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Nun says life has changed since she was healed thanks to JP II

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, France (CNS)—The French nun who believes she was healed of Parkinson's disease thanks to Pope John Paul II said her life had "totally changed" since that night two months after the pope's death.

Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre, 46, is working again, now in Paris at a maternity hospital operated by her order, the Little Sisters of Catholic Motherhood.

She met reporters on March 30 in Aix-en-Provence during a press conference with Archbishop Claude Feidt of Aix, the archdiocese where the cure took place.

"I was sick and now I am cured," she told reporters. "I am cured, but it is up to the Church to say whether it was a miracle or not."

However, she said, she knows she is well and that she must continue her work "to serve life and to serve the family."

Diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2001, she said that, while watching Pope John Paul deteriorate from the effects of Parkinson's disease, "I saw myself in the years to come."

Pope John Paul died on April 2, 2005, and as Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre's condition began to worsen, all the members of the Little Sisters of Catholic Motherhood in France and in Senegal began praying to

Pope John Paul to intervene with God to heal her.

By June 2, the religious has said, she was struggling to write, to walk and to function normally.

She said she went to bed that night and woke up very early the next morning feeling completely different.

"I was sure I was healed," she said.

In a March 29 statement, Archbishop Feidt said that after hearing about the alleged healing of Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre he decided to conduct "a thorough investigation" to determine whether it might be the miracle needed for Pope John Paul's beatification. In general, the Church must confirm two miracles through the intercession of the sainthood candidate before canonization.

The archbishop said the investigation took a year to complete.

The postulator of Pope John Paul's sainthood cause, Msgr. Slawomir Oder, said the investigation included testimony from theologians and canon lawyers, physicians, a psychiatrist and a handwriting expert since the legibility of a patient's handwriting is used as an indicator of the progress of Parkinson's disease.

Archbishop Feidt and Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre attended the April 2 ceremony



Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre, right, a member of the Little Sisters of Catholic Motherhood, attends a Mass marking the conclusion of the initial phase of the process for the canonization of Pope John Paul II at the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome on April 2. The French nun believes she was healed from Parkinson's disease through the intercession of Pope John Paul, who died on April 2, 2005. The healing could be the miracle needed for the late pope's beatification, a step on the way to sainthood.

in Rome marking the end of the diocesan phase of Pope John Paul's cause and the memorial that Mass Pope Benedict XVI celebrated to mark the second anniversary of his predecessor's death.

While in Rome, Archbishop Feidt delivered all the documentation regarding the nun's case to the Congregation for Saints' Causes, which will conduct its own investigation into the alleged healing. †

Signs of the Cross

We see the Cross
That crowns the hill,
The blood-stained sand—
It haunts us still.

Our stifled cries,
The pent-up tears,
Have stained the face
Of countless years.

Can minds suppress
Such wanton crime?
No, not as long
As earth holds time.

Our thoughts recoil,
Our shame prevails,
As eyes reflect
The glint of nails.

We hear the taunts
Of cruel men
As his bowed head
Lifts ours again.

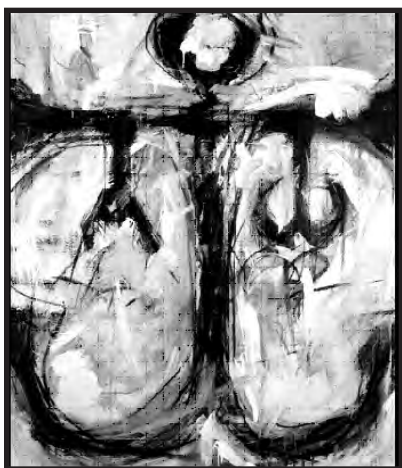
By Dorothy M. Colgan

(Dorothy M. Colgan is a member of St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad. Her son, Benedictine Father Tobias Colgan, a monk and prior of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, wrote music for this poem.)



On the cover: The Crucifixion is depicted in a stained-glass window at St. Mary of the Isle Church in Long Beach, N.Y. The Passion and Crucifixion are commemorated on Good Friday, which is April 6 this year.

Photo by Gregory A. Shemitz, Long Island Catholic



Anchor, 2007. Acrylic on Canvas

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Pope: John Paul's ministry, agony showed his love of Christ

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope John Paul II's intense pastoral ministry, "but even more, the Calvary of agony and the serene death of our beloved pope let all people of our age know that Jesus Christ really was his everything," Pope Benedict XVI said.

Pope Benedict marked the second anniversary of Pope John Paul's death by celebrating a memorial Mass on the evening of April 2 at St. Peter's Square.

The pope said his predecessor truly fit the biblical description of a "servant of God," which is the way the Church officially refers to him while "his process of beatification quickly progresses."

Pope Benedict, who had set aside the five-year waiting period usually required

before a sainthood cause begins, told tens of thousands of people in St. Peter's Square that the initial, diocesan phase of Pope John Paul's cause had concluded earlier in the day.

While the Church has not solemnly proclaimed Pope John

Paul a saint in heaven, Pope Benedict said he is certain that "our beloved John Paul II" continues to accompany the Church with his prayers.

At the same time, he offered prayers that Pope John Paul, "our father, brother and friend," would enjoy eternal rest and peace in the company of God.

The pope praised his predecessor's ability to share with the world his faith, hope and charity, even as Parkinson's disease gradually made it impossible for him to walk and, ultimately, to talk.

"Especially with the slow, but relentless progression of his illness, which little by little stripped him of everything, he made himself an offering to Christ, a living proclamation of his Passion, in a hope filled with faith in the Resurrection," Pope Benedict said.

"Like his divine master, he lived his agony in prayer," the pope said. "He died praying. Truly, he fell asleep in the Lord."

Sitting near the front of the crowd was Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre, the 46-year-old French nun who believes she was healed of Parkinson's disease through Pope John Paul's intervention.

Guy Murphy of the Chicago-based Totally Yours Pilgrimages was at the Mass with 45 pilgrims from the United States.

"We are big John Paul II fans," he said.

Murphy said he was not concerned that the Church was taking its time officially proclaiming the late pope a

saint—"sometimes it takes hundreds of years"—but he has no doubt that "John Paul is one of the greatest saints ever."

Earlier in the day, during a ceremony marked by prayers, song and formal oaths in Latin, officials of the Diocese of Rome concluded the initial phase of Pope John Paul's sainthood cause.

The process had included interviews with more than 120 people who knew Pope John Paul and a study of his ministry, the way he handled suffering and how he faced his death, said Cardinal Camillo Ruini, papal vicar of Rome.

"In the certainty of being loved by God and in the joy of responding to that love," the late pope "found the meaning, unity and aim of his life," Cardinal Ruini said during the prayer service at the Basilica of St. John Lateran.

The documents from the investigation were placed in five chests, latched, tied with a red ribbon then sealed with red wax. They will be delivered to the Congregation for Saints' Causes for further study.

"The pope suffered in his flesh and he suffered in his spirit, finding himself increasingly obliged to reduce his commitments," Cardinal Ruini said. His occasional "signs of impatience" were not the result of pain, but of his frustration at not being able to continue the ministry to which he felt called, the cardinal added.

Cardinal Ruini described Pope John Paul as a man of continuous, intense prayer, "concrete and radical poverty," and great freedom, which allowed him to stand up to Poland's communist government.

His love for God was lived as love for human beings, leading the pope to be an insistent voice for peace and for the defense of human life from conception to natural death, the cardinal said.

Celebrating a televised Mass early in the morning at Pope John Paul's tomb in St. Peter's Basilica, Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz of Krakow, Pope John Paul's personal secretary for almost 40 years, called the late pope an "extraordinary witness" of Christ.

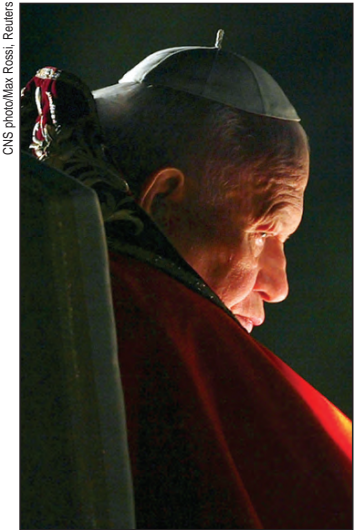
"John Paul II was a member of the friends of Jesus, that is, the group of saints. Membership in this group was what gave meaning and direction to his life, to all he did and said," Cardinal Dziwisz said.

"The people of God clearly recognize his sanctity," he said.

Cardinal Dziwisz and others have pointed out that Pope Benedict could beatify or even canonize Pope John Paul immediately, without waiting for the Congregation for Saints' Causes to conclude its work.

Portuguese Cardinal Jose Saraiva Martins, congregation prefect, said that unless or until he hears otherwise from the pope, the congregation will continue the process according to established Church law: first, studying the documentation gathered by the Diocese of Rome and assisting with the drafting of a "*positio*," or position paper, outlining how Pope John Paul heroically lived the Christian virtues.

The 15 cardinals and 15 bishops who are members of the congregation will study the "*positio*" and forward their opinion to the pope, he told the newspaper *La Repubblica*.



Pope John Paul II looks at the faithful gathered at the Colosseum during the traditional Via Crucis (Way of the Cross) Good Friday service in Rome in this April 18, 2003, file photo.



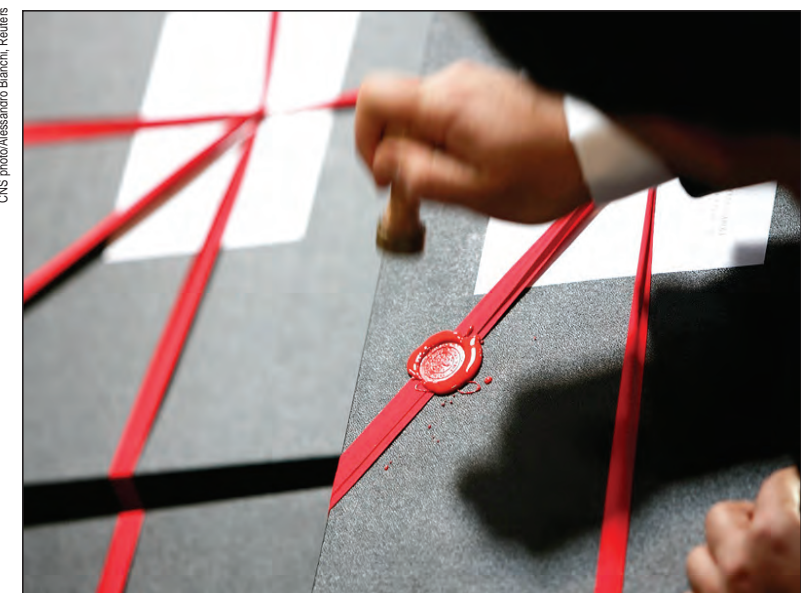
Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz of Krakow, Poland, prays at Pope John Paul II's tomb in the crypt under St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on April 2, the anniversary of the Polish pope's death. Cardinal Dziwisz served as Pope John Paul's personal secretary for nearly 40 years.

At the same time, he said, "an ad hoc commission of experts with scientists and physicians of every religious orientation, even nonbelievers," will be convoked to study the records and testimony collected in the case of Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre.

"It will be up to them to establish whether or not it is a healing that is scientifically inexplicable," the cardinal said. "Only in the light of this scientific

pronouncement will a later commission of cardinals declare whether it is a miracle that can be attributed to the intercession" of Pope John Paul.

A declaration of heroic virtues and recognition of a miracle usually are needed before beatification. In the usual process, canonization requires another miracle attributed to the candidate's intervention after the beatification. †



A worker seals boxes of documents after a Mass marking the conclusion of the initial phase of the process for the canonization of Pope John Paul II at the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome on April 2.



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Editorial



Tenth-grader Sidney Ragland plays the role of Jesus during St. Elizabeth High School's Stations of the Cross on March 28 at St. Elizabeth Parish in Oakland, Calif.

Stations of the Cross

We hope you will take time this Good Friday to meditate on the Passion and death of Jesus. You could use the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary as a guide or perhaps Jesus' seven last words. Or you could say the Way of the Cross. Here are a couple sentences on each station to get you started:

Station I: Jesus is condemned to death. The Gospels say that the Jewish leaders incited a crowd to pressure Pontius Pilate into condemning Jesus. But he was dying for our sins, and Jesus himself accepted his Father's plan for our salvation during his agony in the garden.

Station II: Jesus receives the cross. As Jesus is tied to the crossbeam of the cross, he already has blood trickling down his face from his head crowned with thorns, and his whole body has received a cruel scourging. Pilate had said, "Ecce homo!" ("Behold the man.") But look, too, at what we have done to our God.

Station III: Jesus falls the first time. With his arms tied to the crossbeam across his shoulders, Jesus can't even catch himself when he falls—and the Roman soldiers make sure he falls by giving him a little shove.

Station IV: Jesus meets his Blessed Mother. Imagine the anguish that Mary felt when she met Jesus in his pitiable condition, knowing that he was about to die a horrible death. And the torment for Jesus was increased when he saw how much his mother was suffering.

Station V: Simon helps Jesus carry the cross. This Cyrenian, forced to carry the cross when it appeared that Jesus might die before reaching Calvary, had no wish to do so. How long did he resent being forced to do this? We don't know. St. Mark simply says that his sons were Alexander and Rufus, apparently members of the Christian community.

Station VI: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus. Tradition has bequeathed us Veronica, a name that means "true image" because a likeness of Jesus remained on the towel she used. She is apparently a counterpart to the man who helped Jesus carry his cross.

Station VII: Jesus falls the second

time. Jesus falls again in a narrow street of Jerusalem where thousands of people are busy preparing for Passover.

Station VIII: Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem. At least some of the people are aware of what is happening and are sad. Jesus tells them, "Don't weep for me, but for yourselves and for your children." He calls for true repentance.

Station IX: Jesus falls the third time. Let's remember who is falling: His nature was divine, but he did not cling to his equality with God. Jesus humbled himself to become a man and, taking on human nature, he accepted death on a cross.

Station X: Jesus is stripped of his garments. This is still another humiliation inflicted by the Romans, stripping him naked before crucifying him.

Station XI: Jesus is nailed to the cross. Pinned immobile in a terrible position, legs bent so he could push himself up to breathe, Jesus is nailed to the cross like a mere thing. As the soldiers do their work, Jesus prays, "Father, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing."

Station XII: Jesus dies on the cross and redeems the world. While hanging there, Jesus thinks of others. He assures one of the men crucified with him that he will be with him in paradise, and he ensures that his mother will be taken care of. Then he prays Psalm 22 ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"), and says that he thirsts. Only then does he say, "It is finished," the task his Father gave to him. With the words "Into your hands I commend my spirit," he dies.

Station XIII: Jesus is taken down from the cross. Mary receives Jesus' body into her arms as she did in that stable in Bethlehem.

Station XIV: Jesus is laid in the tomb. In a tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea, Jesus' body is hastily laid to rest. Jesus, a human like us and the Son of God, has conquered death with death.

— John F. Fink

Parish Diary/Father Peter J. Daly

Going green to become better stewards of creation

Our parish is going green. Not just for St. Patrick's Day. Not just for spring. We are going green for good.



This Lent, we took on a new spiritual discipline. In addition to the usual disciplines, we are trying to become better stewards of God's creation.

It is something that is long overdue—for the Church and for our society.

