With CRS in the Holy Land

BY BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

I had the privilege to travel to Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza last week with Catholic Relief Services. Hosted by the wonderful staff of CRS in the Holy Land, Bishop Joe Vasquez of Austin, Texas, and I, along with two CRS staff from the U.S., seven board members and benefactors and the CRS regional director participated in the trip. I was especially delighted that one of the participants was from our diocese: Tom Veldman, parishioner of St. Joseph Parish in South Bend and a great supporter of Saint Joseph High School.

The work of Catholic Relief Services in the Holy Land began in the 1940s and focused on assisting refugees displaced by the devastation of World War II. CRS established a program office in 1961 under an agreement with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In 1967, the Israeli government asked CRS to continue its presence. In 1999, CRS was officially registered with the Palestinian National Authority’s Ministry of Interior to carry on its work in the West Bank and Gaza.

CRS has offices today in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Gaza, from which it implements many programs. Presently, there are 49 national staff and six international staff of CRS in the Holy Land. The CRS Country Representative, Hilary Dubose, who leads CRS programs and staff in the Holy Land, graciously hosted and guided us throughout the week.

East Jerusalem and Ramallah

Our first full day, January 16, was spent in East Jerusalem, the Palestinian section of the city that was annexed by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. To this day, no country has recognized the legitimacy of Israel’s annexation of East Jerusalem or of Israeli rule in this area. The 308,000 Palestinians of East Jerusalem, with rare exception, are not citizens of Israel, but are classified as “permanent residents” with very limited rights. A great source of consternation for the Palestinians is the Israeli settlement in East Jerusalem that solidifies Israeli control. Settlement blocks now house 200,000 Israelis in East Jerusalem.

In the morning, a well-known Israeli attorney who defends the rights of Palestinians gave us a tour of East Jerusalem. At one stop, we were able to look out over an area of an Israeli settlement and a Palestinian neighborhood on two hills separated by an area called “E-1.” Controversial and problematic plans have been in the works for an Israeli settlement there that would separate the northern and southern parts of any future Palestinian state, undermining its geographical integrity and the viability of East Jerusalem as the capital of that state.

Both officials expressed deep concern for the decline of the Christian population in the Holy Land. Today, 1.8 percent of Palestinians are Christians. Both officials expressed deep gratitude for the work of CRS in Palestine and especially in Gaza. They expressed grave concern about the present very volatile situation and growing opposition to the two-state solution. They believe an international commitment is needed, given the lack of progress in bi-lateral negotiations. They asked for our help in shedding light on the injustices suffered by the Palestinian people.
Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Latin Patriarchate

We began our second day in Jerusalem with Mass at the chapel on Mount Golgatha, within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, founded by a tour of this holiest church in the world, on the site of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. If you have been there, you know the indescribable experience of entering the Edicule, the shrine that encloses Jesus' empty tomb. Kneeling at the tomb, I prayed for justice, peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land. Presently, the Edicule is being restored and is covered with scaffolding. I was happy that it is still open for pilgrims. A few months ago researchers found the original rock surface, the bed of Jesus' burial, under the marble slab where people pray. The limestone cave walls of the tomb are also intact.

After the tour and breakfast in the Christian Quarter of the old city, we visited the residence and offices of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Latin Patriarch is the Bishop of all the Latin Roman Catholics in Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Jordan and Cyprus (approximately 150,000 Catholics today). Last year the Patriarch retired, so the Patriarchate is presently governed by an Apostolic Administrator, Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, an Italian Franciscan.

We had a very friendly audience with Archbishop Pizzaballa, who expressed his deep appreciation for the work of CRS in the Holy Land. He shared with us his concern about the diminishing population of Christians in Jerusalem, now numbering only 12,000. He wants the Church to be a living presence in Jerusalem. Archbishop Pizzaballa expressed gratitude for U.S. pilgrims to the Holy Land who support the local Christians. He also spoke about the universal, international significance of Jerusalem and the need for a just and stable solution for the Palestinians.

After the meeting with Archbishop Pizzaballa, we visited the U.S. Consulate for a meeting with Mr. Donald Blome, the U.S. Consul General in Jerusalem. This is the oldest continually operating U.S. diplomatic mission in the world. Mr. Blome spoke of CRS as a "great place to work" and praised the work of CRS in Gaza. He discussed the political problems in the region and the "pretty awful" situation created by Israel and the Palestinians, whom we met, the Consul spoke of the extremely tense situation at the present time and the real possibility of more violence.

Hebron

In the afternoon we travelled to Hebron, a city I was anxious to visit since, when I was there in 1981, we were not able to stay and visit because it was too dangerous. We had left quickly because stones and rocks were being thrown at our bus. This time it was different. We began by visiting the famous Tomb of the Patriarchs, the burial place of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. This is the second holiest place in the world for the Jewish people. King David began his reign in Hebron. Many Jews were praying or studying everywhere and I observed crowds and halls within the building of the Tombs when we visited.

Our guide in Hebron was an Israeli woman, a leader of one of CRS' partners in the Holy Land, B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Hebron, a Palestinian city in the West Bank, is now divided, with parts under Israeli control and parts under the Palestinian Authority. There are no Christians in Hebron. It truly felt like an occupied city, with Israeli soldiers everywhere and Israeli checkpoints throughout the city. Israeli settlements have been built throughout the city and Palestinians are prohibited from being on various streets, making mobility a challenge. I spoke with two friendly shopkeepers near the Tomb of the Patriarchs, who shared with me about the severe restrictions on them as well as the poor business because of lack of tourists.

We visited the home of one of the Palestinian families in Hebron who participated in the CRS and B'Tselem Visual Impact Project. This project provides video cameras so they can collect footage of their daily lives and violations of human rights under occupation. This has helped educate people outside to their plight, monitoring and documenting human rights violations.

Gaza

We spent the next two days in Gaza, really the heart of our trip, where 90 percent of CRS' work in the Holy Land takes place. Since 2007, the people of Gaza have lived through three wars, a crippling blockade, economic stagnation and accelerating environmental collapse. Nearly a third of the population (over 500,000 people) fled their homes during the 2014 war and bombings. The water is contaminated and electric power is sporadic. Thousands of families still need safe and adequate housing today. Gaza has the highest rate of unemployment in the world, about 40 percent. It is governed by Hamas, which took over the Gaza Strip after the Fatah party lost the elections in 2007. Hamas is a militant Islamist group, designated by the U.S., Israel and others as a terrorist organization, but respected by many Palestinians as a legitimate resistance movement. Hamas, unlike Fatah, has refused to renounce violence.

CRS was a leader in providing emergency relief during the wars and has been a leader in recovery, rebuilding homes, lives and community. CRS is implementing the USAID-funded "Envision Gaza 2020" project to build resilience and self-reliance in vulnerable communities through reconstruction and redevelopment, expansion of employment opportunities and targeted emergency assistance. We visited several CRS projects during our two days in Gaza. We attended a meeting of a group of local women, one of many CRS "Savings and Internal Lending Communities" organized by CRS to help participants build savings and assist each other through loans. We visited a center where young adults are trained by CRS to work in Child-Friendly Community Centers to help children develop greater psychosocial resilience and wellbeing. We also visited a supermarket where recipients of USAID/CRS electronic food vouchers purchase the food they need. Many of these families are so poor that local markets are not viable for them.

We visited the two houses of the Missionaries of Charity next to Holy Family Church. The sisters care for 57 disabled children and 10 disabled elderly people, truly the poorest of the poor in Gaza. CRS assists the sisters with many of their needs, including building repairs and utilities. It was a joy to visit and hold the children who are so lovingly cared for by Mother Teresa's sisters.

Entering and leaving Gaza involved going through three checkpoints: Israeli, Palestinian Authority and Gaza's Hamas authority. The people of Gaza are like prisoners, since they are unable to leave except for rare emergency or other special situations. It was hard to leave Gaza and say goodbye to the sisters, the priests and the CRS workers. The people living in Gaza rarely see visitors from outside, since few are allowed entry to Gaza. They can feel "forgotten by the world." They were very happy and grateful for our visit. I assured them of the prayers of the people of our diocese and that I would share with others about them and their difficult lives.