This year, our parish council set up a committee to look at all aspects of our parish life in relation to the environment. I had read about a parish in Michigan that set up a similar committee. They even started producing wind power and using solar panels to heat water.

We are an average-size Catholic parish for my diocese with about 1,100 families and around 3,300 people. We are not "Big Foot" in our environmental impact, but we are nonetheless significant.

Our activities generate a lot of trash. We fill a dumpster every week. We use hundreds of Styrofoam cups and plates every week. Our five buildings use thousands of dollars worth of electricity and heating fuel every month. Sometimes we overheat and overuse air-conditioning.

We have run-off water from our parking lots, lawns and fields that pollute the local watershed. We could cut down on fertilizer. We have a lot of land in forest and wetlands (over 60 acres). We could plant more trees and protect the ones we already have.

I do not think we are major polluters, but we are typical Americans. And being typical Americans means we use more of the earth's resources than most people.

It is time for us to do something to counter this.

So we put together a committee of parishioners who have a concern for the environment and real expertise. The chairman, Dr. Bob Ulanowicz, is a well-known biologist.

We gave them a commission that includes

some short-term and long-term tasks:

- They are to look into ways to reduce our energy consumption and thereby our carbon "footprint" (including our vehicles).
- They are to address recycling of paper and other waste, and explore ways to avoid generating any nonbiodegradable waste.
- They are looking for alternatives to chemical fertilizers, and ways to preserve our wetlands and forest lands.
- For the long term, they will recommend changes to our heating and cooling plants. We might even put in solar panels to heat water and exhaust vents to cool buildings.

We will look at ways of educating the parish to be better stewards of the environment. One suggestion we already have is to sell canvas tote bags to parishioners so we don't have to use so many plastic bags at the store.

Why should a Catholic parish do this? Our theology tells us about our relationship to nature. While Genesis says that we should "fill the earth and subdue it" (Gn 1:28), we do not have a license to ruin it. Each of us is just "passing through" this earth. Our true home is in the next life. That makes us the "stewards" (temporary custodians) of the environment, not the "masters" (owners) of creation.

So we are going to try our best to go green.

There are some folks who are disturbed by this, but not many. Most parishioners see the wisdom and the necessity of being better stewards.

One happy bonus of going green is that it will save some green. Just adjusting our thermostats and replacing incandescent light bulbs with cool fluorescent bulbs will save a few thousand dollars in the first year.

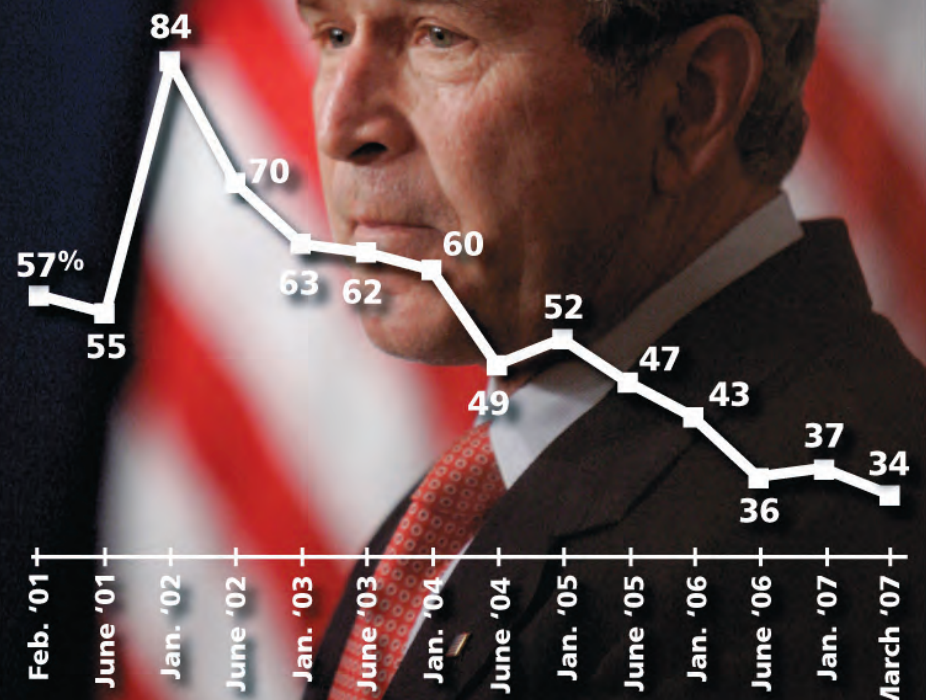
From now on, our parish is wearing green.

(Father Peter Daly writes for Catholic News Service.) †

Church Facts

Declining Approval

Percent of American adults who say they approve of the way Bush is handling his job...



Source: Gallup Poll

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ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO DANIEL M. BUECHLEIN, O.S.B.



SEEKING THE FACE OF THE LORD

BUSCANDO LA CARA DEL SEÑOR

Easter is the pre-eminent feast of hope

Once again, we sing with Easter gusto, "The strife is o'er, the battle won." Yet much will seem the same on Easter Monday.

Easter faith lifts our spirit, but Easter faith is also perplexing. We are born of mother earth, and we bury each other in mother earth.

We are too much a part of the earth to want to leave her, yet as someone once said: "The earth bears us with infinite hearts, and alas, what she gives us is too beautiful for us to scorn and too poor to satisfy us fully" Mother earth brings forth both life and death, not one without the other.

We call this mixture of life and death, of joy and sorrow, of exciting activity and tiresome duty, the stuff of everyday life. We at once love it, and yet we want something more.

We long for something that makes us more than sisters and brothers in pain and suffering and in moments of joy that pass too quickly. We want a sisterhood and brotherhood that is something more than a passing dream; we want it to be down-to-earth and lasting.

A person named Jesus, the Son of God and also a child of this earth, revealed a Father, a Father like no other father, whose love mysteriously surpasses our passing experience of love. He gave us a mother, the Church, filled with the Spirit

of life and from whose womb in baptism all of us are reborn to a life that will never end.

The suffering and death which God asked of his own Son gives us the only key that helps us make sense of the human tragedy that is all around us.

Once more, we trace the Holy Week path of an innocent son of the earth who was betrayed by a friend, and then forced to die the humiliating and excruciating death of a criminal. And once more, we emerge from Holy Week rejoicing because we remember we have been saved from sin and death. Alleluia!

Over and over again, I remind us that our Church clings to the tradition of displaying the cross with the image of the body of Jesus on it. We keep the tradition of venerating the crucifix, and not only the plain cross. This tradition is not a denial of the victory of Jesus over death, and it is not a displacement of the Resurrection in Christian life.

The crucifix is not a sign of death, it is a sign of life because it is always viewed with the glow of the Resurrection around that body born of earth like our own.

We want to be reminded that a real human person stretched out his arms on the cross and suffered so deeply because he loves us. Our crucifixes embrace a down-to-earth Christian realism about life and death and resurrection, and they strike

a chord in our human experience.

Even during Easter week, we face the Christian reality that our salvation was won through real sweat and blood, suffering of the most unbearable kind. We are saved by a suffering love. And yes, we need to remember even now that the worst sting of all for Jesus was the betrayal by "one of his own."

I say this to reach out to those among us who bear more than their share of human suffering. The love of Jesus is for every one of us, and not just for a few. Most important of all, he showed us that life does not end when we are returned to the earth.

Easter is the feast of hope. For those who face death with fear, Jesus showed once and for all that in death, life is merely changed, not taken away. This life as we know it is only the vestibule to something more beautiful.

Yet it is true, we do not understand birth and death, we do not understand rebirth and resurrection. Like Peter, as he stooped to look into the empty tomb, we can only be amazed. So Easter is a sacred feast of happy faith and firm hope. Easter

is the pre-eminent feast of hope! For those who face death with fear, Jesus showed once and for all that in death, life is changed and not taken away.

Once more with peaceful hearts, we thank God for the gift of our Easter faith! Thank God for the gift of his own Son and for Christ's Easter victory! We thank God for the gift of our Church, which carries forward the Easter mystery in the life of the sacraments and our community of faith even in the midst of suffering that will pass away.

God bless you and yours with the happiest Easter ever! †

Do you have an intention for Archbishop Buechlein's prayer list? You may mail it to him at:

Archbishop Buechlein's
Prayer List
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
P.O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

Archbishop Buechlein's intention for vocations for April

Priests: that they may joyfully and faithfully live out their priestly promises and encourage other men to embrace God's call to the priesthood.

La Pascua es la festividad de esperanza más importante

Una vez más cantamos con entusiasmo pascual: "La lucha ha terminado, la batalla se ha ganado." Y sin embargo, muchas cosas parecerán seguir su curso el Lunes de Pascua.

La fe de la Pascua eleva nuestros espíritus, pero la fe pascual también es desconcertante. Nacemos de la madre tierra y en ella se nos entierra.

Formamos parte de la tierra a tal punto que no deseamos abandonarla, sin embargo, como dijo alguien alguna vez: "La tierra nos alberga con corazones infinitos, y ¡ay!, lo que nos entrega es demasiado hermoso como para despreciarlo y muy poco para satisfacernos por completo..." La Madre tierra nos ofrece la vida y la muerte, no la una sin la otra.

Esta mezcla de vida y muerte, de alegría y dolor, de actividades emocionantes y deberes tediosos la llamamos cotidianidad. En principio nos encanta, y sin embargo, deseamos algo más.

Anhelamos algo que nos haga más que hermanos y hermanas en el dolor y el sufrimiento, al igual que en los efímeros momentos de alegría. Deseamos una hermandad y una fraternidad que sea más que un sueño pasajero; deseamos que sea realista y duradero.

Una persona llamada Jesús, el Hijo de Dios y también el hijo de esta tierra, develó a un Padre, un Padre como no hay otro, cuyo amor sobrepasa misteriosamente nuestra experiencia pasajera del amor. Él nos entregó una madre, la Iglesia, repleta del espíritu de la vida y de cuyo vientre renacemos todos en

el bautismo a una vida que no tendrá fin.

El sufrimiento y muerte que Dios le pidió a su propio Hijo nos proporcionan la única clave que nos ayuda a dar sentido a la tragedia humana que nos rodea.

Una vez más, recorremos en Semana Santa el camino de un hijo inocente de la tierra que sufrió la traición de un amigo y luego se le obligó a sufrir la muerte humillante y tormentosa de un criminal. Y una vez más emergemos de la Semana Santa regocijándonos porque recordamos que hemos sido salvados del pecado y de la muerte. ¡Aleluia!

Una y otra vez recuerdo a todos que nuestra Iglesia se aferra a la tradición de mostrar la cruz con la imagen del cuerpo de Jesús en ella. Mantenemos la tradición de venerar el crucifijo, y no simplemente la cruz. Esta tradición no supone la negación de la victoria de Jesús sobre la muerte, y no se trata de un desplazamiento de la Resurrección en la vida cristiana.

El crucifijo no es un símbolo de muerte, es un símbolo de vida porque se le ve siempre con el resplandor de la Resurrección en torno a ese cuerpo que nació de la tierra, al igual que los nuestros.

Queremos que se nos recuerde que una persona humana real extendió sus brazos sobre la cruz y sufrió tan intensamente porque nos ama. Nuestros crucifijos representan un realismo cristiano sensato sobre la vida y la resurrección, y tocan una fibra sensible en nuestra experiencia humana.

Aun durante la semana de la Pascua nos confrontamos con la realidad cristiana de que nuestra salvación fue

obtenida por medio de sudor y sangre reales, por un sufrimiento inimaginable. Somos salvos por un amor doliente. Y ciertamente debemos recordar, aun en estos momentos, que el peor latigazo que recibió Jesús fue la traición de "uno de los suyos."

Digo esto para todos aquellos que llevan a cuestas una carga de sufrimiento humano muy pesada. El amor de Jesús es para todos nosotros, no para unos pocos. Y lo más importante: él nos demostró que la vida no se acaba cuando volvemos a la tierra.

La Pascua es la festividad de la esperanza. Para aquellos que se enfrentan a la muerte con temor, Jesús demostró definitivamente que por medio de la muerte la vida simplemente cambia, no desaparece. Esta vida que conocemos es simplemente la antesala de algo mucho más hermoso.

Y sin embargo, es cierto, no entendemos el nacimiento y la muerte, no entendemos el renacimiento y la resurrección. Al igual que Pedro mientras se inclinaba para mirar en la tumba vacía, nosotros tan solo podemos maravillarnos. Así, la Pascua es una festividad sagrada de fe gozosa y firme esperanza. ¡La Pascua es la fiesta de esperanza más importante! Para aquellos que se enfrentan a la muerte con temor,

Jesús demostró definitivamente que por medio de la muerte la vida simplemente cambia, no desaparece.

Una vez más con corazones serenos, ¡le damos gracias a Dios por el obsequio de nuestra fe pascual! ¡Gracias a Dios por el obsequio de su propio Hijo y por la victoria pascual de Cristo! Le damos gracias a Dios por el obsequio de nuestra Iglesia que transmite el misterio pascual en la vida de los sacramentos y nuestra comunidad de fe, aun en medio del sufrimiento que también pasará.

¡Que Dios los bendiga a todos con la Pascua más alegre! †

¿Tiene una intención que desee incluir en la lista de oración del Arzobispo Buechlein? Puede enviar su correspondencia a:

Lista de oración del Arzobispo
Buechlein
Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
P.O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

Traducido por: Language Training Center, Indianapolis

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en abril

Sacerdotes: ¡Que ellos realicen sus promesas como sacerdotes con júbilo y fe y den ánimo a otros hombres para que contesten la llamada de Dios al sacerdocio!

Events Calendar

April 6

Calvary Cemetery, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Way of the Cross**, noon, Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, president, with Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Honor Guard. Information: 317-574-8898.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Way of the Cross**, 2 p.m., Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, president, with Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Honor Guard. Information: 317-574-8898.

American Legion Plaza, North Street between Meridian and Pennsylvania streets, Indianapolis. Indianapolis Chapter of the Knights of Columbus, **Outdoor Way of the Cross**, noon. Information: 317-445-6701.

St. Mary Parish, 212 Washington St., North Vernon. Parish youth ministry presentation of **"The Living Way of the Cross,"** 2 p.m. Information: 812-346-1863.

St. Mary Church, 415 E. Eighth St., New Albany. **Outdoor Via Crucis**, 7 p.m. Information: 502-494-3264.

St. Athanasius the Great Byzantine Church, 1117 Blaine Ave., Indianapolis. **Burial vespers**, 7 p.m. Information: 317-632-4157.

April 7

St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis. Men's Club sponsors **Easter egg hunt**, 9:30 a.m. Information: 317-291-7014.

St. Athanasius the Great Byzantine Church, 1117 Blaine Ave., Indianapolis. **Resurrection Matins**, 8 p.m. Information: 317-632-4157.

April 8

St. Athanasius the Great Byzantine Church, 1117 Blaine Ave., Indianapolis. **Pascha Sunday**, 10 a.m. Information: 317-632-4157.

MKVS and DM Center, Rexville (located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South, 12 miles south of Versailles). **Mass**, 2 p.m., Father Elmer Burwinkel, celebrant. Information: 812-689-3551.

April 10

Terre Haute Deanery Pastoral

Center, 2931 Ohio Blvd., Terre Haute. **Eight-week support sessions, "Divorce and Beyond,"** 6:30-8:30 p.m., \$10 per person. Registration: 812-232-8400 or sue@thdeanery.org.