This article from Bishop Rhoades on his trip with CRS to the Holy Land will continue in the next issue.
‘We will be protected by God,’ Trump declares in inaugural address

BY MARK PATTISON

WASHINGTON (CNS) — President Donald J. Trump told the nation in his inaugural address that it need not fear in the days ahead.

“There should not be fear,” Trump said Jan. 20. “We are protected and we will always be protected. We will be protected by the great men and women of our military and law enforcement, and, most important, we will be protected by God.”

In signaling a new era for the United States, “at the bedrock of our politics will be a total allegiance to the United States of America, and through our loyalty to our country, we will rediscover our loyalty to each other,” Trump said in his 18-minute address.

“When you open your heart to patriotism, there is no room for prejudice. The Bible tells us how good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity. We must speak our minds openly, debate our disagreements honestly, but always pursue solidarity. When America is united, America is totally unstoppable.”

He said Americans of all stripes harbor common hopes and dreams.

“We all enjoy the same glorious freedoms,” Trump said, “and we all salute the same great American flag. And whether a child is born in the urban sprawl of Detroit or the windswept plains of Nebraska, they look up at the same night sky, they fill their heart with the same dreams, and they are infused with the breath of life by the same almighty Creator.”

Much of the rest of Trump’s inaugural address restated the themes he used in his presidential campaign, remarking repeatedly that the nation and its citizens would be his top priority as president.

“Today we are not merely transferring power from one administration to another or from one party to another,” Trump said from the west front of the Capitol, “but we are transferring power from Washington, D.C., and giving it back to you, the people.”

He added, “This moment is your moment. It belongs to you. It belongs to everyone gathered here today and everyone watching all across America. This is your day, this is your celebration, and this, the United States of America, is your country.”

Trump distilled theills he saw in the United States: “Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities, rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our nation. An education system flush with cash but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of all knowledge. And the crime and the gangs and the drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed our country of so much unrealized potential. This American carnage stops right here and stops right now.”

TRUMP, page 24

Allen County pro-life rally and march

Nearly 2,000 people took part in the 43rd annual Allen County Right to Life March for Life Saturday, Jan. 21, to peacefully seek an end to abortion. Attendees participated in a rally at the University of Saint Francis Performing Arts Center and then marched through the streets of downtown Fort Wayne, ending at the E. Ross Adair Federal Building. Speakers at the rally included author Peter Heck, Rep. Jim Banks (IN-3) and Dr. Andrew Mullally of Credo Family Medicine. Clergy and medical professionals in attendance were recognized for their contributions for advancing a culture of life.
Viewing the work of Catholic Relief Services

Jerusalem

Bishop Rhoades and Tom Veldman stand outside the Church of the Holy Sepulcre in Jerusalem.

Hebron

“Hope,” written in graffiti on the wall in front of the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron is a sign, according to Bishop Rhoades, of the people’s resolve to endure and move forward despite conflict and strife.

Barbed wire separates a Palestinian neighborhood with destroyed shops from the Israeli settlement in Hebron.

All photos contributed by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades
Gaza

One of the thousands of homes destroyed by bombardments during the 2014 Gaza war.

At left, a family in Gaza stand outside their home, rebuilt with Catholic Relief Services funds after being severely damaged in the war.

One of the hundreds of temporary shelters built by CRS for families left homeless by the Gaza war.

Bishop Rhoades holds Muhamat, one of 36 disabled children cared for by the Missionaries of Charity in Gaza City.

CRS visitors attend Mass with the priests of Holy Family Parish in Gaza City, together with the Missionaries of Charity and Sisters of the Holy Rosary who serve in Gaza.

Look for more about Bishop Rhoades' trip in next week's issue.

Look for more photos on these media platforms.

www.todayscatholicnews.org

@BishopKevinRhoades
**Georgia tornado**

Debris lies in the ruins of a home Jan. 22 after a tornado ripped through Adel, Ga., killing at least seven people. The enormous storm system that kicked up tornadoes, shredded homes and left other destruction scattered around the Southeast has claimed at least 18 lives after a two-day assault on the region.

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**Pre-K bill would expand school choice access**

INDIANAPOLIS — A proposal to enhance state-funded preschool for at-risk children also expands school choice access. The Indiana Catholic Conference supports the legislation.

The preschool expansion bill, authored by Rep. Bob Behning, R-Indianapolis, builds upon the state’s On My Way Pre-K pilot program. The pilot program allows income eligible 4-year-olds access to high-quality pre-school education in five counties — Allen, Jackson, Lake, Marion and Vanderburgh. Currently the pilot program serves approximately 2,500 low-income children.

Behning, who chairs the House Education Committee where the bill will be heard Jan. 31, said House Bill 1004 expands the pilot program from five counties up to 10 and is expected to serve an additional 2,500 students. “It’s important to provide more options for children and this bill takes the next step in the pilot program,” said Behning. “We are going to put more money toward preschool.”

The governor is calling for double the current level.

“Another critical aspect of the bill is it raises the entry income threshold so that more people have options to participate,” said Behning. The income threshold increases from 127 percent of the federal poverty level, or $31,500 for a family of four, to 150 percent of the free and reduced lunch program, or an annual income of $67,432 for a family of four. Behning said these income guidelines sync with the K-12 scholarship program.

Behning said it’s also important that the bill has a trigger for a K-12 voucher. “If you are a recipient of a pre-K voucher, you would gain access to kindergarten using a voucher,” he said.

A family eligible for the K-12 voucher would have a threshold income of about $44,000, explained Behning. “The cost of a nonpublic school is anywhere from $4,000-$8,000,” said Behning. “If a family has two kids, a family could be paying upwards of $16,000 per year. That’s about 30 percent of their gross income.

“I have always been an advocate of school choice beginning in kindergarten,” said Behning. “The K-12 voucher portion of the bill provides a seamless transition for children whose parents may choose a church or religiously-affiliated pre-k option. The state won’t force them back to the public school setting for kindergarten,” he said. “It gives parents a choice.”

Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, said House Bill 1004 improves upon the current preschool program in that increases access to high-quality preschool education for more children. It increases the income eligibility making more families eligible. The bill makes those children voucher-eligible to go into a school of their parent’s choice beginning in kindergarten including nonpublic or religiously affiliated schools.

“Typically a kindergarten student cannot receive a choice scholarship, commonly referred to as a voucher, for a nonpublic school, but must enter a public school first,” said Tebbe. “Under this plan, children who qualify for a pre-K voucher, because their family has a financial need, would be eligible for the choice scholarship for kindergarten. “We support parents’ ability to select a school that best suits their children’s needs. House Bill 1004 does that.”

Tebbe added that the school choice portion of the bill is expect to be a bone of contention in the pre-K debate. Behning said he’s going to fight to keep the school choice piece in the bill.

House Bill 1004 permits a student, who receives an early education grant in the immediately preceding school year and is a member of a household with an annual income of not more than 200 percent of the amount required to qualify for the federal free or reduced price lunch program, to qualify for a choice scholarship. This entitles the student to receive at least a 50 percent scholarship of the state tuition support amount.

The Early Education Matching Grant program, the funding mechanism of the On My Way preschool pilot program, was established by the Indiana General Assembly in 2013. These grants allow high-quality, early childhood education programs to apply for matching funds to serve 4-year-old children from families whose incomes are below federal poverty guidelines.

According to the state’s Family and Social Services Administration, the group that administers the preschool grants, the program grants are awarded annually through a competitive process to early education programs that meet the certain requirements. Participating programs must also secure matching donations and agree to participate in a study to determine the impact of the program on school readiness. For the 2014-15 school year, 30 early education programs were awarded grants to serve low-income 4-year-olds. FSSA would determine which counties are added to the expansion program.

During his first State of the State address Jan. 17, Gov. Eric Holcomb called for doubling the state funding for preschool from $10 million to $20 million each year. Rep. Behning said the funding piece of the pre-K program would be included in the budget bill. If passed, House Bill 1004 takes effect July 1.

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**‘9 Days for Life’ campaign urges prayer, action to build culture of life**

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. bishops’ nationwide “9 Days for Life” campaign is “a great way to put our faith into action,” said Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities. He made the comments in a video posted on a website about the Jan. 21-29 campaign, www.9DaysforLife.com. The site offers four ways for participants to receive daily prayers, suggested reflections and practical actions for the campaign, along with links to the free “9 Days for Life” smartphone app. “We’re praying for a lot of things this month, including racial harmony, Christian unity and the protection of all human life,” Cardinal Dolan said in a Jan. 19 statement inviting Catholics and others to take part in “9 Days for Life.” He noted that the beginning of the campaign overlapped with the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, observed this year Jan. 18-25. “As we pray for that unity, I invite our brothers and sisters in Christ to join in the ‘9 Days for Life’ prayer campaign. Together, our prayers and actions can witness to the dignity of the human person,” he said.

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**NEWS BRIEFS**

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**INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE**

**BRIGID CURTIS AYER**

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**Pope offers prayers for Trump as he becomes 45th U.S. president**

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis sent best wishes and prayers to incoming President Donald J. Trump shortly after he took the oath of office Jan. 20. “I offer you my cordial good wishes and the assurance of my prayers that almighty God will grant you wisdom and success in the exercise of your high office,” the pope’s message said. Saying that the human family faces “grave humanitarian crises” that demand “farsighted and united political responses,” the pope said he would pray that Trump’s decisions “will be guided by the rich spiritual and ethical values that have shaped the history of the American people and your nation’s commitment to the advancement of human dignity and freedom worldwide.”

The pope also said he hoped that America’s “stature” continued to be measured by “above all its concern for the poor, the outcast and those in need who, like Lazarus, stand before our door.”

The message concluded with the pope saying he would ask God to grant the new president, his family and all Americans “peace, concord and every material and spiritual prosperity.”
Theology on Tap winter series begins

BY EMILY SCHMID

Theology on Tap Winter Series begins on Jan. 31 in the South Bend area. Theology on Tap is a Catholic speaker series for young adults in their 20s and 30s, single and married, and is an opportunity to share in food, fellowship and faith.

The theme for this series is Catholic Adulting: The Struggle is Real. The talks will cover common challenges that are unique to Catholic young adults and offer support for overcoming them. Everyone is welcome.

This winter the series has a new location: the Columbus Club, located at 114 W. 1st St. in Mishawaka. The evening will include an optional dinner buffet: dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. and the talk usually starts at 7 p.m.

The schedule of topics and speakers is as follows:

**Tuesday, Jan. 31:** God, Church and You: Defining the Relationship — Fr. Jacob Meyer. Father Jacob, pastor of St. Monica Church, will discuss the crisis of young adults leaving the church, how to bring our young adult friends back and the challenges that come with growing in faith.

**Tuesday, Feb. 7:** Dreams and Expectations: Are We There Yet? — Carolyn Woo. Dr. Woo, former CEO of Catholic Relief Services, will discuss resolving the tension between the expectations of society vs. the expectations of Christ, how to manage young adult goals for the future and how prayer works in all of this.

**Tuesday, Feb. 14:** Community: You Can’t Do It Alone — Raquel Falk. Falk will discuss friendship and loneliness that one may encounter as a Catholic young adult, how to discover one’s gifts and talents as a member of the body of Christ and finding support in the young adult community.

**Tuesday, Feb. 21:** Things I Wish I Had Known as a Young Adult — Paolo and Susan Carozza. The Carozzas, as Catholics beyond the young adult stage, will discuss lessons they learned as young adults that current young adults can relate to and learn from, as well as encouraging words for Catholic young adults.

**Tuesday, Feb. 28:** Mardi Gras: Mass and party at St. Monica Church, Mishawaka. The series conclusion will include Lenten games and a raffle.

Visit http://www.diocesefwsb.org/tot-sb for more information, or find the event page on Facebook: #TOTSouthBend.

The students of Sacred Heart School, Warsaw, had an exciting visit from the Fort Wayne Mad Ants’ Mascot in January. The visit included a presentation about the importance of a good education and the history of the Fort Wayne Mad Ants Basketball Team. Students in grades three through six will attend a Mad Ants game during Catholic Schools’ Week. The Sacred Heart Parents’ Home and School Association will treat the students to the game and to lunch. The Mad Ants gave the students booklets with math and science activities that can also be brought to the game.
Following death of Castro, Pedro Pan refugees recall relocation

BY PATRICK MURPHY

They came to Fort Wayne just as the Cold War threatened to worsen — dozens of teenage Cuban boys, slightly bewildered but determined.

The boys were part of Operation Pedro Pan, a plan engineered by the U.S. government, the Catholic Church in Miami and parents anxious to get their youngsters off the island nation after the 1959 Cuban Revolution. The plan, which was terminated abruptly after the Cuban Missile Crisis, saw about 14,000 adolescent boys fly from Havana to Miami, eventually being disbursed to family members and religious organizations in Nebraska, Delaware, New Mexico and other states, including Indiana.

Most were Catholic, but some Protestants and Jews were among the exodus. They arrived unaccompanied, but a large percentage were reunited with family members who were already here, or who came to the U.S. later on.

No one seems to recall exactly how many of the boys came to Fort Wayne or how many of them remained in the area. There were likely as many as three dozen who arrived in Summit City in the early 1960s, many of them then traveling to Florida or another state that had a warmer climate.

The youngsters were close during the exodus. And while many have lost contact over the last half-century, others keep in touch. Each of the Pedro Pan youngsters has his own story, and a few of the boys who first came to Fort Wayne were able to be located to share some of it.

“Like a baseball team,” said Mark Tenorio, one of the housefathers hired to supervise the new arrivals. They initially stayed at St. Vincent’s Villa on Wells Street, and later at a house in the 1000 block of west Wayne Street. “And most became quite successful,” he said.

“We didn’t like winter,” said Michael Barnet, who was 15 when he arrived in the summer of 1961, among the initial batch of refugees. “But the sisters dressed us warmly, and we got through it.”

Language was a problem, although some of the youngsters had studied English in Cuba.

Among the dozens of minors who were flown to Fort Wayne during the Pedro Pan operation of 1959-61 were Jack Hernandez, center, and Michael Barnet, right. Both young men attended Catholic high school and then married, began working and settled in Fort Wayne.

Jack, originally Joaquin, Hernandez and his wife, Carol, pose during a recent vacation. Jack was among the wave of young, unaccompanied Cuban refugees who arrived in the U.S. during a two-year period following the 1959 Cuban Revolution.

Others took classes in grammar and usage while awaiting transport to their new homes. “I barely understood anything,” said Barnet. Their hosts used hand gestures, he recalled, and sometimes the boys needed things to be repeated over and over. “It was hard, but lots of fun,” he remembered. “Everybody in school was very understanding.”

Frequently on Sundays, the new arrivals would spend afternoons with families who welcomed them into their homes. Barnet remembered that during these visits they learned more about the U.S. way of life.

After graduation from high school, Barnet took a job at Seyferts Potatoes and became an interstate truck driver. “I enjoyed every minute,” he said. He retired after 37 years.

The high school the young Cubans attended was Central Catholic High School, where they were made to feel at home. “At first, some had some trouble with the language,” remembered Steve App, a 1962 graduate.

“But they were welcomed with open arms.”

Following their studies at Central Catholic, Ledo studied accounting for several years at what would eventually become IPFW and then enjoyed a career in the wire industry. Now retired, he and wife Sharon enjoy spending time with their children and grandchildren. “I get urge to return (to Cuba) once in a while,” he said, “but I never have.”

Joaquin “Jack” Hernandez, another refugee who landed in Fort Wayne, graduated from Indiana Tech with a degree in mechanical engineering before becoming a supervisor at Navistar. He remembered that while most people were receptive of him and the other Cubans, others weren’t. “I can’t say it was discrimination,” he said, “but they weren’t particularly friendly. We just avoided them.”

One of the teen refugees who relocated from Fort Wayne to Florida was Felipe de Jesus Estevez who became bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine.

Benedict, Ledo and Hernandez, all of whom are now U.S. citizens, said they are grateful to Fort Wayne and the residents who welcomed them. The nuns, priests, parishioners and ordinary people helped their transition to new lives possible, even adventurous and enjoyable, they agreed.