April 11

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Evening of Dining and Laughter, "Live, Laugh and Be Blessed,"** St. Joseph Sister Anne Bryan Smollin, presenter, Chef Tony Hanslits, dinner 6:30 p.m., speaker 7:45 p.m., \$40 per person. Information: 317-545-7681.

St. Athanasius the Great Byzantine Church, 1117 Blaine Ave., Indianapolis. **Ancient Healing and Paraklis Service**, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 317-632-4157.

Terre Haute Deanery Pastoral Center, 2931 Ohio Blvd., Terre Haute. **Eight-week support sessions, "Grief support for children,"** 6:30-7:30 p.m., no charge. Registration: 812-232-8400 or sue@thdeanery.org.

April 12

St. Paul the Apostle Church, 202 E. Washington St., Greencastle. **"Theology of the Body,"** Father Jonathan Meyer and Margaret Hendricks, presenters, pitch-in dinner, 6 p.m., presentation, 6:30 p.m. Information: 765-653-7789.

St. Athanasius the Great Byzantine Church, St. Mary Hall, 1117 Blaine Ave., Indianapolis. **Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Central Indiana**, praise, worship and healing prayers, 7:15-8:45 p.m. Information: 317-592-1992, www.inholyspirit.org or e-mail ccrci@inholyspirit.org.

Spalding University, 851 S. Fourth St., Louisville, Ky. Book signing and lecture, **"The Altruism Equation: Seven Scientists Search for the Origins of Goodness,"** 7:30 p.m., Dr. Lee Alan Dugatkin, author and presenter. Information: 502-585-9911 or www.spalding.edu.

April 12-14

Roncalli High School, Performing Arts Center, 3300 Prague Road, Indianapolis. **"Beauty and the Beast,"** Thurs. and Fri.

7 p.m., Sat. 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., \$7 per person, \$3 students. Information: 317-787-8277, ext. 249.

Marian College, Allen Whitehall Clowes Amphitheatre, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. **"How Zebra Got Her Stripes and Other African Folktales,"** 8 p.m., \$3 per person. Information: 317-955-6588.

April 13

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Lumen Dei meeting**, Mass, 6:30 a.m., breakfast and program at Priori Hall, \$10 members, \$15 guests. Information: 317-919-5316 or e-mail Lumen_Dei@sbcglobal.net.

St. Mark the Evangelist Church, 535 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. **Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Central Indiana**, teaching, 7 p.m., followed by praise, worship and Mass. Information: 317-592-1992, www.inholyspirit.org or e-mail ccrci@inholyspirit.org.

April 14

Marian College, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. **Right to Life, "Bike Hike,"**

registration, 7-8:30 a.m. Information: 317-582-1526 or e-mail bikeandhike@rtlindy.org.

Sisters of St. Francis, Michaela Farm, Oldenburg. **HERP Walk**, 9 a.m.-noon, donations appreciated, pre-registration required. Information: 812-933-0661 or e-mail michaelafarm@seidata.com.

April 15

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Chastity seminar for junior high and high school students**, Jason Everett, presenter, Mass, 5 p.m., presentation, 6:30 p.m. Information: 317-634-4519.

St. Mary School, gymnasium, 420 E. Eighth St., New Albany. **Health Fair for Spanish-speaking people**, no charge, 3-5 p.m. Information: 812-948-6730 or kangevine@fmhhs.com.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Bede Theater, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. Indianapolis Opera Ensemble, **"Little Red Walking Hood,"** 3 p.m. Information: 812-357-6501. †

Regular Events

Second Mondays

Church at Mount St. Francis. Holy Hour for vocations to priesthood and religious life, 7 p.m.

Second Tuesdays

St. Pius X Parish, 7200 Sarto Drive, Indianapolis. **Support Group for Separated and Divorced Catholics**, 7 p.m. Information: Archdiocesan Office of Family Ministries, 317-236-1596 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1596.

Second Thursdays

St. Luke the Evangelist Church, 7575 Holliday Drive E., Indianapolis. **Holy Hour** for priestly and religious vocations, 7 p.m. Information: 317-259-4373.

Oaklawn Memorial Gardens, Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Chapel, 9700 Allisonville Road, Indianapolis. **Monthly Mass** (except December), 2 p.m. Information: 317-849-3616.

Second Fridays

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Lumen Dei meeting**, Mass, 6:30 a.m., breakfast in Priori Hall, \$10 members, \$15 guests. Information: 317-919-5316.

Second Saturdays

St. Agnes Parish, Brown County Public Library, Nashville. Brown County Widowed **Support Group**, 3 p.m. Information and directions: 812-988-2778 or 812-988-4429.

Third Sundays

Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd.,

E. Drive, Indianapolis. **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**, 2 p.m.-7 a.m. Monday, rosary, 8 p.m. Open until midnight.

Knights of Columbus Hall, Mater Dei Council #437, 1305 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis. **Breakfast buffet**, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., adults \$5, children under 12, \$2.50. Information: 317-631-4373.

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Church of the Immaculate Conception, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Mass**, 11 a.m., sign-interpreted. Information: 812-535-3131, ext. 434.

Third Tuesdays

St. Francis Medical Clinic, 110 N. 17th Ave., Suite 300, Beech Grove. **Chronic pain support group**, 7-8 p.m. Information: 317-831-1177.

Third Wednesdays

Holy Name of Jesus Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Holy Hour** and rosary, 6 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454.

St. Francis Home Health, 438 S. Emerson Ave., Greenwood. **Cancer support group meeting**, 6-8 p.m. Information: 317-257-1505.

St. Francis Hospital, 1201 Hadley Road, Mooresville. **Cancer support group meeting**, 6-8 p.m. Information: 317-257-1505.

Mary, Queen of Peace Church, Blessed Sacrament Chapel, 1005 W. Main St., Danville. **Divine Mercy Chaplet**, 7 p.m. Information: 317-745-5640.

St. Jude Church, 5353 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **Rosary**, 6:15 p.m. Information: 317-783-1445. †

Submitted photo



Hispanic Health Fair

Sivestre Carillo, a member of St. Mary Parish in New Albany, has his blood drawn for a blood sugar and cholesterol test during a health fair for Spanish-speaking people held in March 2006 at the St. Mary School gymnasium in New Albany. This year's health fair for Spanish-speaking people will take place from 3-5 p.m. on April 15 at the gymnasium. Representatives of 30 health care organizations from southern Indiana and northern Kentucky will staff booths at the health fair. Admission is free.

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Minimum wage bill passes in House, awaits Senate panel vote

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

A bill to raise Indiana's minimum wage from \$5.15 per hour to \$7.50 per hour by September 2008 passed the Indiana House by a 71-29 vote and awaits approval by a Senate panel.

House Bill 1027, authored by Rep. John Day (D-Indianapolis), would raise Indiana's minimum hourly wage in three stages. The wage would increase to \$6 per hour on Sep. 1, 2007, \$6.75 per hour on March 1, 2008, and \$7.50 per hour on Sept. 1, 2008.

The bill, which received a hearing on March 28 by the Senate Pensions and Labor Committee, drew a large crowd of supporters and opponents.

In a letter, Rep. Day gave the 11 members of the Senate Pensions and Labor Committee two reasons why they should support the minimum wage bill.

"If Indiana's wage rates had kept up with the rate of inflation over the past 20 years, it would be \$8.50 per hour," he wrote.

Rep. Day also told panel members that it's not just young people working for spending money who are primarily minimum wage earners. A 1998 report by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) said that nationally 36 percent of minimum wage workers are ages 16-19. Sixty percent are adults, and 40 percent of those are the sole wage earner of the family.

"This group should be our focus," Rep. Day wrote.

Glenn Tebbe, Indiana Catholic Conference executive director, testified before the Senate panel in support of the bill. "The Indiana Catholic Conference supports an increase in the minimum wage as a matter of justice for the worker and the family," he said. "The principle of a just wage is integral to our understanding



Glenn Tebbe

of human work. Wages should be adequate for workers to provide for themselves and their families in dignity."

Beth Mickelson, public policy and legislative specialist for the Children's Bureau Inc., who also testified in support of the bill, said, "An increase in the minimum wage has a real benefit for families living in poverty, which directly affects the well-being of children. Twenty-two percent, or 49,638, of all Hoosier workers have incomes which put them below the federal poverty rate. This is simply not acceptable for working families.

"What's even more staggering and upsetting is the U.S. has the second highest child poverty rate in the world among developed nations," Mickelson said. "The only nation which has a

higher child poverty rate is Mexico."

More than a dozen groups testified in support of the minimum wage bill, including a representative from the Gary chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Lindsey Mintz of the Jewish Community Relations Council and a retired member of the United Auto Workers.

Opponents to the bill, including Rep. Matt Bell, who testified against the bill in both the House and Senate, believe those receiving the minimum wage are

typically teens who work so they can have spending money.

Rep. Bell said that raising the minimum wage will only hurt small businesses, causing some to close, thus eliminating the jobs for people that the bill is trying to help. A representative from the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and one from the Indiana Manufacturers Association also testified against the bill.

But Tebbe told Senate panel members, "Information provided by [the] census survey of 2006 shows minimum wage

earners are not only teenagers. Nearly half, or 48 percent, of minimum wage earners are the household's chief bread winner, meaning that no higher paid family members live with them."

The federal minimum wage bill has also passed the U.S. House of Representatives and is awaiting passage in the U.S. Senate. The federal bill would raise the minimum wage in three phases, up to \$7.25 per hour by 2009.

Tebbe explained that even if the federal minimum wage is raised, it does not cover thousands of workers in Indiana who do not fall under the federal law.

"Indiana needs to set its minimum at a reasonable level to ensure that workers and their families are given the opportunity to access what is needed for one's material, social and spiritual well-being," Tebbe said.

Indiana currently has about 1.8 million hourly wage earners. About two percent, or 36,000, of them, make \$5.15 per hour or less.

Rep. Day concluded his letter to Senate panel members by saying, "Those who most need the increase cannot hire a lobbyist to make their case. They are depending on us."

Bills must be passed out of committee by April 4 to advance this session.

(Brigid Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †

'What's even more staggering and upsetting is the U.S. has the second highest child poverty rate in the world among developed nations. The only nation which has a higher child poverty rate is Mexico.'

— Beth Mickelson

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Call (317) 545-7681 to register!

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House
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www.archindy.org/fatima



Divine Mercy services are scheduled in archdiocese

Criterion staff report

Divine Mercy Sunday services reported to *The Criterion* are scheduled on April 15 in 11 locations throughout the archdiocese. All the prayer services are open to the public.

- St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis—2 p.m. eucharistic adoration; 3 p.m. Divine Mercy chaplet, sermon, eucharistic procession and Benediction, Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general, presider, with Father Varghese Maliakkal, parish administrator. Information: 317-926-7359.
- Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd., East Drive, Indianapolis—2 p.m. eucharistic adoration; 3 p.m. prayer service, Divine Mercy chaplet and eucharistic procession, Father Tony Volz, pastor, presider. Information: 317-255-3666.
- St. Augustine Home for the Aged Chapel, 2345 W. 86th St., Indianapolis—2:30 p.m. prayer service, litany, music and Benediction, Deacon Patrick Gallagher of St. Patrick Parish in Lebanon, Ind., presider. Information: 317-872-6420.
- St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Church, 23455 Gavin Lane, Bright—3 p.m. holy hour and Divine Mercy chaplet, Father William Marks, pastor, presider. Information: 812-656-8700.
- St. Bartholomew Church, Home Avenue and U.S. 31, Columbus—3 p.m. eucharistic adoration,

Divine Mercy chaplet, Divine Praises, veneration and blessing of Divine Mercy image, and Benediction, Father Clem Davis, pastor, presider. Information: 812-379-9353.

- St. Michael Church, 519 Jefferson Blvd., Greenfield—noon, eucharistic adoration, 3 p.m. prayer service and Divine Mercy chaplet, Benedictine Father Severin Messick, pastor, presider, pitch-in dinner following prayer service. Information: 317-462-4240.
- Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood—3:30 p.m. prayer service, Msgr. Mark Svarczkopf, pastor, presider, refreshments following service. Information: 317-888-2861.
- MKVS and Divine Mercy Center, Rexville, located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South and 12 miles south of Versailles—Covenant Sunday, 11 a.m. Divine Mercy Field Mass followed by holy hour, Father Elmer Burwinkel, celebrant. Information: 812-689-3551.
- St. Andrew Church, 235 S. 5th St., Richmond—12:30 p.m. reconciliation, 1 p.m., eucharistic adoration, 2:30 p.m. prayer service, Father Todd Riebe, pastor, presider. Information: 765-886-5503.
- St. Joseph Church, 2605 St. Joe Road West, Sellersburg—2:30 p.m. eucharistic adoration, reconciliation, Divine Mercy chaplet and Benediction, Conventual Franciscan Father John Curran, pastor, presider. Information: 212-246-2252.
- St. Nicholas Church, 6461 E. St. Nicholas Drive,



Sunman—3 p.m. eucharistic adoration, Divine Mercy chaplet and litany, Father Gregory Bramlage, pastor, presider. Information: 812-623-2964 or 812-623-8007. †

Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, archdiocesan vicar general, and several members of the Knights of Columbus process into St. Michael the Archangel Church in Indianapolis on April 3, 2005—the day after the death of Pope John Paul II—for the start of a Divine Mercy Sunday prayer service at the Indianapolis West Deanery parish.

Pope asks young people not to lose sight of ‘question of God’

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Celebrating Palm Sunday Mass at the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI asked young people not to let the question of God drift out of their lives.

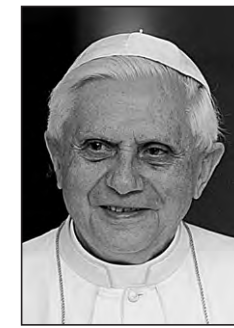
The pope opened Holy Week with a procession and liturgy in St. Peter's Square on April 1, blessing palms and olive branches in memory of Christ's triumphal

entry into Jerusalem a few days before his death.

Dressed in red and gold vestments, the pope carried a braided palm as he walked along the cobbled square at the head of a long line of cardinals, bishops and priests. The choir sang a "Hosanna," evoking the acclamation of the people of Jerusalem when Jesus arrived in the

holy city.

Some 50,000 people crowded into the sunlit square and applauded the pope, who turns 80 on April 16. It was the start of the year's busiest period of papal liturgies.



Pope Benedict XVI

In his sermon, the pope said Palm Sunday poses an important question for Christians of all ages: "What does it mean, in concrete terms, to 'follow Christ?'"

If for Christ's disciples it meant giving up their professions and physically accompanying Christ through the Holy Land, for modern Christians it is a call to an interior change, he said.

"It involves the fundamental decision to no longer consider efficiency and profit, career and success as the ultimate purpose of my life, but to recognize instead truth and love as the authentic criteria," he said.

In short, self-realization ceases to be the most important thing in life, he said.

Addressing young people in particular, the pope looked to the liturgy's processional psalm, which he said suggested two important conditions for those who wish to follow Christ.

First, he said, they must ask themselves about God. "Dear young friends, how important this is today: not to simply let oneself be drawn here and there in life, not to be satisfied with what everyone thinks and says and does," he said.

The important thing is to "look around oneself in search of God" and not allow the question of God to "dissolve in our souls," he said.

The second condition mentioned in the psalm, the pope said, was to have "innocent hands and pure hearts."

"Innocent hands are hands that are not used for acts of violence. They are hands that are not dirtied by corruption or bribes," he said.

Pure hearts, the pope said, are those that "do not simulate and are not stained with lies and hypocrisy."

The pope said the events of Holy Week underline how Christ opened the doors for those who would follow him through the ages—including those who feel indifferent or closed to God.

In effect, the pope said, Jesus on the cross says to all people: If you have trouble seeing God in creation or accepting the message of the Church, then "look at me ... and see that I am suffering for your love. Open yourselves to me and to God the Father."

He noted that many today do follow Christ, often giving up easy lifestyles in order to give themselves totally to those who suffer or opposing with courage and truth the "violence and lies" of the world.

Palm Sunday also marked the Church's celebration of World Youth Day in most countries, and at the end of the liturgy the pope delivered greetings to young people in seven languages. Each salutation prompted a round of cheering, chanting, applause and flag-waving.

"May the great events of Holy Week, in which we see love unfold in its most radical form, inspire you to be courageous witnesses of charity for your friends, your communities and our world," the pope said in English.

On his way back to his papal apartment, he rode in an open Jeep through the vast crowd, waving to pilgrims. †



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This tapestry of the Resurrection of Christ is on display at the Vatican Museum in Rome. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

'My Lord and my God'—The Apostle Thomas tells his story

By John F. Fink

My original name was Judas, but I'm never called that. Usually, I'm called Thomas, which comes from the Aramaic word for "twin," or "*Didymus*," the Greek word for "twin."

The reason I'm not called Judas is probably obvious because of the notoriety of Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Our Lord. Besides, there was another Apostle who was also called Judas.

Unfortunately, I'm well aware of the fact that I'm also referred to as "doubting Thomas," and I'll get to that later. In fact, the reason I'm writing this is at least partially to give my side of the story.

Yes, I am one of the Apostles that Jesus named. (I almost said that I'm proud to be an Apostle, but I'm trying to learn humility.) Frankly, when Jesus included me among the 12 it took me by surprise. I had been a friend of Simon, now called Peter, as well as his brother, Andrew, and also James and John, but I never expected to be named an Apostle.

It was Peter who first told me about Jesus and the wonders he was performing. So I became one of his disciples, determined to learn as much as possible from this holy man. I began to follow him around Galilee as he preached about the kingdom of God.

Honestly, I was amazed at some of the miracles he performed. I wouldn't have believed them if I hadn't seen them for myself. I guess that has always been one of my traits. I simply have to see something for myself in order to believe it.

In time, I became one of Jesus' most enthusiastic followers. Just as an example of what I mean, there was the time when Lazarus died. Lazarus was a great friend of Jesus. He lived in Bethany, only a couple of miles from Jerusalem, with his sisters, Martha and Mary.

When Lazarus died in Bethany, we happened to be a couple of days' journey away on the eastern side of the Jordan River. We had fled there from Jerusalem after some of the Jewish leaders tried to stone Jesus for blasphemy, and we knew that some of them wanted to kill him.

But when Jesus got the word that Lazarus had died, he was determined to return. He was planning to raise him from the dead, but we didn't know that at the time. Nevertheless, when Jesus said that we were going to return to Judea and some of the other Apostles protested, I spoke up and said, "Let us also go to die with him."

CNS photo of painting/Crossiers



The Gospels describe Jesus inviting the Apostle Thomas and others to touch his wounds. Later, appearing to the Apostles at the Sea of Galilee, Jesus eats fish with them to prove that he is not a mirage. After the Resurrection, the Apostle Thomas devoted the rest of his life to teaching people in India about Jesus.

Well, Jesus didn't die on that trip, but it wasn't long after that time that he was arrested, suffered a horrible Passion, was crucified and died. I'm quite sure that you already know all about that.

And what was I doing during that time? I'm sorry to have to admit that I wasn't as courageous as I thought. Far from going to die with him, I went into hiding. Jesus was arrested in the garden at Gethsemane, where we frequently slept at night when we were in Jerusalem, and I and the other Apostles just scattered.

We reassembled back in the house where we had celebrated the Passover earlier on the night that Jesus was arrested. (We did it then according to the Essene's calendar. The Temple calendar had Passover beginning the evening that Jesus was crucified.)

I'm afraid we were a sorry bunch of guys—frightened out of our wits, ashamed that we had deserted Jesus when he needed us, and with no idea what we should do next.

The man we had followed so closely was now dead. His mother as well as Mary Magdalene and other women were at the tomb where he was buried. They did what they could on that Friday night before Passover began, and left him there during Passover itself.

On Sunday morning, I decided that I'd better start making plans to resume the life I had left in Galilee when I started to follow Jesus. I was gone from the house all day so I completely missed what was happening. When I got back late that evening, the others told me the preposterous story that Jesus was no longer dead—that he had been raised from the dead.

First, they told me that Mary Magdalene and other women had found the tomb empty, and that didn't particularly surprise me. Perhaps the Roman soldiers had removed the body for some reason. But then they said that Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene near the tomb.

Not only that, but two disciples reported that he had also appeared to them as they were on the road to Emmaus. That made it even more unbelievable. How could Jesus be both at the tomb and on the road to Emmaus? Yes, I definitely was skeptical.

Then the Apostles insisted that Jesus had appeared to them while I was gone and had come right through the locked doors. They were jubilant, but I simply could not believe what they were telling me. I knew for sure that Jesus had died—a Roman soldier had even pierced his side with a

spear—and no one was going to convince me that he was alive again.

So I said, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail-marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

I told you that I've always had to see for myself, and this story just seemed ridiculous. I was convinced that all the other Apostles were hallucinating.

For a week, it seemed that I was right. Nothing else happened and we were talking about returning to Galilee. Then it happened. Jesus came right into the room where we were. He knew what I'd said to the Apostles because he told me to put my finger in his hands and my hand into his side.

"And do not be unbelieving, but believe," he said.

Did I believe then? Absolutely! I could see him right there. I fell to my knees and said, "My Lord and my God!"

This couldn't be just a man. How could a man conquer death? Jesus was God!

Jesus recognized the skepticism I had before I saw him.

He said to me, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

That message was meant for you who are reading this account of the Resurrection.

That wasn't the only time I saw the risen Lord. Later, seven of us—including Peter, James and John—were fishing on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus appeared on the shore. He told us to cast our nets on the right side of the boat. After we did, we caught 153 large fish. After we dragged them ashore, we had breakfast with Jesus.

Now you know why I'm called "doubting Thomas." Yes, I did doubt at first. Rising from the dead just seemed impossible—and it is for anyone except God, which is why I expressed my faith that Jesus is my Lord and my God. I've devoted the rest of my life here in India to teaching the people about Jesus.

(Author's note: Regarding the statement in the first sentence that Thomas's original name was Judas, this is stated in the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, an ancient Syriac version of the Gospel of John, and in a footnote in the New American Bible for John 11:16.)

(John F. Fink is editor emeritus of The Criterion.) †

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Easter: Walking with Christ heals our faults and character

By Elizabeth Rackover
Catholic News Service

Why doesn't the resurrection of Jesus Christ stir the same excitement among Christians as the Lord's birth at Christmas?

Trappist Father Thomas Keating shared his thoughts on that question by telephone recently from St. Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, Colo. Father Keating is one of the architects of the Centering Prayer movement and a co-founder of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.

"Christmas has a great deal of human interest and charm," Father Keating said. "Everyone has or knows babies and has a great interest in them. Most people don't have the remotest idea of Easter and what 'resurrection' might be, and to most people it is painful to think of the Passion and suffering."

Father Keating expanded his definition of suffering to go beyond the scourging and Crucifixion.

"I'm more drawn to the spiritual and mental suffering of Jesus," Father Keating said, "his rejection by his people and his disciples, the terrible suffering of identifying the psychological consequences of our sins."

He said Jesus "identifies with the vast endless motion of human injustice, violence, indifference [and] brutality, the results of social sin."

Warm and fuzzy, it isn't.

"Easter and the Passion require us to experience ... a certain amount of disappointment and suffering ourselves," Father Keating said. "There is a great deal to learn from suffering. We need the example and the experience that Jesus provides. The Resurrection teaches us that suffering and death have been overcome, so in our little deaths [and losses] in this life we find out that it leads to a greater

capacity for understanding and joy."

Father Keating said he believes that the mystery of the Resurrection is a serious complication.

He said the word "mystery" provides insight into why Christians might even subconsciously gravitate more toward the commercial aspects of Easter.

"Really, we have to 'learn' about the Passion and resurrection of Jesus," he said, "and study the prophets and the great writers of the early Church and the great wisdom of the Christian contemporary tradition."

Father Keating suggested that faith in the Resurrection is "something that has to be developed by education and practice [because] nobody knows exactly what 'resurrection' is or what it means."

"Jesus alone is the fruit of this mystery," he said. "No one else has been resurrected or come back since Jesus, and that imposes a great deal of limitations on our understanding."

Father Keating said he doesn't think that the word "Easter" is a good name for the paschal mystery.

"The paschal mystery focuses on the extraordinary and triumphant character of Jesus rising from the dead," he explained.

"Mentally, it's more powerful, more life-giving, more loving than Christmas, [which] anticipates the rhythm of Christ's death and resurrection. But, in resurrection, he is raised as King of Kings, the Great Icon of Easter. To him is given all judgment, life and reward. In Jesus, humanity itself is glorified."

Why, then, are we tempted to identify Easter with images of cute, fuzzy chicks and drawings of basket-carrying bunnies?

"It's fine to distract yourself with trivia, however devout," Father Keating said, "but the real Christian life is about personal change and the dark side of human reality.

CNS photo/courtesy of He Qi



The morning of the Resurrection is depicted in "He Is Risen," a painting by contemporary Chinese Christian artist He Qi. His artwork blends Chinese folk customs and traditional Chinese painting techniques with Western painting methods. The Easter season begins with the celebration of the Resurrection, which is April 8 this year in the Latin Church.

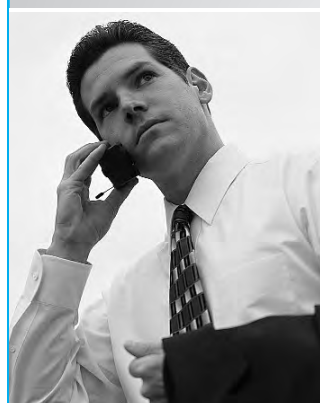
Walking that path is the way of healing. Walking with Christ heals our faults and character, and transforms us into the divine way of doing things.

"Through the gift of his own suffering and death," he said, "Jesus teaches that death is the ultimate path to life—a kind of birth canal into eternal life. Birth is a symbol that life itself is a sort of womb,

preparing us for the move into divine life. And that's really what the Resurrection is all about: the transformation into divine life, the maximum participation in divine life."

(Elizabeth Rackover is a freelance writer and catechist at St. Irenaeus Parish in Rochester Hills, Mich.) †

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Happy Easter!

Love enables us to believe in Jesus' resurrection

By Fr. W. Thomas Faucher
Catholic News Service

A lawyer friend who was born and raised Catholic told me that he has "lost his faith." He challenged me to prove that Jesus rose from the dead.

Proof is a strange thing. It is not just simple facts. Proving something can be one of the most difficult things that we ever have to do in life.

Consider Jesus' rising from the dead. Why do I believe in the Resurrection? Why do millions of Christians believe that he rose from the dead?

There are a host of good explanations from the lack of a body to the constant tradition to the theological necessity, but an explanation is not the same as proof.

For 2,000 years, Christians have tried to find ways to tell the story that would be totally convincing. The problem is that the resurrected Christ will not come and appear upon demand.

People who study the mind tell us that—between having something said to us and locking that something in our mind—there are filters that sift what we learn through all the other things we have learned in the past.

In theology, this process is called "hermeneutics." Because of my hermeneutics, I have no difficulty believing that Jesus rose from the dead. It makes perfect sense to me, and then all the explanations fit right into my belief system.

But some people reject all that is not totally rational, scientific and able to be proven without a doubt.

If you cannot replicate the event in a laboratory experiment, they insist, it is not believable. These people have real difficulty believing that Jesus rose from the dead.

Something in them says that it is just

impossible, cannot happen, has never happened and did not happen to Jesus.

Even if someone comes back from a near-death experience, they claim, he or she has to die eventually.

But Jesus did not come back, eventually to die. He was dead and rose from the dead to never die again.

Why is it possible for me and millions of Christian people like me to believe in the Resurrection and impossible for others to believe that Jesus rose from the dead?

It is probably too simple to say that it is because my hermeneutics include faith and theirs do not, although that is probably part of it.

I think it is more that I can include real experiences in my thought processes that cannot be replicated in the laboratory. I can believe in things that are rational but also beyond reason. I believe in things beyond just what my senses and my rational brain tell me.

What in life is most like the resurrection of Jesus Christ? What experience have I had that falls into that same category of something that is beyond reason, beyond replication and beyond scientific fact?

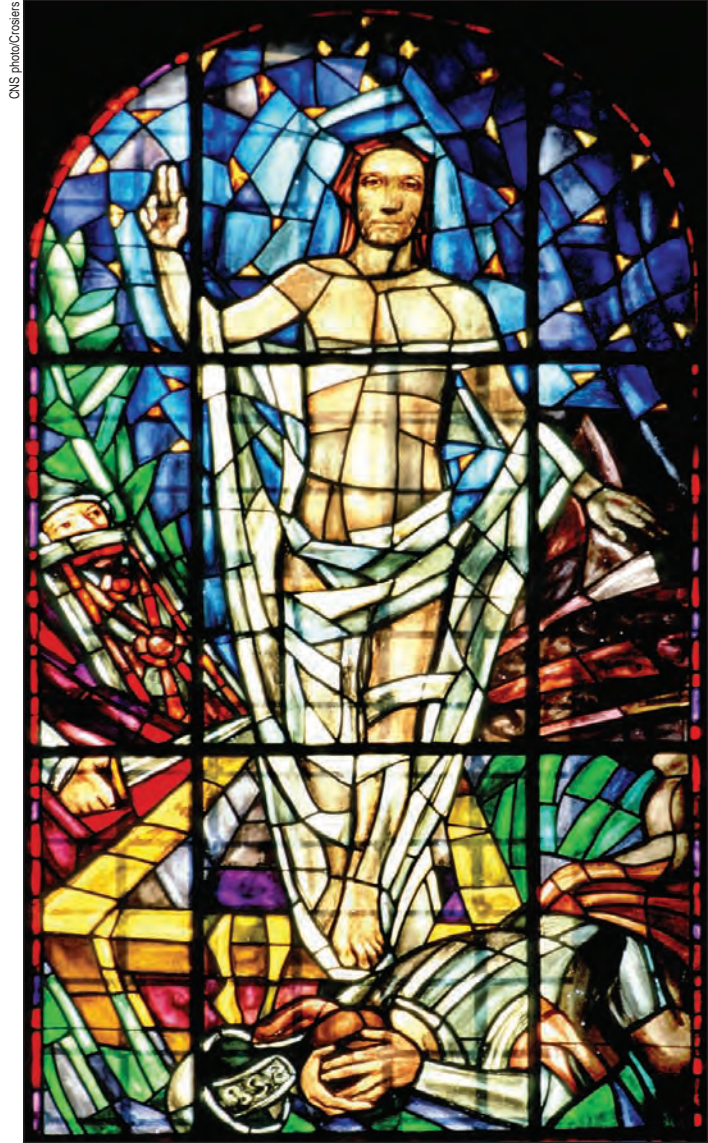
It is the experience of love.