The trio has mixed feelings about efforts to normalize relations with their homeland since the death of Fidel Castro. “They’re a good idea,” said Hernandez, “as long as it’s tied to improving human rights and giving ordinary citizens more of a voice in their government.”

Ledo is more skeptical. “I don’t know that it will make a difference,” he said. “But I hope so.”
Catholic schools: Transforming students in heart and mind

BY MARSHA JORDAN

The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2017 — “Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service” — encompasses several concepts at the heart of Catholic education. Our schools are not only communities themselves but also a part of the larger communities of home, church, diocese, city and nation. Faith, knowledge and service are integral components of a Catholic education, which has as its core aim to build up the body of Christ.

“Our Catholic schools exist to call our children and young people to greatness, this greatness of soul, to use their God-given gifts to do what is great in God’s eyes — to serve, to help, to give and build up the body of Christ,” Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades said in 2014.

True and faithful Catholic education is necessary today given the many crises of values in our country and world. While a secular education takes into consideration only life in this world, we know we are destined for so much more; we are destined for eternal life and eternal happiness.

“We need Catholic schools that build on solid values — values that renew the face of the earth. We need Catholic schools that situate us within the full truth of our existence and prepare us for beatitude in the eternal dimension. We need schools that concern themselves with forming humanly and spiritually mature persons, discerning people who want, and who are able, to use what they have learned only for good,” said Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, in 2015. And, as stated by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, a good Catholic school should help all of its students toward the goal of becoming saints.

For 38 years I have had the privilege to serve in the life-giving and joy-filled ministry of Catholic education. Like many other teachers and administrators, I made a conscious decision to devote my career to Catholic education.

As Catholic educators, we know we are truly blessed to serve in a ministry that shares with parents the formation and transformation of the hearts and minds of young people. We also recognize that we, in turn, are formed and transformed by our experiences with students, colleagues and the communities of which we are a part. Each person we encounter teaches us something about ourselves and what it truly means to serve God, the church and one another. We recognize our call each day to be the face of Jesus to all we meet.

What are some of the ways that demonstrate our students being formed and transformed in heart and mind, and set on their path to heaven? Students tell us and show us daily, as evidenced by the following witness:

• “The daily prayer that is offered at my high school during the school day and in the classrooms has helped me grow spiritually; sharing it with other students has been a beautiful experience that I will take with me to college.”

• One student’s school “has been a great gift from God in my life! My school has helped me grow as a person in my faith, and I know my life will be amazing because I had this opportunity to attend a great Catholic school.”

• When asked, “To whom do you go when you are in trouble?” a high-school senior replies, “I take my concerns to confession and talk it out.”

• A classroom of 6-year-old first-graders stops at 12:15 p.m. daily to recite the Angelus perfectly from memory.

• A second-grader describes how his family takes food to the poor “because they have nothing to eat.”

• While making the sign of the cross, a first-grader suddenly realizes that the crucifix represents Jesus being nailed to the cross. “I don’t want Jesus to be hurt,” she says with tears in her eyes.

• Many students freely, and without reservation, elect to join the Catholic Church and be baptized and confirmed by Bishop Rhoades during his annual high school visits.

• Throughout the diocese, many students are involved in pro-life activities, Catholic Relief Services, community outreach and service to the poor and elderly.

• A high school graduate gives up an all-expenses-paid vacation and instead pays his own way on a 10-day mission trip to Honduras.

• When asked what he most appreciates about his Catholic school, a high school student shares comments both touching and powerful: “The teachers are all amazing, but especially the theology teachers. My faith has really been awakened, and I find myself falling more and more in love with Jesus every day. Yes, I will be prepared for college, but the deepening of my faith is the greatest gift of my Catholic education.”

There can be no doubt that our Catholic schools are serving as places for the formation of authentic Catholics with unshakeable faith who are growing to become courageous builders of a better world on their path to heaven.

We ask all our parish communities to pray daily for the continued mission of our schools. Especially during Catholic Schools Week, please pray for teachers and staff members who daily witness and proclaim the Gospel to our students. These men and women truly are, in the words of St. John Paul II, “great gifts to the church.” Pray also for our predecessors, priests and laypeople who established the firm foundation of Catholic schools in our diocese. What a tremendous treasure they have given us!

Inspired by their example, may we continue to strive for greatness in all areas of our Catholic schools, making them the best they can be, with everything aimed at building up the body of Christ.

Marsha Jordan is the superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.
Eighteen Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend are being awarded tuition assistance of $500 per student, for a total of 36 students, for the school year 2016-17 from The Bishop D’Arcy Catholic Education Jubilee Fund. Nine recipients are Fort Wayne-area elementary schools and nine are South Bend-area schools. The Bishop D’Arcy Catholic Education Jubilee Fund is a restricted endowment fund within the Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana. Bishop John M. D’Arcy established the fund in 2007 with gifts from the 50th anniversary of his priesthood, from memorials of his late sister, Mary Caprio, and from other special donations. The purpose of the fund is to grant tuition assistance to Catholic students in Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Schools that have one or more students receiving an award for school year 2016-17 are as follows:

- Fort Wayne area: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. John the Baptist, St. Vincent de Paul, Most Precious Blood, Queen of Angels, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel and St. Therese, all in Fort Wayne; and St. Aloysius, Yoder.
- South Bend area: St. Matthew Cathedral, Corpus Christi, Holy Family and St. Jude, all in South Bend; Mishawaka Catholic, Mishawaka; Queen of Peace, Mishawaka; St. John the Evangelist, Goshen; St. Thomas the Apostle, Elkhart; and St. Vincent de Paul, Elkhart.

The fund makes distributions each year based on an annual payout of 6 percent of the value of the fund on June 30. Recipients are awarded financial assistance based on need by a committee that consists of Deacon James Fitzpatrick, Chief Financial Officer Joseph Ryan and Superintendent of Catholic Schools Marsha Jordan. Bishop D’Arcy celebrated 50 years as a priest on Feb. 2, 2007. He contributed gifts that he received from the golden jubilee of his priesthood to create the Bishop D’Arcy Catholic Education Jubilee Fund. In addition, when his sister, Mary Caprio, died in September 2007, Bishop D’Arcy requested that memorials be given to this fund. Moreover, a special gift from a family foundation was contributed to the Bishop D’Arcy Catholic Education Jubilee Fund in May 2008. The total value of the fund was approximately $259,277 as of June 30, 2016.

The committee sent letters and tuition assistance application forms in October to principals and pastors of all Catholic elementary schools in the diocese, inviting them to recommend a student from the school who qualified for tuition assistance based on financial need. Also, the committee requested a written essay of not more than 100 words from each student who applied, titled “Why Catholic Education is Important to Me.” For each student who is granted an award, it will be for one time and is nonrenewable.

Those who would like to make a current gift of cash or stock or a planned gift such as a will bequest to the Bishop D’Arcy Catholic Education Jubilee Fund, may contact Ryan at (260) 422-4611 or jryan@diocesefwsb.org.

The Independent College of Indiana’s “Realizing the Dream” grant was recently awarded to Caroline Blue, a parishioner of St. John the Evangelist Church in Goshen. She attends Saint Mary’s College in South Bend. Blue, right, received $2,500 to help with college expenses. Sister Colleen Bauer, SSND, left, was named Blue’s most influential teacher and received $1,000 for professional development. Sister Bauer taught Blue in the second grade.
January 29, 2017

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Destination Imagination teaches teamwork, problem solving

BY DEB WAGNER

Destination Imagination is an international organization that encourages student use of problem-solving skills in a competitive environment. Students in first grade through university level are encouraged to participate.

In September of each year, Destination Imagination releases five problem-solving challenges for the year. Each challenge pertains to one of five areas of focus: science, technology, engineering, fine arts and improvisational. Teams of up to seven students form by the first part of October to address one of the challenges, supervised by parents who serve as team managers.

The students on a team must collectively decide which one of the five challenges they want to solve. Whatever challenge is decided upon becomes the team’s “Main Challenge” for competition later in the school year.

The students work together in the months that follow. They do all of the work, such as developing a skit and making costumes if the chosen challenge pertains to the performing arts. The team managers provide guidance if, for example, the students need to know how to operate a sewing machine or power tool for their skit.