That I can love and be loved is the origin of the Resurrection, the reason for the Resurrection and the power behind the Resurrection.

St. John tells us that "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8). God so loved us that he created love for us to enjoy with him and with each other. God so loved us that he became one of us. God so loved us that he died for us on the cross. And God so loved us that he rose from the dead.

Why do I believe in the Resurrection? What is my proof?

I can enter into a relationship with another person that goes beyond me, my needs, my likes and my desires.



Some people reject all that is not totally rational, scientific and able to be proven beyond doubt. These people have real difficulty believing that Jesus rose from the dead.

St. Paul's litany of what love is and is not in Corinthians is completely true (1 Cor 13:4-13). Love makes all things possible.

Why do I believe in the Resurrection?

I believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead because it is the ultimate act of love.

(Father W. Thomas Faucher is pastor of St. Mary Parish in Boise, Idaho.) †

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As Christians, are we an Easter people of praise?

By Jean Sweeney
Catholic News Service

Watch a child's face as he or she discovers something new and you will see wonder, gratitude and praise.

Recently, I watched a young boy examine a florescent dragonfly then tug at his mother to get her to see this marvel.

Finally, she paused and joined his awe, sighing, "God has designed such amazing creatures."

In their joint reaction, I experienced true praise. It seems that praise and gratitude are written into our very beings, but when we get blinded by our busyness we become less appreciative of God's creation.

The Easter season is a good time to reflect on how praise is integrated into our busy schedules and lives. Are we a people of praise?

Getting everyone to Easter services, hiding the Easter eggs, finding baskets for candy and wearing something new to church to symbolize this season of renewal can leave us as stressed as we feel during other holidays. Are we so busy doing all that we think needs to get done that we do not notice what really lifts the heart and mind at Easter?

Our Easter Mass celebrations are filled with praise, song and gratitude. The Holy One who has shown us the face of God, and who redeemed and reconciled our lives, is alive and still with us. Alleluia!

Does the impact of this awareness touch our daily lives?

An Easter Vigil psalm says, "I will praise you, you have rescued me. ... Give praise to the Lord, you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name" (Ps 30).

It is presented almost as an instruction on how to live our lives, yet the bold attitude of giving praise is something that we Catholics often leave to evangelicals.

Various things limit our capacity for praise.

As a pastoral counselor, I have heard many tales of what is wrong in people's families, in their work and in their relationships. The negative grabs our attention. We look for the worst.

When we are hurt or are feeling pain, those feelings are central to our experience and must be acknowledged, but this is not the whole story of a person, even in hard times.

A woman with a serious type of cancer wrote to me about fighting for her life. Then she went on to say that she also had an alternative plan and was having fun planning her funeral service and the songs as well as attending to friendships.

This is a woman of praise. She lifts her mind and heart to God even in difficult times.

In ordinary times, we get trained to look at what is wrong, to criticize, to make judgments and to compete with others. If we live this way, we will not be ready for the hard times.

It is a far cry from being a people of praise and gratitude, the people that God intended us to be.

Can we retrain ourselves to be people of gratitude, people of praise?

Each night, a client of mine wrote lists of things that she was grateful for. She said it took days to notice and write down the more subtle things, like a plant coming into bloom or the small kind exchange of words with a grocery store cashier. She praised God for these good things.

It seems that God's request that we give praise and thanks is for our own well-being.

(Jean Sweeney is a licensed pastoral counselor and spiritual director in Arlington, Va.) †



File photos by Sean Gallagher

The season of Easter should remind us that, as Christians, we are to be a people of praise. One way we live this out is to praise God for the wonders of nature, such as the beauty found in these spring flowers on April 16, 2006, Easter Sunday, in Shelbyville.



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Children's Easter story: The empty tomb can teach us about friendship

By Janaan Manternach
Catholic News Service

Kylie kept thinking about the assignment from her religion teacher to read the Gospel story for Easter Sunday over and over until the students could come up with a creative way to retell it.

The students were told not to discuss their ideas with each other.

That was OK with Kylie because she hadn't made any friends since coming to this new school. Actually, none of the children seemed to want to have anything to do with her. That was the part that hurt her the most.

Kylie wished she had friends like the ones who went to the tomb to be with Jesus. She was sure that no one at her school would go to her if she died. She tried not to think about that, but she couldn't quite get it out of her mind.

Maybe that was the seed of a way for her to retell the Gospel story.

Their teacher told them how Jesus had died at the hands of a mob who hung him on a cross. She also told them about his burial in a tomb. The story they had to recreate was about what happened after that.

Kylie kept re-reading the Gospel story. The thought of Jesus' friends made her happy, but she couldn't seem to get much beyond that. So she decided to retell the story pretty much like it was in the Gospel, but from her own perspective.

"Jesus had died on Friday," Kylie explained. "On Monday, Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James, took spices to Jesus' tomb. On the way, they talked about their friendships with Jesus.

"Mary Magdalene said that hardly anyone ever wanted to be her friend. Jesus befriended her when she was shunned



CNS photo/Nelle Gould, The Catholic Post

Easter lilies and a white cloth lie in an empty tomb on April 10, 2006, at Resurrection Cemetery and Mausoleum in Peoria, Ill., signifying the risen Christ. The Easter season begins with the celebration of the Resurrection, which is April 8 this year in the Latin Church.

by others.

"Joanna said that she never had a problem having friends, but what she liked about Jesus was that anyone and everyone could be his friend.

"Mary, James' mother, told them that she became a friend of Jesus because of her son and that it was the best friendship she ever had.

"They were now nearing the tomb and noticed that something was wrong. Jesus' body was gone. The tomb was empty!

"Puzzled and scared, they looked at each other and cried, 'Where is Jesus? Where has he gone?'

"While they stood there in shock, two men in dazzling garments appeared.

Frightened, they bowed their heads and stared at the ground.

"Then the men spoke: 'Why do you seek your friend among the dead? He isn't here; he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee—the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners and be crucified, and will rise on the third day.'

"They remembered the words, but hadn't understood them. They talked to each other about how close they had been to Jesus and wondered how they could have missed what he told them. They knew they had to tell the Apostles and his other close friends about the empty tomb.

"Peter decided to check into the story for

himself. He ran to the tomb, bent down and saw the empty burial cloths. He stood there for a while and finally went home puzzled at what had happened.

"The women knew what Peter would find. They also knew that Jesus was their friend; he would never abandon them. Jesus was alive!"

Kylie told her class that the story helped her to think more about Jesus and that something she especially liked was that he did not pick and choose who would be his friends.

She added, "It helps me to know that Jesus is my friend, too."

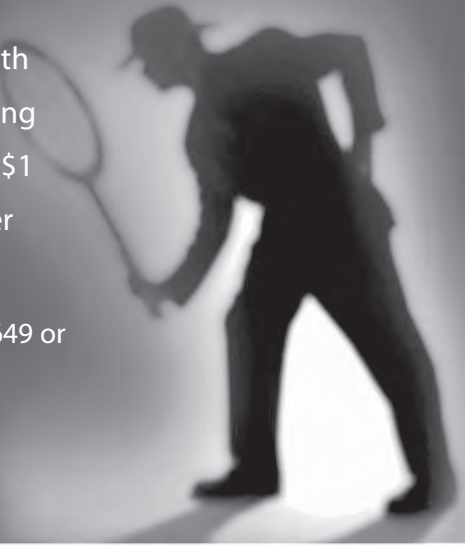
(Janaan Manternach is a catechist in Dubuque, Iowa.) †

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The Last Supper: Jesus teaches us importance of sharing meals

By Allan F. Wright
Catholic News Service

I often ask people to reminisce about the most significant meal they have ever eaten. It is never the food that makes the most impact in their memory, but the people sharing the meal with them.

Whatever the occasion, whatever the cultural norm dictates, it rings true to human experience that meals bring people together.

Jesus' Middle Eastern culture was one in which only those considered family would be welcomed around the table. The people one dined with defined the boundaries of one's relationships.

There are no fewer than 58 references to food, eating, hunger or meals in the Gospel of Luke alone. In fact, Jesus is so involved with sharing his teachings and enjoying the fellowship of sinners around the table that he is accused of being "a glutton and a drunkard" (Lk 7:34).

The meal that Jesus shares with Zacchaeus, the tax collector, is a sign that repentance has taken place and that a celebration is required despite the murmuring of the crowd (Lk 19:1-9).

When Jesus enters Simon's house as a guest in a story in the Gospel of Luke, he is not given any basic gesture of hospitality by Simon. Jesus, however, allows a repentant, sinful woman to offer a costly demonstration of unexpected love at his feet (Lk 7:36-50).

Jesus takes this opportunity to teach Simon by way of a parable during the meal. Jesus is correcting Simon's self-righteousness by conveying the simple message that if the Son of Man cannot dine with sinners he will not eat with Simon either, since all people are sinners.



This interactive life-size sculpture at St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis allows visitors to contemplate the Last Supper.

In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the celebration begins in the home. A fatted calf could feed up to 75 people, and the message here is that it is a community celebration of the father who welcomes his son back home with open arms. The father takes the initiative with the younger son and goes out to welcome him home with peace. The father also goes out to invite the older son as well. The family is not complete until the older son accepts his seat around the table (Lk 15:11-31).

Jesus would not use his miraculous power to feed himself when he was

hungry and tempted by Satan, but when he sees the hunger of the 5,000, he multiplies the loaves and fish so that others are fed (Lk 9:10-17).

The Last Supper is a way for Jesus to share his very life around the table with friends. This significant event was not lost on the early Christians, who gathered around the table to share in the Eucharist (1 Cor 11).

Likewise, it was during a meal around a simple table in a home that the disciples' eyes were opened to the risen Lord in their midst.

Sharing a meal can be difficult in our



This image of the Last Supper was included in the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

fast-paced world. Often, our vehicles have more cup holders than we have place settings for our dining room tables. Nonetheless, sharing food can still bring a family, community and friends together. Like Jesus, they too can share their lives—their stories, hopes and joys—by the simple act of sharing a meal.

(Allan F. Wright is the author of *Jesus in the House: Gospel Reflections on Christ's Presence in the House*, published by St. Anthony Messenger Press in Cincinnati.) †

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Growing in faith

Baking Easter cookies as a family can be a fun holiday tradition

By Cori Fugere Urban
Catholic News Service

Slide over Christmas cookies. Easter cookies with spring colors, fun shapes and biblical symbolism are gaining popularity. Bouquets of sugar dough cutouts of flowers, gingerbread Easter bunnies, chocolate and shredded wheat “nests” filled with jellybean “eggs,” and Easter story cookies are on the to-do lists of many Easter bakers.

Ask Chef Lonny W. Ricketts for an Easter cookie recipe, and he is quick to oblige with a sugar cookie recipe sure to keep a baker busy making loads of cookies.

At the end of the usual mixing, rolling, cutting, baking and frosting directions, the self-described “Catholic chef” adds one final instruction: “Don’t forget to bring three cookies to your priest.”

Ricketts is the chef instructor at William Dean Technical School in Holyoke, Mass., and chairman of the board of the Pioneer Valley Chefs Association.

He said that although many people have never heard of Easter cookies, this Easter is a good time for your family to start the tradition.

Getting started is easy. Magazines in the checkout aisle of local grocery stores have lots of ideas. Or search the Internet for “Easter cookies.”

One recipe easily found online that Ricketts recommends is for “Easter Story Cookies,” and the list of ingredients is topped with a Bible.

As you put the ingredients together to make the meringue cookies, you can read about how they relate to Jesus’ Passion.

Breaking pecans symbolizes how Jesus

CNS Illustration/Emily Thompson



Easter cookies with spring colors, fun shapes and biblical symbolism are gaining popularity as a holiday tradition for families.

was beaten. Adding the vinegar calls to mind the drink that Jesus was given when he thirsted on the cross. The egg whites—eggs are a symbol of life—call to mind the fact that Jesus gave his life for us.

Other ingredients are added with pertinent Bible readings, and the uncooked cookie dough is left overnight in a warm oven.

Ricketts, who is a member of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish in Turners Falls, Mass., also suggests a simple butter cookie recipe that can be adapted for any holiday,

including Easter.

There are plenty of cookie cutters with Easter symbols: eggs, lambs, chicks and crosses. If you do not have any cookie cutters, Ricketts suggests drawing a cross on a manila paper folder, cutting it out and using it as a template when cutting the sugar cookie dough.

Or you may want to try a simple Easter cookie: Make chocolate chip cookie dough, but instead of adding chocolate chips, add pastel-colored, candy-covered chocolate chips to the mix.

Donna Tozloski, an avid baker from Our Lady of Peace Parish in Turners Falls, Mass., once made wedding cakes as a business.

Tozloski said making cutout cookies are fun because they can be personalized and

are a good project for children.

“Kids like to help decorate,” she said, adding that making Easter cookies helps children get ready for Easter and the cookies’ symbolism is “something [that children] can contribute to the Easter dinner.”

Whatever cookie project you select, what matters is not the artistic quality of the product.

“It’s [about] time well spent if you’re together” with family and friends, Ricketts said. “It’s not what you make or even how you make it. It’s [all about] doing it together, and having fun and growing closer.”

(Cori Fugere Urban is a staff reporter for The Vermont Catholic Tribune.) †

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Easter tradition

Coloring Easter eggs is a tradition for many families. Cindy, from left, Raphael and Michael Gallagher, members of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, color eggs in 2006 at their home in Indianapolis.

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Easter offers a new beginning for people of faith

By Edward P. Hahnenberg

We love happy endings. In fact, we expect them. From the earliest stories that we read as children to the movies and TV shows that we watch today, we have come to expect a happy ending.

The hero defeats the villain. The guy gets the girl or the girl gets the guy. The family crisis or complicated crime is resolved or solved before the closing credits scroll across the screen.

I have trouble remembering the details of many movies that I've seen partly because they all seem to end the same way. Rarely are we surprised. We start most stories knowing how they will end.

Easter is that time of the year when Christians celebrate the ultimate happy ending. On this day, we recall the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. But it is a story we have heard so many times that I wonder if we really hear it anymore.

We start the story knowing how it will end. No surprises here. Has the Good News of the Resurrection been dulled by this predictable pattern?

It was not always this way. For the first disciples, the Resurrection was a shocking surprise. Even though Jesus had warned them of what was to come, they still did not believe the news that Mary Magdalene brought: "He is alive!"

The Resurrection was not just unexpected. It was a radical new beginning.

Christianity always has rejected the idea that Jesus appeared to his friends as a mere ghost or a figment of their imagination. The Gospels have Jesus inviting others to touch his wounds. He eats fish to prove that he is not a mirage.

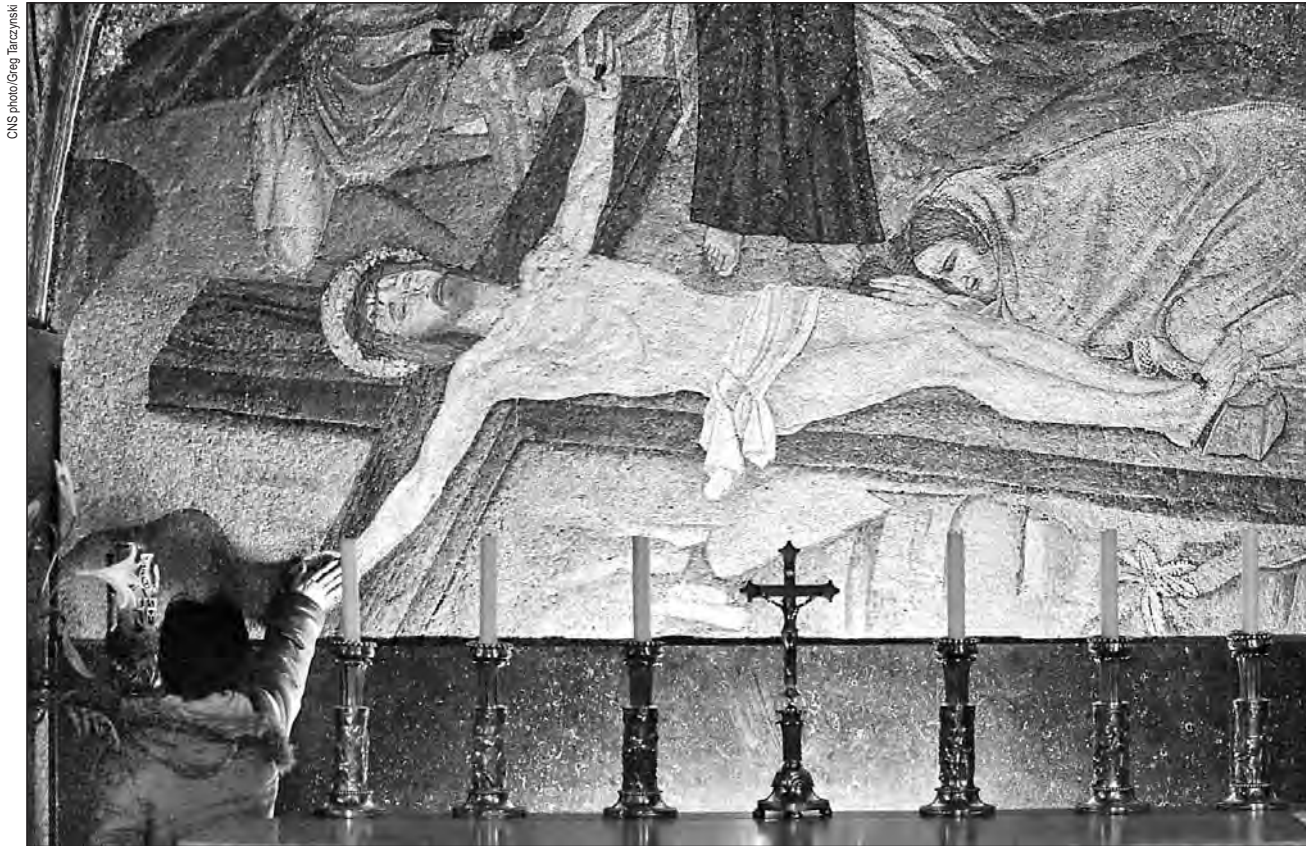
But the Church also teaches that Jesus' resurrection was not resuscitation. He was not raised from the dead like Lazarus or Jairus' daughter—their new earthly lives still were shadowed by the fact that they would one day die.

Jesus does not return to earthly life and to the "good old days" of his ministry. Instead, he passes beyond space and time (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #646).

It is hard to describe this in words. The Gospels tell of Jesus coming to the disciples through locked doors. His closest friends do not recognize him at first. He later vanishes from their sight.

Throughout these stories of the Resurrection is a profound sense of newness. It is Jesus, but he is transformed. New life is not like the old.

The Resurrection starts something, a new



CNS photo/Greg Jarzynski

A woman touches the hand of Jesus on the cross in a mosaic of the 11th Station of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem on March 6. The church is built on the site traditionally accepted as the burial place of Christ.

era in human history and new life in each of us. Movies about Jesus get it wrong when they turn the Resurrection into a happy ending. It is really a happy beginning!

One film that gets it right is Pier Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, released in 1964.

In Pasolini's depiction of the Resurrection, the drums and joyful Gloria of the Congolese "*Missa Luba*" burst through the soundtrack and the camera chases the disciples running toward the risen Lord. You feel like you're running with them and are caught up in their excitement and joy. It is the end of the story, but the start of something wonderful.

Jesus Christ is risen today! We sing it every Easter. Jesus is risen! Today! What does the newness of the risen Lord tell us about our own journeys through death and resurrection?

New life is not like the old. The Resurrection reminds us that in our own struggles with death—whether the literal death of a loved one, the slow suffering of illness or the daily deaths of disappointment, discouragement and failure—we are called by God to hope for a truly new future.

This future is not a return to the past. We will never be Lazarus, returning to the way things were. Instead, we join the risen Christ and step toward a new future

with new experiences, new possibilities and new life.

We do not know quite what it will look like to survive our present struggles. The pain is real. But the risen Lord gives us confidence to hope. Through this pain, something new is being born.

Ever since the birth of our first child, I have thought how appropriate birth is as a metaphor for the Resurrection. Everyone told my wife and me that when the baby comes nothing ever will be the same. It is true. Our new life is not like the old.

For each of our children, my wife kept a journal and carefully wrote out each birth story. We have been blessed in that each story ended happily. It is so obvious to us, as we watch our children grow, that the happy endings were just the beginning.

The Resurrection is not the end of the story. It is the beginning. In Benedictine Sister Genevieve Glen's beautiful Easter hymn "The Sun Arose in Clouds of Fire," the women run from the tomb and sing of this new beginning: "Death, death has died—now all is birth!"

(Edward P. Hahnenberg teaches theology at Xavier University in Cincinnati. He is the author of *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II*, published by St. Anthony Messenger Press in 2007.) †

The Resurrection is a new beginning

By David Gibson

Have we heard the story of Christ's resurrection so many times that it has lost its intended impact on us?

For the earliest Christians, the Resurrection was an amazing event that signified the start of a new creation.

Pope Benedict XVI explained this in a 2006 homily.

"Christ's resurrection happened the first day of the week, which in the Scriptures is the day of the world's creation," the pope explained. "For this very reason, Sunday was considered by the early Christian community as the day on which the new world began, the one on which ... the new creation began."

To really understand the significance of the word "resurrection" today, it helps to revisit this notion of a "new creation" and a "new beginning."

The Resurrection announces a new era. Its dominant forces enable us to hope, to believe and to love.

(David Gibson edits Faith Alive!) †

Discussion Point

Difficulties can lead to blessings

This Week's Question

Describe a time when a great difficulty or disappointment in your life was followed by a highly positive outcome.

"I had a child born with multiple birth defects. The medical community didn't know if he would live 24 hours. Now he's a thriving 11-year-old boy who's a miracle because of prayer though he still has special needs." (Colette Courtemanche, Skowhegan, Maine)

"Almost a year ago, my grandpa died during the summer. Our family is large so usually we didn't get together much. ... His death ... brought our family closer together." (Brandon Mai, Hampton, Iowa)

"The hardest thing for me was my mom's death at

the age of 53. I was at home with my father and 15-year-old sister. I thought I'd have to stay and look after them. ... Dad got ill and had a heart attack within a month. But Dad married a year later, and I no longer needed to stay home. I know now you always have to look for the open window." (Jan Pedersen, Billings, Mont.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: Briefly describe a program that you participated in or a decision that you made which aided a revitalization of your faith.

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to cgreene@catholicnews.com or write to *Faith Alive!* at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †



CNS photo/Chris Helgren, Reuters

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

The cross is the crux of the whole matter

I wish I could take credit for the pun in the headline over this column, but I can't.

The great G. K. Chesterton used it when he pointed out, in his masterpiece *The Everlasting Man*, that Christ's crucifixion stands at the center of human history. The dogma that God died, sacrificing himself to himself, is one of the great mysteries of the Christian faith.

St. Paul saw the importance of the Crucifixion, telling the Corinthians, "I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). To the Philippians, he quoted an early Christian hymn that proclaimed that Jesus "humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8).

St. Paul told the Galatians what Christ did and why: He "gave himself for our sins that he might rescue us from the

present evil age in accord with the will of our God and Father" (Gal 1:4).

All that Jesus did prior to his death was simply leading to his real purpose in life. Chesterton pointed out, "The primary thing that he was going to do was to die. He was going to do other things equally definite and objective; we might almost say equally external and material. But from the first to last, the most definite fact is that he is going to die."

Surely Jesus could have avoided this cruel death. As he himself said, "Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me at this moment with more than 12 legions of angels?" (Mt 26:53). He tells why he does not ask for that: "What should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour" (Jn 12:27).

He suffered his agony in the garden, knowing what was about to happen. He wouldn't have been fully human if he hadn't prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me," but

he added, "Yet, not as I will, but as you will" (Mt 26:39).

We shouldn't, however, say that God the Father willed the Crucifixion. What God willed was our redemption. He permitted the cruel death brought about by sin. It was indeed a cruel death, what the first-century historian Josephus called "the most wretched of deaths." It was the method of execution begun by the ancient Persians, and perfected by both the Carthaginians and the Romans.

The crowd yelled, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!" (Mt 27:40) and, "He saved others; he cannot save himself" (Mt 27:42). Having accepted his Father's will, Jesus accepts these provocations which seem to undermine the whole meaning of his mission, his teaching, his miracles. He wills it all.

And so the God-man died for us. Why? Because "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). †

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

The reign of heaven is at hand

There was a time when Easter most likely meant fuzzy chicks, jellybeans and dressing up for Mass.

Of course, it also meant an army of ants marching to the Easter baskets left carelessly on the floor, muddy white Sunday shoes, stale hot cross buns and ham ... endless ham. In some quarters, it still means those things, and that's great as far as it goes.

But over time on our spiritual journey, Easter is revealed to us as the splendid and climactic mystery it is: The literal wonder that God appeared to us imperfect creatures as one of us in order to teach us perfection. And then he sacrificed himself, all this out of love, so that we might live with God forever in joy. Wow.

Certainly the chocolate bunnies and baby ducklings, the daffodils and other holiday symbols are reminders of spring, the season in which they occur. And spring, of course, reminds us of rebirth, new life, resurrection. It's an optimistic, hopeful time that gives us an inkling of the reign of heaven promised by Easter.

Garry Wills, writing in his book *What Jesus Meant*, said, "It is the simple contention of this book that what Jesus meant is clearly laid out in the Gospels." And he concluded, "But neither [a particular Church or a brand of politics] is what he meant by 'the reign of heaven.'"

"Heaven's reign is himself [Jesus], the avenue of access to the Father. He partly opened that access on earth, but the process will be complete only in the Father's bosom when history ends.

"One enters the heavenly reign by sharing Jesus' own intimacy with the Father. He is the Vine, to which the branches must be attached to draw life from him. By becoming members of his mystical body, one honors the Father and passes the key test for a disciple—treating the poor, the thirsty, the hungry, the naked as if they were Jesus."

Wills said the Gospels also warn us how we might become detached from the Vine, as in the parables of the wheat and chaff being separated at harvest time, or the net full of fish which must be sorted out at the shore.

He wrote, "Jesus' followers have the obligation that rests on all men and women: to seek justice based on the dignity of every human being.

"That is the goal of politics, of 'the things that belong to Caesar.' But heaven's reign makes deeper and broader demands, the demands not only of justice but of love."

Wills continued, "[St.] Augustine knew that the highest human faculty is love, the self-emptying love of Jesus," and he quoted Jesus speaking in John's Gospel: "A new instruction I have given you: Love one another. As I have loved you, you must also love one another. All will know that you are my followers by this sign alone, that you have love for one another" (Jn 13:34:35).

Symbols of joy, hope and rebirth help us begin to understand the meaning of Easter. But when we mature, we also consider the great love which has come into our lives through family, friends, nature, intellectual delight or just the kindness of strangers.

Then we realize that in sharing our love as Jesus did at Easter, the reign of heaven truly begins. Through God's grace, we'll truly be Christians known for our love. Happy loving! Happy Easter!

(Cynthia Dewes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

Musing about music in the Easter season

"In my Easter bonnet with all the frills upon it, I'll be the grandest lady in the Easter Parade ..."

Songwriter Irving Berlin produced this jewel of a song that is sweetly archaic now since hats are no longer the vogue.

I sometimes think if women were still required to wear hats to church, the

chapeau industry would still be booming.

Readers too young to remember the custom of women covering their heads will probably laugh at this former custom: We could wear chapel veils instead and, if one wasn't available, we could pin on a handkerchief. Since feminine handkerchiefs are out of vogue, too, a tissue would have to do.

As for Irving Berlin, who died at 101, he was a Russian-American Jewish composer and lyricist. He wrote more than 3,000 songs, including "White Christmas," "God Bless America,"

"Alexander's Ragtime Band" and "There's No Business like Show Business." He also produced 17 film scores and 21 Broadway scores even though he never learned to read music beyond a rudimentary level.

His first wife died from typhoid fever five months after their marriage, and 14 years later, he married a devout Irish-American Catholic writer. Their only son died as an infant on Christmas day. Neither Easter nor Christmas can be celebrated without hearing Berlin's music.

Easter music for the general public seems limited now, but church music is increasingly beautiful. Not long ago, a CD titled "Salvation" was released featuring the beautiful voice of Melissa Wood Buechler, with background vocals by The Wood Sisters: Janie Richardt, Jackie Wood, Ellen Wood, Carolyn Charles, Julia Wood, Jennifer Wood Thompson and, of course, Melissa.

I have listened to this CD repeatedly as have those to whom I've given them as gifts. Each listener seems to single out a favorite, from "Amazing Grace," "Hear Us,

Heal Us," "There is Only Love," "Ave Maria," "Our Father," "Rain Down," "Peace Prayer," "You are Mine," "Eye Has Not Seen" and "Daughters of God."

Several are especially appropriate for the entire Easter season, but "There is Only Love" says it all: Love is a legacy from Jesus Christ. He loved us so much that he died for us and, through the Holy Spirit, we are commissioned to share that love.

Whether heard in the comfort of our homes or rejoicing with choirs and congregations who celebrate the risen Christ, music is an integral part of the Easter season.

The triumph of the Resurrection is the crux of our Christian faith. Even the traditional Easter egg is a symbol of the Resurrection because it comes from a Saxon word, "oster," which means "to rise."

May the Easter season help us rejoice in springtime after an introspective and healing Lent.

(Shirley Vogler Meister, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Faith, Hope and Charity/David Siler

Service as evangelization

In December 2005, you may remember reading about Charlene Booker and her three children, who relocated to Indianapolis from New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. (Visit www.CriterionOnline.com for the story.)

Charlene recently called to tell me that after having seen the latest list of



confirmed deceased hurricane victims, she could count 60 people from her own network of family, friends and acquaintances—including her own husband.

Charlene's story is certainly one of her own amazing faith,

but it is also a story about our own wonderful Catholic Church. We provide tangible and intangible charity every day for all human needs: spiritual, educational, nutritional, clothing, housing and emotional support.

Charlene and her children came to Indianapolis with little more than the clothes on their back. St. Rita parishioners rallied to help the family find clothing and other basic necessities. Catholic Charities Indianapolis' Christmas Store helped provide gifts for Charlene and her children for the Christmases of 2005 and 2006.

All of you, through your contributions to the Hurricane Relief Fund, helped Charlene purchase a used mini-van to transport her children to school and to her new job at St. Vincent Hospital.

Unfortunately, Charlene's job at St. Vincent was eliminated, and she had to find another temporary job to make ends meet. When I talked to her recently, she told me she is starting a new job at St. Francis Hospital.