In addition to the Main Challenge, students face an “Instant Challenge” when they arrive at competition. The Instant Challenge is worth 25 percent of the team’s final score. It requires a team to enter a room in which they’ll find miscellaneous supplies such as straws, cups and paper. The team members are given a random challenge from one of the categories and four to five minutes to develop a plan to resolve the challenge, followed by two minutes to complete it. They learn to think outside the box, solve problems, work as a team and think on their feet through these tasks. During the Instant Challenge time, team managers are not allowed to speak, make gestures or assist in any way. They do, however, introduce concepts (such as, for example, the fact that paper is made stronger when it is folded) during their meetings throughout the school year, in order to prepare the students for this part of the competition.

Destination Imagination International holds a regional, state, and global competition each year. The regional competition is held at the end of February. For the purpose of regional competition, the state of Indiana is divided into three groups of schools in the northern half of the state and schools from Indianapolis south to the Indiana-Kentucky state line. The top two teams from the respective age groups within each Main Challenge advance to the state competition in April, and the global competition the week before Memorial Day. For the global competition, the state competition, and the global competition the week before Memorial Day.

At the global competition students and team managers stay Tuesday through Sunday at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville campus. There are 17 countries and 45 states represented at the global competition. During the application for global competition, if they are selected to be paired with a buddy team, students take small gifts representative of their city or country to exchange with those students.

During the day students prepare for competition, compete or watch others compete. The teams also design and exchange pins with other teams in order to develop communication skills. They are encouraged to ask each other questions during the pin exchange, such as, “What challenge are you doing?” and “Where are you from?” Many evening activities and entertainment options are planned for the students as well, including opening and closing ceremonies.

Students from St. John the Baptist School, New Haven, have represented the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and the Fort Wayne area at global competition three of the last four years, and eight or nine of the 17 years the Destination Imagination Challenge Program has been in existence. Linda Shepherd and Lisa Litchfield have acted as the school’s team managers for Destination Imagination teams for all of the 17 years.

“I think Destination Imagination is very valuable,” said Litchfield. “It definitely prepares students for future college and job interviews, and any type of life situations involving teamwork and communication.”

Students who do not attend St. John the Baptist School may still join its Destination Imagination teams. Anyone interested in becoming involved in Destination Imagination, or individuals wanting to make a donation to offset the cost of travel to competitions, may contact St. John the Baptist Parish office at 260-493-4553.

Students at St. John the Baptist School in New Haven perform for the 2016 Destination Imagination Main Challenge in the performing arts category. The international Destination Imagination organization encourages student use of problem-solving skills in a competitive environment.
Diocesan high schools demonstrate leadership in CRS Global High School Program

BY MELISSA WHEELER

During Catholic Schools Week, time is taken to remember the lessons taught by Christ the Teacher. His teaching was based in faith and compassion. Today, schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend aim for these same ideals: They teach the faith and form compassionate young people who will live the Gospel. Catholic Relief Services partners with diocesan high schools to enhance this mission.

A familiar acronym at Catholic Relief Services is FLAG. In its mission of global solidarity, CRS is called to pray, learn, act and give in solidarity with the global poor. Most of the time, individuals think of giving first. They think of how much they have and how much the poor lack, and reach into their pockets to give what they can. While monetary support is very important to any mission that helps the poor, praying for the people in the situation, learning about their lives and acting to help change their situations, is vital. It is only in entering into their lives, even in a simple way, that others are able to come into solidarity with them. Their dignity and worth are recognized when others see how alike all people really are, and that we are all members of one human family.

The United States Operations side of CRS makes the message of global solidarity to the Catholic Church in the U.S. in various ways. The most familiar is CRS Rice Bowl, the Lenten enrichment experience for individuals and families. There are currently 85 parishes, schools and university offices across the diocese that will participate in CRS Rice Bowl this year. CRS Rice Bowl helps family, parish and school communities connect with their brothers and sisters all over the world through prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

All four diocesan high schools—Bishop Dwenger, Bishop Luers, Marian and Saint Joseph—are participating in the CRS Global High School Program. The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend was the first diocese in the U.S. to have all of its high schools engaged in GHS.

According to CRS, a global high school “works collaborative-ly with Catholic Relief Services to form internationally aware and globally responsive students who live their Catholic faith in solidarity with their brothers and sisters around the world.” What does this partnership mean for our high schools? It means ready access to CRS resources that help educate the school community in Catholic social teaching. Teachers can participate in the GHS forums that allow them to share lesson plan ideas with one another between schools, and because there are global high schools throughout the United States. Catholic identity is enhanced within the participant schools. Faith comes alive in the schools as students, faculty and staff advocate for global solidarity. The schools can also celebrate and enhance their individual charisms through the incorporation of Catholic social teaching through the CRS Global High School program.

All Global High Schools participate in CRS Rice Bowl and at least one more core program such as Foodfast, Ethical Trade, Advocacy or Global Emergency Response. CRS Foodfast is a hunger-awareness experience in which, through fasting, prayer, art and other activities, students enter into an experience of hunger to be in solidarity with their hungry brothers and sisters around the world and discover how they might become involved in eliminating hunger. Through CRS Ethical Trade, formerly CRS Fair Trade, school communities can host fair-trade sales and pray for and learn about the artisans and growers who have produced the products in the sale. For high schools that want to engage in advocacy regarding global issues, CRS provides an advocacy toolkit that allows the school community to examine the legislative process and engage in advocacy for global concerns shaped by CRS through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Participants can write letters, make phone calls and make visits to members of Congress to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves. And when global emergencies occur, school communities can pray, learn, act and give to help those in need. CRS

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend was the first in the U.S. to have all of its high schools engage in Catholic Relief Services’ Global High School Program, in which schools work collaboratively to form internationally aware and globally responsive students who live their faith in solidarity with their brothers and sisters around the world. The relationship also provides opportunities for school staff members to travel to locations where CRS is at work. Melissa Wheeler, at far left in the front row, and Bishop Dwenger High School Principal Jason Schiffli, behind her, are pictured with CRS’ Ghana staff, staff members from Baltimore and other high school teachers and principals from Global High Schools around the U.S. during a trip to Ghana in 2014.
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Two high schools learn ethics, entrepreneurship in business-based class

BY CLAIRE KENNEY

A group of students from Saint Joseph High School in South Bend and Marian High School in Mishawaka are getting hands-on entrepreneurial experience. The students are part of St. Joe CEO, the St. Joseph County chapter of the national program Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities, which seeks to educate young minds on sustainable, innovative and applicable business practices through concepts such as supply and demand, competitive analysis, emotional intelligence, finances, marketing and overall product development.

During the year-long program, all 34 St. Joe CEO students work together as a team to create a platform for raising seed money for their own individual businesses. Though they function as a single unit, they are also broken down into separate subteams assigned to various concentrations much like an actual business model. For example, one handful of students are assigned to oversee the financing for the fundraising, another group manages the marketing, etc.

This is how Start Up the City was developed — a ticked event that will showcase various entrepreneurs, including the students themselves, who will compete the evening of the event for an opportunity to pitch their business ideas to local investors. The winners of the pitch competition pool will receive investment money.

Open to the public, Start Up the City takes place at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 2, with the winners announced on a day-to-day basis. The students' pitch platform will receive investment money.

For these students, their corporate dreams are grounded in their daily work for a company that reaps short-term and long-term rewards. “CEO changed my life completely,” said Edmonds, who has come into class. It is extremely selective in the business model. For Hammel, the job is one that reaps short-term and long-term rewards.

For Hammel, the job is one that reaps short-term and long-term rewards. Watching students grow and go outside of their comfort zones to become entrepreneurs of their lives is what I live for in the day-to-day, but the true reward is when I get a call out of the blue from last year’s students excited to share about an opportunity they have because of what they have applied and learned through CEO or asking me to be on an advisory board for a new startup they are working on,” she said. “The return on investment is a long-term game and I absolutely love it.”

Saint Joseph student Catherine “Cat” Edmonds completed the St. Joe CEO program during her senior year at St. Joseph High School. This year, she has teamed up with Hammel and the program’s leadership team to help current high school students learn about business and entrepreneurship.

“Through CEO you learn how to make ethical business decisions and these translate into the students’ daily lives,” she said.