Charlene's two older children were originally placed in a public school, but that environment was not right for their complex needs. St. Andrew & St. Rita Catholic Academy welcomed them with open arms, and the children found a safe and comforting environment there—free of tuition.

Charlene told me that this was the best thing that has ever happened to her children. They have since moved to another school due to a housing change, but will always remember the care and concern that they received while at this wonderful Catholic school.

At last year's chism Mass, Charlene and her children were invited to bring up the gifts at the offertory; they are not Catholic, however. At the reception following the Mass, Charlene found me and, with great excitement, told me that she and her children were going to go through instruction to become Catholic.

I expressed my joy to her while thinking to myself, "Well, of course you are!" How could anyone who has been touched so deeply in so many ways not want to be a part of this Church?

As Church, we were able to wrap our welcoming arms around the Booker family to meet their wide array of needs. Four major Catholic entities carried out Christ's mission to serve others: Catholic Charities, Catholic education, local parishes and Catholic healthcare. Moreover, we are dedicated to carrying out Christ's mission every day to all people in need, regardless of faith.

We often hear the Church described as the body of Christ. I don't believe that I have ever witnessed a better example of that body at work in so many ways!

(David Siler is executive director of the Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries.) †

Easter/Feast of the Resurrection of the Lord

Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 8, 2007

- Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37-43
- Colossians 3:1-4
- John 20:1-9

The Church celebrates the Easter Vigil late in the evening on Holy Saturday. These readings are those read during the Masses on Easter Sunday.

For its first reading on this extraordinary feast of Christian faith, the Church presents us with a passage from the Acts of the Apostles.

Acts is, in effect, a continuation of St. Luke's Gospel. Scholars say that this Gospel and Acts were the work of the same author. Beginning with the Ascension, Acts reports what life was like for the infant community of Christians in Jerusalem and then it recalls the initial spread of Christianity.

Important in the early chapters of Acts is a series of sermons delivered by Peter. Always, Peter spoke for the survivors.

In this sermon, Peter briefly gives a synopsis of the life of Jesus. Sent by God, Jesus was crucified, the victim of human scheming. He rose after death. He commissioned the Apostles to continue the work of reconciling God and humanity. The Apostles were witnesses of all that Jesus did.

The Epistle to the Colossians, the second reading, places Christ at God's right hand.

It says that Christians already have "been raised" because they have taken Christ into their hearts. Having given themselves to Jesus, they have died to earthly things and to earthly ideas.

In the process, they have been drawn into the eternal life of the Risen Lord. True believers will live with Jesus eternally.

St. John's Gospel supplies the last reading.

John's Gospel goes into some detail about the Resurrection and its aftermath.

The first figure mentioned in the story is Mary Magdalene. She was a beloved figure in early Christianity because she was so intensely a follower of Jesus.

Indeed, according to John's Gospel, she stood beneath the cross of Calvary rather than abandon the dying Lord. It was a risky gesture. She might have been construed to be an accomplice in treason against the Roman Empire. Yet, despite the risk, she remained with Jesus.

Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb before daybreak. Finding it empty, she hurries to Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved. Tradition long has assumed that this disciple is John, although this disciple is never identified by name in this Gospel.

Peter and the disciple then rush to the tomb themselves. It was all very sudden, and indeed overwhelming, for them. Grasping what exactly had happened at the tomb was not easy. Love and faith made the process easier. The disciple saw that the tomb was empty, and he believed that Jesus had risen.

Reflection

The Church excitedly tells us that the Lord lives. He rose from the dead. It is a proclamation of the greatest and central belief of the Church, namely that Jesus, the Son of God, overcame even death.

However, the lesson is more than simply to affirm once again the Church's trust in the Resurrection—the actual and physical resurrection of Christ. It calls upon us to respond.

Such was the message in Colossians, the second reading. Such is the important lesson in the references to Mary Magdalene, Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved. They had to believe. They had to have faith.

We must be open to God ourselves. Limited and bruised by sin, we must be healed and strengthened to receive the grace of faith. Hopefully, Lenten penances these past weeks have healed and strengthened us, and made within us this openness.

In the meantime, the Church shares with us the testimony of Peter and the Apostles, not just bystanders as the mission of Jesus occurred, but rather the Lord's specially commissioned agents to tell us about our own salvation. Their testimony, so guarded by the Church, is our avenue to knowing and meeting the Risen Christ. †

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the "My Journey to God" column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to "My Journey to God," The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org. †

Daily Readings

Monday, April 9

Acts 2:14, 22-32
Psalm 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11
Matthew 28:8-15

Tuesday, April 10

Acts 2:36-41
Psalm 33:4-5, 18-20, 22
John 20:11-18

Wednesday, April 11

Acts 3:1-10
Psalm 105:1-4, 6-9
Luke 24:13-35

Thursday, April 12

Acts 3:11-26
Psalm 8:2a, 5-9
Luke 24:35-48

Friday, April 13

Acts 4:1-12
Psalm 118:1-2, 4, 22-27a
John 21:1-14

Saturday, April 14

Acts 4:13-21
Psalm 118:1, 14-15, 16ab-21
Mark 16:9-15

Sunday, April 15

Second Sunday of Easter
Divine Mercy Sunday
Acts 5:12-16
Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24
Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13,
17-19
John 20:19-31



Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

God created all people, even terrorists, out of divine love

QI believe Catholic teaching is that the idea of suicide bombers is totally wrong and that anyone who commits such a crime is going to hell.



Why doesn't the Church preach more about these sinful actions? (Wisconsin)

AWhile suicide is an objectively sinful act, and deliberately killing innocent people while committing suicide is particularly horrendous, I am not clear why you think more Catholic homilies against suicide bombing will affect extremists who do it.

One point in your letter, however, which I know is shared by many Christians, deserves some comment.

I am not qualified to explain Islamic beliefs on suicide bombing, but Catholic teaching has some valuable things to say about the eternal destiny of those who commit such crimes.

Contrary to the assumptions of many, the Catholic Church holds that all persons who sincerely attempt to follow their own consciences, what they believe to be right and good, are saved. This concept is well entrenched in Church teaching. It applies to everyone, not just to those whose religious theories enjoy our blessing.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says it clearly: "Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—these too may achieve eternal salvation" (#847).

Pope John Paul II elaborated on this in his World Day of Peace message on Jan. 1, 1999. Speaking of religious freedom, he concluded, "People are obliged to follow their conscience in all circumstances and cannot be forced to act against it."

All this assumes, of course, a diligent and honest attempt to inform one's conscience with all the prayer and wisdom possible, and then to live

one's life in accord with what is seen as "religious duty," however the individual sees that duty.

More than a few American religious leaders publicly proclaim that all dead terrorists are in hell, and that all still alive will end up there. It does not at all dilute or deny the hideous evil of terrorist actions (or our right and obligation to oppose them in any moral way possible) to reply that religious arrogance like this is unworthy of any thoughtful follower of Jesus Christ.

Judgments about the condition and fate of other people's souls are wholly beyond our reach. To pretend we have sufficient knowledge and wisdom to make such judgments invades territory that belongs to God alone.

God created all of us, terrorists included, out of love. And Jesus, as St. Paul says, died for each of us. It is blasphemy to dare to tell God which of his children he will reject or to tell Jesus which of those people that he died for must be condemned.

To be sure, someone of any or no religion is capable of rejecting God and his law by a deliberate, radical, eternal choice of evil over good.

But that is not the whole story.

We must also admit our complete ignorance of how God's grace and truth may have transformed a person, terrorist or anyone else, not only during his or her life, but also during his or her last moments. It is our radical belief that God performs incredible miracles of mercy.

Who knows what took place in these events? We do not know, of course, and will never know in this life.

It is with these instincts of faith and hope, however, aware that we all desperately need his mercy, that the Church has us pray just after the consecration at Mass that God will bring our departed "brothers and sisters, and all the departed," all the people in the world who have died, into the light of his presence (Eucharistic Prayer II).

(A free brochure in English or Spanish, answering questions that Catholics ask about baptism practices and sponsors, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 3315, Peoria, IL 61612. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address or by e-mail in care of jjdietzen@aol.com.) †

My Journey to God

Lamentation

A keening sound comes
From midst the olive trees.
A lamentation ...
To hear it brings me
To the depths of sadness,
And yet ... I listen.

When comes this dirge,
This grievous sound of sorrow,
As though all joy
Has left the earth,
As though the world stops ...
Until the morrow?

By Margaret Jacobi

(Margaret Jacobi is a member of St. Michael Parish in Bradford. Judas kisses Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane as Jesus is handed over to soldiers in this detail from a contemporary Bible illumination. On April 6, 2006, the National Geographic Society released the first modern translation of an ancient gnostic text that describes conversations between Jesus and Judas Iscariot.



Vatican releases DVDs detailing Pope John Paul II, papal transition

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Vatican released a complete catalog of DVDs documenting the life and death of Pope John Paul II, the papal transition of 2005 and the Second Vatican Council as well as what goes on behind Vatican City's walls.

To mark the second anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul and the election of Pope Benedict XVI, the Vatican television center presented a full-color, two-page catalog showcasing the seven DVD collections for sale.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, said at a March 27 press conference that the collection is unique "because CTV [Vatican television center] cameramen can get close to the pope," and capture images and events that other television crews cannot.

For example, the hour-long documentary "Benedict XVI: The Keys of the Kingdom" starts out giving the viewer a ride in the backseat of the popemobile. The camera peers over Pope John Paul's shoulder and shows crowds waving to him as the pope is driven home from Rome's Gemelli hospital a few weeks before

his death on April 2, 2005.

Viewers also are given privileged peeks of the Sistine Chapel where voting for the new pope took place, workers erecting the smoke stack that would tell the world with a puff of white smoke that a pope had been elected, and the cardinals' living quarters during the papal transition.

Accompanied by detailed and colorful commentary, there is also footage of the newly elected Pope Benedict walking up to the closed red curtain moments before he was presented to the world from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica. There is also footage of the joyous celebrations the new pope encountered on the streets when he returned to his old apartment to greet neighbors and friends.

The seven DVDs produced by the Vatican television center currently for sale to the public are:

- "Benedict XVI: The Keys of the Kingdom," which documents the papal transition in 2005.
- "John Paul II: The Pope Who Made History," which



The Vatican has released a catalogue of its DVDs documenting the life and death of Pope John Paul II and the papal transition of 2005.

offers a chronological view of the late pope's life in a five-disc collection.

- "John Paul II: His Life, His Pontificate," which condenses his life and papacy onto one disc.
- "John Paul II: This Is My Story," which features the late pope narrating the most significant events of his life.
- "John Paul II: Seasons of the Apostle," which follows the pope's bold initiatives and courageous mission that never waned over the years even during his illness.
- "The Vatican: Behind the Scenes of the World's Smallest Kingdom," which shows the day-to-day life behind the city's walls.
- "The II Vatican Council" showing special archived footage and interviews with religious leaders explaining the council's reforms.

The multilingual DVDs are available online at www.hdhcommunications.com (the official distributor of the Vatican DVDs), www.amazon.com and www.ebay.it.

Vatican to broadcast papal events in high definition television

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Keeping in step with the fast pace of communications technology, the Vatican television center is to begin broadcasting in high definition.

The first papal event to be aired using the new format will be a special on April 15 of a Mass celebrating Pope Benedict XVI's April 16 birthday.

"We've realized that if we want to continue to do a good job of broadcasting footage of the pope to other television stations, we have to be ready for the day" when high definition is expected to become the norm in television broadcasting, said Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman and head of the Vatican television center, or CTV.

CTV, which is in charge of producing, broadcasting and archiving filmed Vatican and papal events, must keep up with new technology, said Father Federico. If they don't keep up, "people won't be able to see the pope anymore" on their television screens, he said.

After April 15, the center gradually will start to broadcast regular Vatican events in high definition, while the major events will be aired using the new technology.

High-definition television, or HDTV, is a digital broadcasting system for television that offers greater resolution and a sharper image than found in traditional formats.

Father Federico said the capability would allow CTV to provide papal event coverage to the many high-definition television broadcasters around the world that are hungry for programming.

CTV also will begin archiving all new footage filmed in high definition to produce high quality documentaries on DVD, he said.

Vatican employees to celebrate pope's birthday with day off and bonus

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Vatican employees will celebrate Pope Benedict XVI's 80th birthday with a day off from work and a fatter paycheck, said an announcement from a top Vatican official.

April 16 will be a holiday for all Vatican workers, said the March 27 statement from Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state. Employees also will receive about \$667 more in that week's paycheck to mark the celebration.

Pope Benedict will begin his birthday celebrations early by saying a special Mass on April 15 at St. Peter's Basilica.

The Vatican also marks as holidays April 19, the day of the pope's 2005 election, and the "name day" of the pope on March 19, the feast day of St. Joseph, because Pope Benedict's birth name is Joseph Ratzinger.

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Archdiocesan Catholics give aid to the Church in the Holy Land

By Sean Gallagher

As Catholics across central and southern Indiana gather in churches for the solemn liturgies of the Easter Triduum, they will be invited to recall the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus that took place in Jerusalem nearly 2,000 years ago.

While they're doing that here in Indiana, other Catholics who live in the Holy Land will be doing the same.

However, the number of Christians who live in the place where Jesus and his disciples walked—and where the faith came to be—has dropped precipitously over the past several decades, in part because of the political and economic turmoil that has wracked the region for so long.

Over the past 12 years, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land has taken action to make the place where Jesus died and rose again a land of opportunity for the Christians who live there by supporting their education and helping them find housing and jobs.

And many archdiocesan Catholics are joining the foundation's efforts to support what Franciscan Father Peter Vasko, the foundation's president, called "the mother Church."

"Our religious roots and heritage comes from Jerusalem," said Father Peter during a recent visit to Indianapolis.

"Without the Church of Jerusalem, there would be no Church in Cincinnati or Indianapolis or Tokyo or New York."

Whether he is leading pilgrimages in Israel or traveling in the United States, Father Peter is constantly meeting Catholics, some of whom have a longstanding love for the Holy Land or others who are coming to learn about the Church there for the first time.

"It's very exciting to meet more and more Catholics ... who once they hear about it, want to do something about it," he said. "It's a wonderful opportunity, not only to tell the story but to see the love that they have for the Church in the Holy Land."

Husband and wife Dan Crowe and Ruth Stanley, members of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, met Father

Peter during a pilgrimage they took to the Holy Land last November.

While they were there, they viewed and prayed at many of Christianity's holiest places and met Christians who live there.

Shortly after returning home, Crowe and Stanley decided to participate in the foundation's Child Sponsorship Program, which provides tuition support for students in Church-run grade schools in the Holy Land.

"It was very rewarding to be able to ... recognize that maybe, in some small way, we could help to educate this child through graduation," Crowe said.

"It really caught our imagination, that without some care, Christianity could disappear from Israel," Stanley said. "And, if you think about that, we would be visiting tourist sites rather than living places."

Crowe and Stanley aren't the only ones from Indiana giving aid to Christians in the Holy Land. Of the 65 students receiving tuition assistance through the Child Sponsorship Program, 19 are sponsored by Hoosiers.

Additionally, residents of Indiana were the third largest group of supporters of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land in 2006, ranking only behind Texas and California.

In addition to leading them to give support to the Church in the Holy Land, Crowe and Stanley's pilgrimage has also had a continued spiritual impact on their lives from Advent onward.

"All of the scripture readings just came alive in my mind [in Advent and Christmas]," Stanley said, "and so the same thing is happening with Lent and now coming into Holy Week."