For Edmonds, the program was transformative and ultimately led her to attend Notre Dame in order to study business. “CEO changed my life completely,” she said.

St. Joe CEO is accepting applications for next year’s class, through Feb. 26. Those interested in applying can visit www.stjoeeco.org for more information.
Dioséncian schools lay groundwork for increase in vocations

BY ANDREW MENTOCK

Currently, 29 young men and women with roots in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend have accepted their calling to do God’s work. This includes three young women who are postulants for the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration in Mishawaka, three young men who are in temporarily professed in the Congregation of Holy Cross and 23 young men who are in seminary studies with the diocese. “This is a great testament to their parents, of course, but also teachers and pastors who have helped these students discern the possibility of a religious vocation,” said Marsha Jordan, superintendent of schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

The Catholic schools in the diocese had a large impact on Michael Thomas, CSC, 26. After growing up as an Evangelical Christian, Thomas converted to Catholicism at the age of 19 and is currently third-year professed in the Congregation of Holy Cross. He attended St. Joseph Grade School in South Bend and St. Joseph High School.

“I have very clear memories of how my schools taught me a love for the liturgy, especially the Mass,” said Thomas. “In grade school we had weekly Mass. That’s where I learned the rosary. Stations of the Cross and about Lent.”

Thomas also remembers using his prayer journal in the fourth grade, which is where he first wrote that he wanted to become a missionary — something he will likely have an opportunity to do, “God-willing,” after he completes his studies and becomes a priest with the Brothers of Holy Cross.

Some of the experiences that benefited Thomas the most, as his belief in Catholicism developed, happened in his high school theology class. There he had the opportunity to struggle with, argue and debate the Catholic faith. As he did, his love for theology grew. He saw the beauty of the faith, and even grappled with reasoning through the mysteries.

“It was also not just his theology teachers that helped him grow, however. His teachers of subjects such as economics and English were also “immensely influential,” he said.

“One of the things that I’m most grateful for is where I went to school. It gave me my life. There is no way I would be as close to my vocation at my age if I hadn’t attended the schools I did.”

Another former student of the Catholic schools in Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend is Alexis Lombaugh, 20, who went to St. Matthew School and Marian High School, and spent one year at Holy Cross College, before entering the community of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration.

“The support and guidance of many of our priests has helped me tremendously in my discernment, as well as the witness and teaching of both Bishop D’Arcy and Bishop Rhoades,” said Lombaugh. “I attended many high school retreats and these helped me grow in my relationship with Christ, which strengthened my discernment.”

While at St. Matthew, Lombaugh had an opportunity to consistently learn and grow from the Sisters of Saint Francis of Perpetual Adoration.

“When I was in fifth grade I had Sister Gianna Marie as my religion teacher, and in sixth grade I had Sister Margaret Mary,” she recalled. “This was my first encounter with sisters, and I was amazed by their joy and charity. At that point in my life, the thought of being a sister was already in my mind, but their example made my desire to become a sister even stronger.”

After her early experiences with the Sisters of Saint Francis of Perpetual Adoration, Lombaugh visited the convent many times. As her spiritual life grew she “fell in love” with the sisters and decided that she wanted to be a member of their community.

Beyond the classroom and discernment retreats, there are many other opportunities available for adolescent and young adult members of the diocese to discern and learn about religious vocations.

Father Andrew Budzinski, director of the Office of Vocations in the Diocese of Fort Wayne South Bend, said one such opportunity for adolescents in the diocese are the Melchizedek Projects, which are vocation discernment groups for like-minded men who love Jesus. There are several groups, in Fort Wayne, South Bend and Elkhart.

Young women have opportunities for discernment as well.

“We also take time to visit grammar schools, high schools, and parish youth groups,” said Sister Maria Gemma, OSF, who works with Sister Lois, OSF, in the Vocations Office of the Sisters of Saint Francis of Perpetual Adoration in Mishawaka. “A new initiative at our Motherhouse this year is the “Chiara Club” inviting middle school aged girls to come for one afternoon every two weeks to spend time with the sisters doing an activity and joining them in prayer.”

The two vocation leaders believe that a large number of young men and women will continue to accept their calling to serve God.

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Apostolate to the Fourth World

When the U.S. Catholic bishops do their laudable work looking out for the needs and rights of migrants and refugees, they are looking out for a large and vulnerable share of their flock. For all the articles and volumes written about the new Americans and their growing political importance, though, it was the prophecy of yesterday’s Catholic migrants and refugees who earned the national spotlight in the 2016 election.

When Donald Trump took the oath of office Jan. 20, he did so largely because working-class, white Catholic voters in key Midwestern states unexpectedly handed him the presidency. Trump picked a high-profile fight with Pope Francis during the election, and polls suggested he would lose badly among Catholics. Instead he carried their vote, and by unusually large margins in the states where he needed it most: by 10 points in Florida, 18 points in Michigan, 20 points in Ohio and 14 points in Iowa.

Sadly, no exit polling on Catholics was published for Wisconsin, or for Pennsylvania, where I grew up; but the story there was likely similar. This is not the place to analyze these voters’ political aspirations. But an earthquake like this one cannot be ignored by any segment of society. The church in the United States may now be asked to ask itself a less self-interested version of the question the politicians are all now asking: Did we forget these people? How can we serve them better?

This goes not just for the Catholics in this “forgotten America,” but for our non-Catholic peers as well, to whom the church is also duty-bound to bring the truth.

It is easy enough for middle- or upper-class, college-educated Catholics to go through life without knowing much of the Fourth World. That Pope John Paul II wrote about in the encyclical “Centesimus Annus” in 1991 — the world many of our religious leaders inhabit — is the source of this ignorance.

As he put it, “Aspects typical of the Third World also appear in developed countries, where the constant transformation of the methods of production and consumption devalues certain acquired skills and professional expertise, and thus requires a continual effort of retraining and updating. Those who fail to keep up with the times can easily be marginalized, as can the elderly, the young people who are incapable of finding their place in the life of society and, in general, those who are weaker.”

This passage could describe so many of the coal and steel factory towns that have been destabilized and left behind by a growing global economy. The inhabitants of this Fourth World are not the world’s poorest people. They are not even the poorest in America.

But many are on the edge financially, and they have watched with sadness as the once-viable communities where they had hoped to build lives on a worker’s wage, disintegrated. Even when government steps in to meet their immediate needs, people in the Fourth World may feel as if they have been robbed of their dignity and self-sufficiency.

The church and its charitable organizations are often present to help those with the most acute needs — drug addicts, the homeless, those pregnant and alone — and that is as it should be. But when Pope John Paul II wrote of “something which is due to man because he is man, by reason of his lofty dignity,” he was not merely referring to the means of survival. He was also referring to the means “to make an act of love and to render the common good of humanity.”

There is no one-size-fits-all answer for the church to reach the forgotten America. But remembering it, as this occasion clearly demands, is a good first step.

John Garvey is the president of The Catholic University of America.

On ‘Spirituality’

“Spirituality” or being “spiritual” means nothing more, but also nothing less, than being animated and guided by the Spirit of the Lord that is received at baptism. This is what St. Paul means by “being under the influence of” or being “spiritual.” It does not necessarily mean some intense form of interiority. Perhaps the most helpful way we can understand the spiritual life is to see our goal as the reformation by grace (particularly of the Holy Spirit, often called “our grace”) of the image of God within us, wounded by original and actual sin. Grace purifies our intellect in knowing the truth and rectifies our will in loving the good.

Essential to spiritual health — maintaining the health and vigor of the Holy Spirit’s life within us — are prayer, silence and nourishment through reading.

All of these require dedication, discipline and the development of a habit. Silence is the preparatory prerequisite to prayer and the spiritual life. It is imperative to cultivate times of silence within our daily life. Silence helps us to grow in self-awareness, which is essential to genuine growth, since pride is the absence of self-awareness and self-absorption. As we grow in self-awareness, two things happen: We recognize our real poverty and we see our own true identity in Christ.

Nourishment through solid spiritual reading is also essential. Pride of place belongs to the inspired text of Sacred Scriptures. Scripture must be read Christologically: Christ is the key to unlocking the meaning of the Scriptures as a whole — including the Old Testament. He is the Word revealed and through the words. He is the alpha (“in the beginning was the Word”) who will “draw all things” to Himself, framing the text. If you plan on reading the Scriptures, always start with the Gospels, which provide the lens for the rest of the Bible. Small bits of Scripture, each day, over which we can mull or meditate, are the basis. Also helpful is to read the Scriptures along with the whole church: following the Lectionary cycle. We can follow the daily Mass readings and make them a source of real nourishment.

Another source of nourishment is the Liturgy of the Hours, the official prayer of the Universal Church. Comprised of psalms, canticles and passages from the Scriptures, it is designed to become the hinge, or pivot, of our daily prayer life. The cycle of Morning Prayer, called “Lauds,” and Evening Prayer, called “Vespers,” can structure and mold our day-to-day existence.

The lives and writings of the saints are another excellent nourishment to the religious life of society and, in general, those who are weaker.”

Blessed are the weak and humble when they seek the Lord

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Matthew 5:1-12a

The first biblical reading this weekend is from Zephaniah. These details are known about this prophet: He was the son of Cushi and a descendant of Hezekiah, presumably King Hezekiah, who reigned as king of Judah, the southern Israelite kingdom centered on Jerusalem, from 715 B.C. to 687 B.C.

Royal ancestry is important. If indeed Zephaniah descended from a king, he may more easily have had access to the royal court and consequently more familiarity with the politics of his day.

Whatever the exact time frame in which this prophecy was written, the plight of the Hebrews was grave. Both the northern kingdom of Judah and those in the northern kingdom of Israel, was uncertain. The two kingdoms were insignificant and weak. They were easy prey for their mightier neighbors, and as history unfolded, powerful neighbors regularly overran them.

The prophets, Zephaniah included, saw the peril facing the Chosen People not so much as a reason for policies for conquest of hostile neighboring powers, but rather as a consequence of the people’s sin.

Sin was the root of all problems. The Chosen People would remain faithful, regardless of whatever, God’s protection would prevent. St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians furnishes the next reading this weekend. The reading presents us to a paradox. The weak will be exalted. The mighty will be laid low. This paradox is deep and profound, teaching us a fundamental fact of life, but it runs utterly counter to the human presumption of reality. So we cannot judge our lives or the world by earthly, human standards. The weakness is all that Jesus has.

For its last reading, the church this weekend offers us the Gospel of St. Matthew and its presentation of the beatitudes. Among the synoptic Gospels, Luke also has a version of the beatitudes differing only slightly from those given in Matthew. Mark does not include the beatitudes.

The beatitudes reveal to us a paradox. The readings for this weekend, culminating in the beatitudes, both celebrate the revelation of God to us, bringing us genuine wisdom about life, and challenge us to be strong and active witnesses to Jesus and to the truth of the Gospel.

Zephaniah builds the case that living without regard for God reaps the whirlwind. Paul adds another lesson. The judgments of the world are inevitably unsure, if not altogether false. To follow the world’s judgment of things, we at best dance on the edge of the cliff.

The beatitudes reveal to us the joy and perfect peace of life with God, and they summon us to do our part in redemption. This summons applies to us personally and collectively. We must accept the Lord, the Son of God, the Redeemer, born of Mary at Christmas, seen as God at the

Heb 13:1-8 Ps 27:1, 3, 5, 8-9

Friday:
Ps 103:1-2, 13-14, 17-18a Mk 6:1-6

Wednesday:
Ps 124:7-8, 11-15 1 Cor 1:26-31 Mt 5:1-12a

Monday:
Heb 11:32-40 Ps 39:1-20 Mt 5:1-12a


Tuesday:
Ps 124:1-5 Ps 39:1-20 Mt 5:1-12a

Monday:
Ps 103:1-2, 13-14, 17-18a Mk 6:1-6

Thursday:
Isaiah 38:1-8 Ps 27:1, 3, 5, 8-9

Hymn: "Lauds," and Evening Prayer, called “Vespers,” can structure and mold our day-to-day existence.

The lives and writings of the saints are another excellent source of nourishment.

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THE HUMAN CONDITION

READINGS

Sunday: Zep 2:3; 3:12-13 Ps 146:10-11 1 Cor 12:6-31 Mt 5:1-12a

Monday: Heb 11:32-40 Ps 39:1-20 Mt 5:1-12a


Wednesday: Heb 12:4-7, 11-15 Ps 103:1-2, 13-14, 17-18a Mk 6:1-6


Friday: Heb 13:1-8 Ps 27:1, 3, 5, 8-9 Mk 6:14-29

Saturday: Heb 13:5-7, 17-21 Ps 23:1-6 Mt 60:34
Lessons from an era of confusion

In the introduction to “Aggiornamento on the Hill of Janus: The American College in Rome, 1955-1979,” Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni warns readers that his book will be most easily understood by students and alumni of the Pontifical North American College. With respect to my old college classmate and friend, I hope Msgr. DiGiovanni is wrong about that. For amidst all the inside baseball about Roman seminary life over two and a half turbulent decades, “Aggiornamento on the Hill of Janus” offers a snapshot of a once-stable institution caught in the maelstrom of ecclesiastical confusion and crisis. And from that picture, much can be learned for today. Like any sensible student of these years, DiGiovanni understands that reform and renewal were imperative as the North American College entered its second century in 1959. The severe regimentation of student life undercut the house rule’s intention to prepare men for lives of service in parish ministry, where they wouldn’t have dozens of bells telling them what to do every time something was to be done. The pedagogy at the Pontifical Gregorian University was ill-suited to the American temper, or to any form of intellectual curiosity, as lectures repeated every year the same Latin lecture they’d given on that day the previous year. NAC was understaffed, not least in terms of spiritual direction. Student morale was a problem because of nit-picking rules and chronic health problems caused by inadequate and sometimes literally poisonous food. Change was imperative.

What followed Vatican II, however, was not so much change as confusion and even chaos.

One of the many strengths of DiGiovanni’s book is its demonstration that attitudes among American seminarians in Rome closely paralleled the dynamics in the drama being played out in St. Peter’s Basilica, just down the Janiculum Hill from NAC, where the Second Vatican Council was meeting. At the council’s halfway mark, Father Henri de Lubac, SJ — a reformer once silenced by the Roman authorities and who was a key theological advisor at the council — sensed that the reformist party at Vatican II was dividing. One camp sought an organic theological development of the church’s self-understanding, while another seemed more interested in kicking the traces and reimagining everything anew. As DiGiovanni’s painstaking examination of contemporary diaries, committee meeting minutes, and various NAC publications shows, that division began to express itself among NAC students at the same time.

So even before that cataclysmic year, 1968, a fissure was opening in Catholicism between those who believed that Christ had given the church a certain form, reference to which was essential to true reform, and those who argued that the “Spirit of the Council” called for a root-and-branch rethinking of Catholic doctrine, mission, ministry and morality. This fissure led, in short order, to confusion about the nature of the priestly vocation and its role in the postconciliar church. And out of that confusion seven devils worse than the first were set loose, as the ministerial priesthood in the Catholic Church took a nosedive unlike anything the church had experienced since the 16th-century Reformation. It should have been no surprise that this confusion was catastrophic for both vocation recruitment and priestly formation; as one of the rectors who turned NAC around in the 1990s, now-Cardinal Edwin F. O’Brien, once put it, “A man will give his life for a mystery, but not for a question mark.” During the last 15 years of Msgr. DiGiovanni’s story, NAC was a house of question marks — and worse-than-question marks. The Catholic Church in America paid, and is paying, a heavy price for that season of deep confusion.

The North American College today is as solid a seminary as can be found in the world church: a happy house, filled with impressive young men and led by an outstanding faculty. NAC’s transformation from the confusion of the immediate two post-conciliar decades is due to a re-centering on first principles: a clarity about what the church teaches and why that teaching is important. These practices are both these prescriptions.

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Jennifer Miller reports:

“Truth in Charity” is Bishop Kevin Rhoades’ motto, and it has really cut to my heart,” Allison Sturm, Project Rachel Post-Abortion Healing Ministry specialist for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, explained to eighth-grade students at St. Joseph School, South Bend. “Yes, I was pro-life. But (with) the ugliness of the way I presented my views, I could have hurt people. I was convicted, but all the time I didn’t realize I was pushing people further and further away. I always felt that I spoke the truth, but not always in charity.”