Father Peter said that pilgrimages taken by American Catholics to the Holy Land not only benefit them, but are helpful to the Christians who live there.

"They want to meet American Catholics," he said. "They appreciate the fact that we're helping out with their education, getting jobs and building apartments. But they want to see the people."

In part, the Christians there want to see the people who



Franciscan Father Peter Vasko, president of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, sits with St. Monica parishioner Dan Crowe of Indianapolis outside the Tomb of Lazarus in the Holy Land during a pilgrimage last November.

have given them support because that support, according to Father Peter, is starting to make a difference.

Over the time that the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land has supported Christian college students there, 130 have earned degrees and 65 percent of them are now working in a number of professional fields. Much of the remainder is made up of women who have gotten married and chosen to be stay-at-home mothers.

"It's the beginning of something," Father Peter said. "And so [because of] the hard work of the last 12 years that the foundation has been doing, we're seeing some light at the end of the tunnel."

(For more information about the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, log on to www.fhl.org or call toll free 866-905-3787.) †

Palm fronds figure prominently in Holy Land's Palm Sunday procession history

JERUSALEM (CNS)—Each year, thousands of pilgrims, locals, tourists and clergy gather for the traditional Palm Sunday procession, retracing Jesus' steps from the Mount of Olives to the Old City of Jerusalem. They wave palm fronds, commemorating the palm fronds Jesus' followers placed along his path.

In Jesus' times, the palm frond was a symbol of victory, and placement along the pathway of someone considered worthy of this honor suggested a celebration and triumph.

In the Old Testament, Joshua was also given this honor, and palm fronds play an important role in some Jewish holiday rituals.

Date palms figure prominently in the famous Madaba mosaic map, which depicts holy sites in the Holy Land and is now located in Jordan.

The date palm was considered a staple in the Judean desert, providing food, shelter and shade. It was recognized as a symbol of the kingdom of Judea and, because of it, the city of Jericho was a major population center. Many believe that the honey mentioned in the Bible is date honey.

After they conquered the land and expelled the Jews from

the area of Judea, there is evidence that the Romans destroyed many of the trees and did not take care of those which remained, said Amnon Greenberg, head of research and development of the Jewish National Fund, which is involved in the reintroduction of the date palm into the area.

In 2005, Elaine Solowey, a specialist on indigenous fruit trees for the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, planted three date palm seeds found 20 years earlier at Herod the Great's palace. One of the seeds sprouted and has continued to grow slowly, sprouting fronds.

Many date palms growing in Israel come from side shoots of Deglet Noor date trees smuggled in from Iraq and Iran in the early 1900s and later the juicier Medjool dates from Algeria and Morocco by way of California in the 1960s, Greenberg said.

Until recently the cultivation and harvesting of the dates remained much the same as it was in biblical times, he said. But in the past 20 years, research has helped introduce advanced technology such as the pollination of female date trees with the aid of airplanes, a mechanical shaker that makes the harvest 10 times quicker and more efficient by only bringing down the already mature fruit, and a natural freezing process that creates a longer shelf life for the fruit, he said. †

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Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

ALBRECHT, Edward J., 90, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, March 12. Uncle of one.

ANDRESS, Max D., 84, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, March 20. Husband of Dolores Andress. Father of Nancy Hankins, Dave, Mike, Steve and Tom Andress. Grandfather of 21. Great-grandfather of one.

BOSCARDIN, Dora, 95, Sacred Heart, Clinton, March 22. Sister of Elda Dolci.

BRIZENDINE, Kennard, 87, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 19. Husband of Alma Jean Brizendine. Father of Lydia Jurgen, Paula Lawhorn, Bibiana Phillips, Brian, Dan, Peter and Vincent Brizendine. Brother of Shirley Kent. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of five.

BURKHARD, Clara Frances, 85, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, March 15. Sister of Margaret Chipplis, Jo Ann Yurcho, Cecilia and John Burkhard.

CONCANNON, Rose M., 78, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Feb. 25. Wife of Philip Concannon. Mother of Marianna Teague and Philip Concannon.

Sister of Rita Morris. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of four.

DAUBY, Charles R., 81, St. Paul, Tell City, March 20. Husband of Jean (Hess) Dauby. Father of Janean Fella, Jane Kelly, Jolene Peterson and Jack Dauby. Brother of Martha Batie and J.J. Dauby. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of nine.

DERLETH, Mary Elizabeth (Sweeney), 90, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 18. Mother of Patricia Hill, Michael and Thomas Derleth. Grandmother of six.

DIAZ, Armando, Jr., 16, St. Monica, Indianapolis, March 17. Son of Armando Diaz Sr. and Faustina Estrada Diaz. Brother of April Estrada, Amanda and Michael Diaz. Grandson of Elvira Domingo, Amalia Estrada, Alverto and Eva Diaz.

FERKINHOFF, Clifford C., 71, St. Louis, Batesville, March 22. Father of Brenda Lamping and Beverly Meyer. Brother of Joellen Dietz, Donna Schutte, Mary Kathryn Tekulve, Dan and Marvin Ferkinhoff. Grandfather of six.

GRIGGS, Alberta (Hartman), 97, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis, Feb. 27. Mother of Judith Sullivan and Michael Griggs. Sister of Elnora Hardesty. Grandmother of eight.

HUBLER, Catherine M., 88, St. Mary, New Albany, March 17. Sister of Clara Hock, Rita, Adolph and Victor Hubler.

KAMER, Michael D., 49, St. Paul, Sellersburg, March 16. Son of Norma Kamer. Brother of

Laura Warren, Mark and Neil Kamer.

KEMPE, Edith Frances (Goedeker), 99, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 5. Mother of Mary Ann Condon, Helene Williams and Jerome Kempe. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of 12. Great-great-grandmother of two.

KINSER, Rosemary, 65, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 19. Wife of Paul Kinser. Mother of Michelle and Paul Kinser. Sister of Dorothy Mount.

KOCHERT, Lula Mae, 92, St. Mary, Lanesville, March 15. Mother of Rosemary Fanning, Bernice Hatfield, Monica Huber, Norma Roddy, Franciscan Sister Marlene Kochert, Kathleen, Cletus and Lester Kochert. Sister of Irene and Marcella Naville, Marie and Rosette Smith. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 14. (correction)

KREKEL, Agnes C., 98, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarks-ville, March 17. Mother of Joyce Koeberlein, Diane Wibbles, Donald and George Krekel Jr. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of 29.

LARNER, John T., Jr., Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, March 18. Father of Nancy Ruschman, James, John, Stephen and Timothy Lerner. Brother of Kay Scruggs. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of six.

MCCULLUM, Alma L., 93, St. Mary, New Albany, March 10. Mother of Judy Blankenship, Jerry, Richard and Sheldon McCullum. Sister of Clarence Merk. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of 35. Great-great-grandmother of 13.

MEACHAM, Ruby (Sangalang), 50, Christ the King,

Indianapolis, March 6. Wife of Don Meacham. Mother of Rachel and Dean Meacham. Sister of Arlene Cayetano and Julian Sangalang.

MUNCHEL, William S., 85, Holy Family, Oldenburg, March 24. Husband of Janette Munchel. Father of Elaine Nobbe, Charlene Whittaker, Darrell and Vernon Munchel. Brother of Bernadetta Vonderheide. Grandfather of 16. Great-grandfather of 19.

OBERTING, Robert Eugene, 85, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, March 25. Husband of Hazel Oberting. Father of Leo Oberting. Stepfather of Donna Liggett and Jerry Bills.

OLIVER, James Irvin, 84, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, March 17. Father of Debi Muccillo, Denise Reed, Pam Woodward, Dan and James Oliver. Brother of Jerry Oliver. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of 21.

REED, Marilyn E., 86, Our Lady of Lourdes, Indianapolis, March 11. Mother of Sandra Duvall, Mark Stephen, Christopher and Gregory Reed. Sister of Dorothy Hollenbeck. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 16.

ROTH, Kendall Ann, 35, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Indianapolis, March 18. Wife of David A. Roth. Mother of Clara, Margaret and Thomas Roth. Daughter of Ken and Debby Hansen. Sister of Jamie Hansen and Krissy Lagemann. Granddaughter of Alice Duerkop and Grace Hansen.

ROWE, Catherine A., 88, St. Paul, Tell City, March 18. Mother of Kenneth Rowe. Sister of Frances Pekinpaugh and Mary Rust.

SELLMER, Nola Cecelia, 97, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarks-ville, March 19. Mother of Patricia Ahern and Michael Sellmer. Sister of Nellie Randall. Grandmother of 15. Great-grandmother of 37. Great-great-grandmother of five.

SHANAHAN, John E., 61, St. Paul, Sellersburg, March 16. Father of Meaghan Shanahan. Brother of Jeri, Kathryn, Mary and Michael Shanahan.

SHEPHERD, Evangeline (Vesh), 99, St. Monica, Indianapolis, March 23. Mother of Ann Lankford, Marjorie Runion, Rosalie and Louis Shepherd Jr. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 10.

SOBIECH, Andrew J., 74, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, March 26. Husband of Margaret Sobiech. Father of Mary Ann Barrett, Michael, Paul and Stephen Barrett. Brother of Sally Bradley, Eleanore Finnel and Marie Hayes. Grandfather of seven.

STILLER, Alma W., 92, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs, March 23. Mother of Verna Habermel, Ruth Rinkhoff, Carl and Martin Stiller. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 10.

STRIEGEL, A. Martin, 62, Holy Family, New Albany, March 23. Husband of Elise Striegel. Father of Brianna Wills, Laurie and Scott Striegel. Son of Martha Striegel. Brother of Christine Baumann, Shirley Harbison, Jeanette Hayden, Debbie Page, Barbara Vance, Marvin, Robert and Tony Striegel. Grandfather of three.

THOMPSON, Abigah P., 82, St. Anthony, Indianapolis, March 17. Husband of Mary Thompson. Father of Karin

Johnson, Kristine Stanich, Michelle, Andrew, Mark, Matthew and Michael Thompson. Grandfather of 17. Great-grandfather of 16.

TRIPLETT, William H., 85, Holy Family, New Albany, March 21. Husband of Barbara Triplett. Father of Kathy Futral, Keith and Steve Triplett. Brother of Martha Anderson and John Triplett.

WALLACE, Ella L., 81, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, March 15. Wife of Frank Wallace Jr. Mother of Colleen Daniels, Mike Hutchings, Frank and Timothy Wallace. Grandmother of 14. Great-grandmother of 25.

WANINGER, Maxine J., 78, St. Paul, Tell City, March 21. Mother of Charles, Don, Jerry and John Waninger. Sister of Betty Hanselman, Edna Meunier and Eileen Schaefer. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of six.

WERNER, Jacob J., 71, St. Monica, Indianapolis, March 27. Husband of Marcia Werner. Father of Michelle Meer, Malcolm, Melvin and Myron Werner. Brother of Ella Mae Amberger, Delores Amberger, Lorene Brancamp, Marty Doll, Regina Lowe, Mary Merkel, Rita Meyer, Carol Schwegman, Betty Young, Franciscan Sister Cleo Werner, Charles, Kenneth, Uriel and Virgil Werner. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of one.

ZARRELLE, Mary Alice, 92, St. Paul, Tell City, March 21. Mother of Mary Jo Burke, Paula Heck, Mary Alice Thurmond and Catherine Zoercher. Sister of Margie Rhodes. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of four. †

LEGACY FOR OUR MISSION:

For Our Children and the Future

CATHOLIC CHARITIES FOOD BANK SEEKS TO MEET GROWING DEMAND

Many people associate soup kitchens with the bleak days of the Great Depression and believe that the need for food cannot exist today in our country, the land of plenty. But in Terre Haute, the need is very real . . . and steadily growing. The *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign seeks to meet these needs.

The Catholic Charities Terre Haute Food Bank gathers and distributes nearly 2 million pounds of food annually to its 90 member agencies including soup kitchens, church food pantries, senior citizen centers, senior housing programs, youth day care centers, church camps, youth residential facilities and other charitable agencies in seven west-central Indiana counties. The food bank, opened in 1980, is part of a national food collection and distribution program.

"If kids don't get adequate nutrition they can't learn as well or stay awake, so it's very important that they be properly fed."

Food Bank Director Patricia Etling described the seven-county area served by the program as "very much in need of adequate opportunities" because of unemployment and underemployment. "Also, the baby boomer population is aging and in some homes they have to decide whether to buy medicine or buy food."

Etling added that feeding young people is a major focus: "If kids don't get adequate nutrition they can't learn as well or stay awake, so it's very important that they be properly fed. In some cases there are youngsters who come from an environment where one or both parents are incarcerated, so what are we as a community doing to take care of them and their needs?"

Still another group helped by the food bank is the so-called working poor, Etling explained. "They're employed, but not at a living wage. They don't know how many hours they'll be given to work each week, and they have no medical benefits. If



they get the flu and have to miss work, they'll have no income and no money to buy medicine. A lot of people like this simply fall through the cracks."

Former Agency Director John E. Etling echoed his wife's observations. "The demand for food has been steadily increasing, particularly in the past two years. The good jobs just aren't there any more. I know of a couple working two or three minimum-wage jobs and they can't make ends meet. I disagree with the perception that people in these circumstances are lazy. They aren't. If it weren't for soup kitchens and such to supplement their diets, they'd go hungry."

The food bank has been impacted by several factors, he explained: a produce company and other businesses in the area that had been contributing food have closed. Some of the country's excess food that might have found its way to Terre Haute has been diverted to the war effort. And some plants and other businesses in the area have closed.

David Siler, executive director of Catholic Charities for the archdiocese, added, "There is a profound need for the food bank in the Terre Haute area. This need is growing because of the significant challenges to the local economy brought on

by the departure of manufacturing plants—and jobs—from the area and the increasing use of drugs that is pushing families into poverty."

The support of the *Legacy for Our Mission* is vital, John Etling explained, since it helps determine how much the program can accomplish. Siler added, "It would be wonderful if the food bank weren't needed, but it is, and the *Legacy for Our Mission* is seeking to provide operating funds and other assistance."

Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocesan capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and addresses the needs of archdiocesan ministries such as Catholic Charities. By contributing to Legacy for Our Mission through your local parish, a portion of your gift will be allocated to Catholic Charities and distributed to organizations such as the Catholic Charities Terre Haute Food Bank.

Please visit the new online home of the *Legacy for Our Mission* campaign at www.archindy.org/legacy. It can also be accessed at www.LegacyforOurMission.org.

Catholic Charities – an Etling Family Tradition

Catholic Charities Terre Haute is an agency that provides assistance to people in need in the Wabash Valley: people who are poor, homeless, elderly and neglected youth. In addition to the food bank, it operates several charitable facilities and programs including a homeless shelter and a youth center as well as a Christmas gift program, a furniture and household item program, and a housing and assistance program for seniors.

At the inception of each of these programs was John E. Etling, whose three-decade tenure as founder and head of the agency ended with his retirement in 2005. His son, John C., today carries on the Etling tradition as agency director. In addition to their heavy workloads for Catholic Charities Terre Haute over the years, John and Pat were blessed with 10 children.

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For information about rates for classified advertising, call (317) 236-1572.

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Rob Rash
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian
Indianapolis, IN 46202
(317) 235-1544 or rrash@archindy.org

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Résumés or phone inquiries may be directed to:
Maribeth Ransel, Interim President
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