Sturm traveled to the school on Jan. 17 to share her witness and her personal experience of being pro-life with the students, narrating how her friend and supervisor treated and spoke with her in a compassionate, kind and trusting manner, allowing her to recognize a more Christ-like option when speaking about pro-life issues — “Because how we say it matters,” she explained. Sturm added that her supervisor in the Office of Evangelization then asked her to lead the Project Rachel program in the diocese, which has helped her to grow, recognize and remember the humanity and pain caused by abortions — as well as the need for prayer and healing.

Project Rachel, the post-abortion healing ministry of the Catholic Church, first began in Milwaukee, Wis., in 1984, when Vicki Thorn noticed how many people, not just women who had the abortion, were affected and damaged by the choice. There were grandparents who had lost their grandchild, friends who had driven a friend to an abortion and fathers still mourning their deceased children. The program’s name comes from Scripture: Jeremiah 31:15 and Matthew 2:18, where Rachel is weeping loudly, mourning the loss of her children. Project Rachel programs and Rachel’s Vineyard retreats can be found today in over 110 dioceses across the United States.

Sturm recognized that for many of the middle school students she was speaking to, this might be their first time hearing about it, and she is aware that in the coming high school, college and young adult years they might meet, date or be friends with people who have been affected by abortion.

To learn how to speak the pro-life truth in charity is a valuable and realistic goal, she said. Also relevant is the fact that in 2014 30 percent of aborting women identified themselves as Protestant and 24 percent identified themselves as Catholic, according to the Guttmacher Institute, the former research arm of Planned Parenthood. Women aged 15-19 years old — teenagers — were 11.4 percent of the abortions in 2013, as reported from the Centers for Disease Control website.

Lastly, she encouraged the students’ preparation for the March for Life in South Bend Jan. 27. Sturm spoke of the joyous reality of people gathering and marching in Washington, D.C., to support the pro-life movement in America. And if given the opportunity to speak, she encouraged them to do so with “Truth in Charity.”

For more information about Project Rachel, visit www.hopeafterabortion.com.
WHAT’S HAPPENING

WHAT’S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. Submit your announcement at least two weeks prior to the event. View more Catholic events and submit yours at www.diocesefwsb.org/bulletin. Events that require an admission charge or payment to participate will receive one free listing. For additional listings of that event, please call our advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

Benefit supper for Hannah’s House
MISHAWAKA — The Knights of Columbus, Council No. 1678 will host a benefit spaghetti supper for Hannah’s House Maternity Home with a Heart on Friday, Feb. 24, from 5-7 p.m. at 114 W. Fourth St. Tickets are $8 for adults, $5 for children 5-12 and children under 5 eat free. This dinner helps care for pregnant mothers and newborn babies.

Interpreters to be at Mass
FORT WAYNE — An interpreter for the deaf and hard of hearing will be present for the 11:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Feb. 12, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne. Elizabeth Ann Seton Home and St. Vincent de Paul Parish will be serving breakfast Sunday, Feb. 12, at 7 a.m. followed by fellowship in the Guerin Chapel at 7:30 a.m. Guest speaker will be Dr. Lance Richey, dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences at University of Saint Francis speaking on the topic: “Of Profits and Prophets: Some Catholic Principles for Business Leaders.” Refreshments provided by Joe Brown with Rekindle the Fire.

Breakfasts at two parishes raise funds
FORT WAYNE — Saint Gaspar del Bufalo Council No. 11043 will be serving breakfast Sunday, Jan. 29, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the gymnasium at Most Precious Blood, 1515 Barthold St. and at Queen of Angels activities center, 1500 W. State Blvd. Prices are $8 for adults, $4 for children 6-12, and $20 per family. Carry-out will be available. Proceeds will benefit each parish.

End-of-Life Moral Decision-Making for Catholics
FORT WAYNE — One of the most important distinctions for end-of-life decision-making is between what is morally obligatory and what is morally optional. A panel question-and-answer discussion on end-of-life decisions is sponsored by the St. Vincent de Paul Parish Respect Life Committee Wednesday, Feb. 8, at 7 p.m. in the St. Vincent de Paul Parish Spiritual Center, 1502 E Wallen Rd. Panels include Dr. Katherine V. Sloane, MD, PhD, FACP, FACC, cardiologist with Lutheran Medical Group; Father Royce Gregerson, specialist in moral theology; and Jackie Stevens, NP at Heartland Homecare and Hospice Light refreshments will be served.

Annual action forum
FORT WAYNE — A Legislative Action Forum will be Saturday, Feb. 18, in Loewe 7 at Concordia College. Invited panelists are David Long, President Pro Temp of the Indiana Senate; Representative Ben Smaltz, Dist. 52, Chairman of the Public Policy Committee; Sue Swazey Liebel, Vice President for Public Affairs for Indiana Right to Life; and state legislators committed to advancing pro-life bills this session. Coffee, juice and donuts are provided. The event is free, but reservations are requested by Feb. 3 to Abigail at abigail@ichooselife.org or 260-471-1849.

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Trump executive order reinstates ‘Mexico City Policy’ on abortion

BY MARK PATTISON

WASHINGTON (CNS) — President Donald J. Trump issued an executive order Jan. 23 reinstating the “Mexico City Policy,” which bans all foreign nongovernmental organizations receiving U.S. funds from performing or promoting abortion as a method of family planning in other countries.

The action was hailed by pro-life leaders.

“President Trump is continuing Ronald Reagan’s legacy by taking immediate action on day one to stop the promotion of abortion through our tax dollars overseas,” said a Jan. 23 statement from Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List.

“President Trump’s immediate action to promote respect for all human life, including vulnerable unborn children abroad, as well as conscience rights, sends a strong signal about his administration’s pro-life priorities,” she said.

“By redirecting taxpayer dollars away from the international abortion industry, President Trump has reestablished life-affirming protections for unborn children and their mothers,” said a Jan. 23 statement by Rep. Chris Smith, R-New Jersey, co-chair of the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus. “There is political consensus that taxpayer dollars should not fund abortion and the abortion industry.”

“Now we see pro-life fruits of the election unfolding as President Trump has taken immediate action to reinstate President Reagan’s Mexico City Policy,” said Father Frank Pavone, head of Priests for Life, in a Jan. 23 statement. “Poll after poll shows that Americans do not want their tax money to pay for abortions. Stopping funding to foreign pro-abortion groups is a powerful first step toward doing the same domestically.”

Named for the city that hosted the U.N. International Conference on Population in 1984, where Reagan, then in his first term as president, unveiled it — the Mexico City Policy has been the textbook definition of a political football. Adopted by a Republican president, it has been rescinded when Democrats sat in the White House, only to be restored when Republicans claimed the presidency.

In 1995, President Bill Clinton’s revocation of the policy was made so quickly following his inauguration that some participants in the March for Life, conducted two days after the inauguration, carried “Impeach Clinton” signs.

Just as Clinton had rescinded the policy two days after taking office, so did President George W. Bush reinstate it two days into his presidency, expanding it to include all voluntary family planning activities. President Barack Obama rescinded the policy Jan. 23, 2009.

Court challenges to the policy resulted in rulings in 1987 and 1988 that limited its application to foreign NGOs.

The executive order “makes clear that Trump intends to carry out with his promised pro-life agenda. Taxpayer funding for abortions, whether here or overseas, is unpopular with voters and is plain wrong,” said a Jan. 23 statement by Ashley McGuire, a senior fellow with the Catholic Association.

“It amounts to subsidizing the violent victimization of women and children, in particular poor and minority women who feel they have no choice but to have an abortion,” McGuire said. “Redirecting those funds to health centers that offer women real choice and hope is the right policy moving forward.”

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump greets outgoing President Barack Obama before Trump’s Jan. 20 swearing-in as the country’s 45th president, at the U.S. Capitol in Washington.

U.S. President Donald J. Trump holds up his executive order reinstating the “Mexico City Policy” banning federal funding of abortion-providing groups abroad after he signed it Jan. 23 in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington.