

Individuals and parishes need to evangelize

By Ken Ogorek

Evangelization has been around as long as the Good News itself. We can be happy forever thanks to the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why, then, would we talk about a New Evangelization? Pope John Paul II articulated where evangelization needs to head in the 21st century and beyond. A new evangelization will help bring about the new springtime of Christian faith that Pope John Paul saw coming and of which we already see signs.

We all need to be evangelized constantly throughout our lives. The New Evangelization brings special focus to three specific groups of us with three related yet separate needs.

Although his Church has been active for over 2,000 years, we occasionally encounter folks who, practically speaking, have never really heard about Jesus. This group is sometimes called the unchurched.

People in this predicament deserve to have at least a basic message about our Savior delivered to them in various ways.

Individual Christians can and should look for opportunities to connect with the unchurched around them on simple, human levels—always ready to mention what a difference Jesus and his Church make in everyday life. Parishes should develop strategies to evangelize their neighbors who have this real, urgent need.

Sometimes due to alienation, sometimes due to indifference, sometimes for no clear reason at all, many baptized Catholics cease any meaningful practice of our faith.

Especially in so-called developed countries—materially developed at least—the distractions of everyday life often lure Catholics to a fantasy world, a world where God doesn't matter, where life imitates TV sitcoms, where pleasure and happiness are mistaken as identical.

This group requires special attention. With focused efforts from individual Christians and parish evangelization committees—Does your parish have one?—by God's grace the alienated can become "re-verts," coming home to the Catholic faith of their youth, coming home to joy, coming home to salvation.

Even the most well-formed, conscientious Catholics need to be reminded constantly that our hope of salvation from sin and death is the suffering, death and resurrection of our Father's only Son, Jesus, the one Savior of the world. This Good News needs to permeate various ministry efforts and parish life in general so that by the Holy Spirit's power it penetrates our culture—building God's kingdom as fully as possible until it is fully realized when Christ comes again in glory.

This doesn't happen by accident. Parishes need to continually seek ways of evangelizing each active member of Christ's local Body. Although the specific needs of practicing Catholics, the alienated and unchurched may differ, under the umbrella of parish evangelization committees, their right to hear the Good News proclaimed will be fulfilled.

Evangelization and catechesis are closely related. More and more parishes, schools and apostolates are exploring this relationship in very fruitful ways.

Our archdiocese has a storied history of evangelization efforts. As we seek to establish and reinvigorate parish evangelization efforts, we know that seeds sown and watered by faithful women and men of the past are bearing fruit today. May the seeds we sow and the faith we nurture be fruitful in God's time—helped along by 151 parish evangelization teams.

(Ken Ogorek is the archdiocesan director of catechesis. Evangelization is one of his administrative responsibilities.) †

College students take initiative in proclaiming the Gospel on campus

By John Shaughnessy

At Christmas, the Catholic college students sang carols at nursing homes and sold candy canes on campus, raising money to make the holiday a special one for a family in need.

On Valentine's Day, they sold carnations to help support pro-life efforts, and they've also prayed for expectant mothers as they've kept vigil outside an abortion clinic.

Still, the proudest moment of this school year for the members of the Catholic Student Association at the University of Indianapolis came at Easter when two non-Catholic students chose to enter the Church.

"It was wonderful," says Scott Knust, the president of the Catholic Student Association at the University of Indianapolis. "We just try to be a presence on campus, to teach the real truth of Catholicism. Not just to teach it, but to live it and help people be transformed—myself as well—into the image and likeness of Christ."

The efforts at the University of Indianapolis reflect the increased commitment that Catholic college students and the archdiocese are making to deepen the faith of other Catholic students and to evangelize to non-Catholic students.

Since July 1, 2008—at the request of Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein—Father Rick Nagel and Mary Schaffner have been leading a renewed archdiocesan effort to connect with young people, including making campus ministry visits to Butler University in Indianapolis, Marian College in Indianapolis, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Indiana University in Bloomington, DePauw University in Greencastle, and Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

"What the students are doing inspires me," says Mary Schaffner, the program coordinator of the archdiocese's young adult ministry. "It's what all Catholics should be doing. I'm struck by how important it is to them to evangelize and



Butler University students Colin Brodmerkel, left, and Ann Govert share in a discussion about their Catholic faith in a meeting on Oct. 30, 2008, with Father Rick Nagel, the director of young adult ministry for the archdiocese. The archdiocese's young adult ministry program has deepened its commitment to connecting with college students this year, meeting with students at Butler, Indiana University, Marian College, Indiana State University and Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis.

be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Rather than just doing things, they're trying to be a presence."

She shares the story of how Catholic students at Indiana State took a different approach to collecting cans of food for

the poor.

"They said they just weren't doing it as a social service project," Schaffner notes. "They were doing it as a spiritual service—taking the presence of Jesus Christ to the

See COLLEGE, page 12

Parishes organize evangelization efforts

By Sean Gallagher

Pete Cerar, a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, sees himself as an average Catholic, just your regular 41-year-old father of four.

Jerry Laue, a member of Annunciation Parish in Brazil, is a small-town hospital administrator who heard a priest make a challenge from the pulpit and took him at his word.

These are men who love their Catholic faith and want to help others love it as much as they do. And they're working to spread that love through formal groups that their parishes have established recently.

These evangelization teams are helping active parishioners grow in their knowledge and love of their faith, are seeking to invite inactive Catholics back into the heart of the Church and are reaching out to those who are not active in any faith tradition.

For Cerar, though, it all boils down to one simple goal.

"If I can help more people get to heaven, that's all the better for everybody."

Cerar, Wendy Braun and other members of St. Simon's evangelization team have been making several efforts to achieve that objective.

They're helping to build up adult faith formation opportunities, putting "everyday evangelization" suggestions in the parish bulletin, experimenting with using

name tags at Mass to foster a more welcoming atmosphere, and making phone calls to registered parishioners who haven't been at the parish recently.

It's this last initiative that has Braun excited.

She said that the phone calls were simply focused on finding out how the people were doing and if the parish could do anything to help them.

"We've had a really good response from that," Braun said. "It was really worth it. None of us were really comfortable doing this. But it's something that we got better at."



Jerry Laue



Wendy Braun



Father Todd Goodson, pastor of St. Ambrose Parish in Seymour and Our Lady of Providence Parish in Brownstown, preaches during a Sunday Advent Mass on Dec. 2, 2007, at St. Ambrose Church in Seymour. Annunciation Parish in Brazil and St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis have launched formal evangelization efforts that have recently focused on inviting inactive Catholics and others outside their parishes to Mass.

"People really appreciated the calls. Some people are coming back to church."

Reaching out to the margins of the parish and beyond is an important part of evangelization, but Cerar sees just getting active parishioners simply to talk regularly about their faith as an important preparation for that.

"As I grow stronger in my Catholic faith, I recognize that if I can share [my faith] openly with others, it makes it easier for others to start sharing also," he said. "If a guy like me, ... [can do it], it's OK to do faith sharing before a parish council meeting

See PARISHES, page 12

Focus on faith

Sacramental preparation helps people grow closer to God

By Mary Ann Wyand

"If you knew God would be somewhere, wouldn't you want to go to see him?"

That's No. 2 on the list of the "Top 10 reasons to go to Mass" published in *The Catholic Herald* in April as part of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee's "Living Our Faith—See You at Mass" evangelization campaign. Their campaign theme is "A love beyond belief. Act on it."

The Eucharist, first and foremost, and sacramental preparation for baptism, first Communion, reconciliation, confirmation and marriage are excellent opportunities to evangelize individuals, couples and families, explained Ken Ogorek, director of catechesis for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

"It's good to offer different reasons and a variety of benefits for celebrating Mass," Ogorek said. "Some of these reasons speak to the fact that God loves us so much that whatever he asks of us is for our benefit. He would never ask anything of us that wasn't going to help us and heal us and make us whole."

"So when we see in sacred Scripture and sacred Tradition that worshipping him on a weekly basis, if not more often, is one of his central commands," Ogorek said, "... we know that the more important his command, the more central it is to our own happiness, health and welfare. He wants us to be happy so he asks of us what will help us to have peace and happiness and joy."

Ogorek likes to remind people that "God gave us the Ten Commandments, not the Ten Suggestions."

Following those commandments enables people to have a personal relationship with God, he said, and Catholics who have lapsed in the practice of their faith need to be reminded of that.

"On a weekly basis, we need to gather with our sisters and brothers in Christ and worship him in his Real Presence," Ogorek said. "The sacraments aren't man-made.

The sacraments are gifts to us from God. They are entirely unique ways of encountering God. ... The grace of the sacraments is very real, and we only hurt ourselves if we deny ourselves that grace, that help, that loving power from God.

"There are few guarantees in life," he said, "and we know that suffering and family difficulties of one form or another are bound to enter every family's life. ... The sacraments help us maintain a basic sense of peace. ... The Lord spoke often of the lost sheep and the joy in heaven over any one person who repents and reconnects with God."

Marty Williams enjoys nurturing people in the faith as well as nurturing his crops and livestock.

In addition to farming, Williams serves as the administrator of religious education at St. Augustine Parish in Leopold. He and his wife, Charlena, also volunteer as a sponsor couple for marriage preparation classes at St. Michael Parish in Cannelton.

"It's very important that couples grow together in the faith," he explained. "They need to nurture one another's faith needs."

Williams said participating in the sacraments together is the best way for engaged and married couples to do that.

"We have had engaged couples that have been pretty far apart in their faith, even to the extent of having different religions, and it's just amazing to me how our [marriage preparation] program brings them closer together," he said. "So many times, the non-Catholic partner has joined the Catholic Church just from the things that have been said and done in the marriage preparation classes."

Often, he said, parents who have lapsed in their Mass attendance return to active participation in the Church when their children prepare to receive sacraments.

"Once their kids get involved in the first Communion class, we notice a big change in the family's habits of coming to

Photo by Sean Gallagher



Sacramental preparation offers unique opportunities for individuals, couples and families to reconnect with their faith in new ways. As parents prepare for their child's baptism, first reconciliation and first Communion, they receive a refresher course in the teachings of the Catholic Church and often become more active in practicing their faith.

church," Williams said. "Learning about the faith with their children is an opportunity for rebirth and reconnecting."

Jennifer Buell has served as the administrator of religious education at Annunciation Parish in Brazil for three years, and enjoys helping parents reconnect with their faith through refresher opportunities made possible by sacramental preparation for their children.

"I think that's what tends to happen as we get older," Buell said. "We may have had religious education when we were young, but some teenagers fall away [from the Church] once they're confirmed then lose the opportunity to continue learning."

"They come back for marriage preparation or, in the case of parents, have forgotten some of [the Church teachings] over time," she said. "So as their children go through the sacramental preparation

classes, they relearn what they have forgotten and it is an opportunity for them to reconnect with their faith in new ways."

Volunteer catechists also grow in their faith, Buell said, by teaching parish religious education classes for children.

Lisa Whitaker, the coordinator of religious education at St. Joseph Parish in Clark County for three years, said parents ask a lot of faith-related questions as their children prepare to receive sacraments.

"We have a strategic plan to re-evaluate and rework all of our parish sacramental preparation programs," Whitaker said. "We're looking at new ways to include opportunities to evangelize, and to share Christ's life-giving and transformational power, especially through the grace of the sacraments. ... We want to extend the Church's hands as the Body of Christ, be a welcoming community, and help affirm and inform people in the Catholic faith." †

Top 10 reasons to go to Mass

- 1 It's the most intimate and personal way to make a connection with Jesus Christ and his sacrifice on the cross.
- 2 If you knew God would be somewhere, wouldn't you want to go to see him?
- 3 Sure, times are tough, but we all have plenty to be thankful for. Go to Mass to say, "Thanks!"
- 4 Some of the greatest people in history were Mass-goers—Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Pope John Paul II.
- 5 Want to lower your blood pressure and live longer? Attend Mass. Researchers have discovered a direct link.
- 6 People who invest money secure their retirement. People who invest in their prayer life secure eternity.
- 7 Life is complicated. Get directions for life at Mass.
- 8 Need someone to talk to? God listens.
- 9 It's the best way to pray for your family and friends.
- 10 One of the Ten Commandments instructs, "Make Holy the Sabbath."

(Reprinted with permission from *The Catholic Herald* and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Wis. To read their evangelization stories, log on to www.livingourfaith.net.) †

Looking for a different kind of getaway this summer?

The Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, invite you to a spiritual retreat on their beautiful monastery grounds. Enjoy warm Benedictine hospitality in a peaceful, relaxed atmosphere. Open to men and women of all faiths.

Centering Prayer Retreats: Intensive and Post-Intensive

June 13–20, 2009

Facilitators Sisters Maria Tasto, OSB, and Renée Wargel, OSB, are certified presenters of Centering Prayer.

Directed Retreats

July 10–17, 2009, and September 4–11, 2009
Led by a team of spiritual directors.

Megan McKenna Guided Retreat

August 2–8, 2009

"Women in the Scriptures as Witnesses, Mystics, and Prophets" — McKenna is an internationally known author, lecturer, retreat leader, and spiritual director.

Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana
Spirituality Ministry

800-880-2777 • spirituality@rbedome.org

www.thedome.org/programs

Heating and Air Conditioning

SERVING CENTRAL INDIANA

THIELE Heating & Air Conditioning SINCE 1883

www.callthiele.com
SERVICE & REPLACEMENT SPECIALISTS
John & Kara Traub
Owners
Our staff has over 100 years of Catholic education

Furnaces as low as \$999.00*

50,000 BTU UPFLOW
*Flue liner, Taxes, Permits, Misc. Material Not Included

126 YEARS OF SERVING HOOSIERS
1883-2009

317-639-1111
"INDY'S OLDEST HEATING & COOLING COMPANY" SINCE 1883

SERVICE CALL \$59.95
SAVE \$30.00
Expires 6/15/09
Coupons must be presented at time of purchase. Cannot be combined with any other offer!
639-1111



A Catholic toolbox for evangelization

As Jesus' disciples, we are committed to building. We build relationships, we build community and, ultimately, we help build Jesus Christ's Church on Earth. Just like any other builder, we need tools.

Basic Tools

- Our faith in Jesus Christ
- Our frequent celebration of the sacraments
- Prayer
- Our frequent invitations to others to join us at Mass and parish events
- Our understanding of the faith

A great resource is the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*. For more information on it and other publications of the U.S. bishops, log on to www.usccbpublishing.org.



Specialty Tools for the Unchurched

- Witness to your faith by sharing your faith story
- Knowing the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (talk to a parish staff person who oversees RCIA)
- Understanding common misunderstandings about the Catholic faith
- Committing to stay in touch with these sisters and brothers who deserve to hear the Good News

Try reading "Top 10 Questions Catholics are Asked," a pamphlet published by Our Sunday Visitor. And check out www.catholic.com, a Web site with lots of factual information about the Catholic faith.

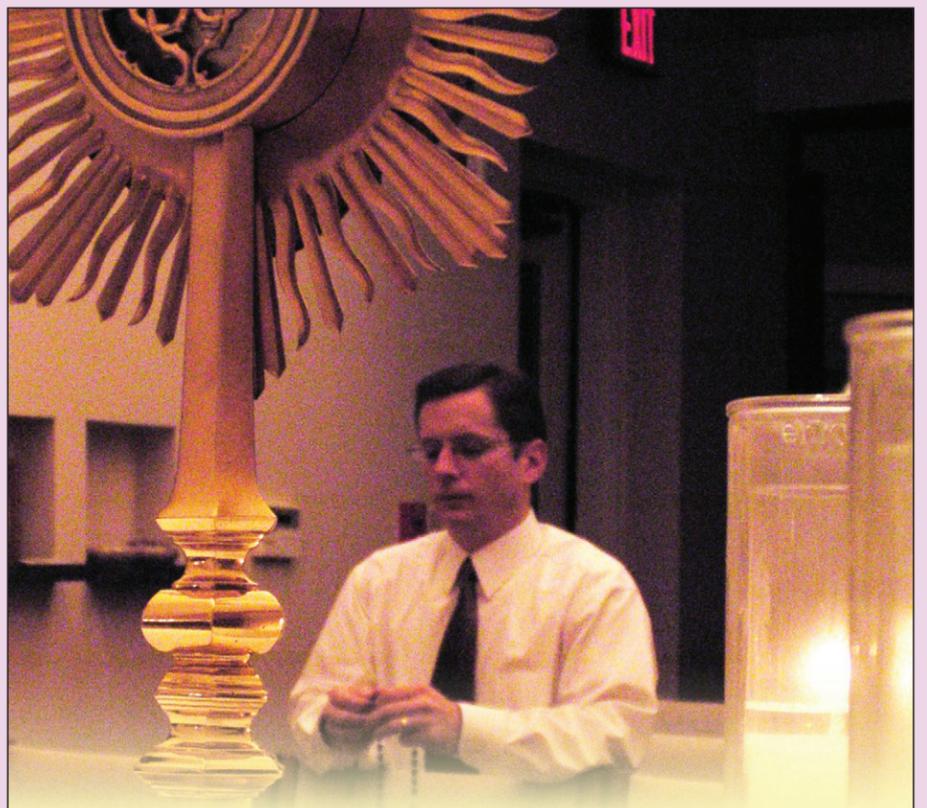


Tools to draw back inactive Catholics

- Patient listening
- Compassionate responses to the problems that led them away from the Church
- Understanding that faith is renewed in God's time
- Setting out Catholic reading material in your home

Such books or pamphlets could include *What Catholics Believe* by Mike Aquilina and Father Kris Stubna, and "Top 10 Reasons for Coming Back to the Catholic Church."

Also check out www.CatholicsComeHome.org, a Web site geared for inactive Catholics or those who are discovering the Catholic faith for the first time.



Catholic battery chargers

- Participate in eucharistic adoration
- Go on a retreat or day of recollection
- Dedicate time for prayer every day
- Participate in adult faith formation opportunities
- Commit to go to confession about once a month

Check out www.lighthousecatholicmedia.com for many reasonably priced audio CDs that can educate you and others about the faith. †

PARISHES

continued from page 9

or an athletic practice. Maybe it will be OK for other dads, moms, guys and gals to do it as well."

Braun also sees the evangelization team as helping people involved in the varied ministries of the parish see the ways in which they can evangelize others in their particular activities.

"We see ourselves as resources to help all these other folks in the parish, first of all, recognize that what they're doing is Catholic evangelization as we understand it, and then just to help them think about it in light of that," she said. "Presented that way, people have wonderful ideas. They just hadn't thought about it before."

Father Dominic Chukwudi, a former administrator of Annunciation Parish, inspired Laue when he challenged his parishioners in a homily to become evangelizers.

"I really took [him] seriously," Laue said. "I thought, 'I'm going to go out and make contact with several [inactive Catholics] and find out, kind of on my own, what were the issues and what we can do to invite them back in a way that they don't necessarily feel that they're being under a microscope.'"

Laue eventually joined other parishioners with a similar desire to form its evangelization committee.

And, in an outreach effort similar to their counterparts at St. Simon Parish, they sent out greeting cards during Lent to several registered parishioners they hadn't seen at church for a while, inviting them to come back for Easter.

Annette Durchholz, a member of the committee, liked the results she saw.



Annette Durchholz

"I noticed on Easter that there were a couple of people that I personally had sent cards to that were in church that I hadn't seen for a long time," she said. "That made me really excited."

"I'm really excited just by the

small success so far to see what we're going to do in the future."

Getting people to come to Mass is an important part of evangelization for Laue.

He's invited some Protestant co-workers at St. Vincent Clay Hospital in Brazil, where he works, to come to Mass with him.

In fact, Laue hopes to see in the future the celebration of what he has called a "friendship Mass," where literature that explains the Mass to non-Catholic friends is given out in advance.

"It would be a celebration of friendships and to expose people, to get them into our doors to at least have them understand our

faith better," he said.

Ken Ogorek, the archdiocese's director of catechesis, said you don't have to look any further than the Bible to learn the priority that parishes should put on formal evangelization efforts.

"I often think that of all the things that Jesus could have said immediately before ascending to the Father, of all the last-minute clarifying instructions he could have given, he was pretty specific: Go everywhere, baptize everyone, teach them everything," Ogorek said. "Part of being a parish is permeating the area and really encouraging people to enter the life of the Church."

He also said that the benefits of organized evangelization initiatives in a parish spread far and wide.

"Every time we engage in evangelizing activity, it helps to renew our own faith, our own enthusiasm for the Lord and his Church," Ogorek said. "So even though we tend to think of evangelization as something that



A volunteer bastes ribs on a grill during the annual Midsummer Festival at St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis. Pete Cerar, a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis and a member of its evangelization team, said parish social events like summer festivals or picnics can be opportunities for faith communities to evangelize.

we do for them, whoever they are, I would say that the more that we focus on evangelizing activity, the more benefit that we ourselves receive." †

COLLEGE

continued from page 9

people they were helping, and also to the people who were helping them."

She also mentions conversations with Catholic students at Indiana University in Bloomington who want to establish at the beginning of the next school year a more visible and welcoming presence to all students, no matter what their faith background.

That was the approach that Knust and a core group of about 20 other students at the University of Indianapolis have taken for the past three years on campus.

The Catholic Student Association created car pools on campus so that Catholic students could have a ride to nearby Good Shepherd Church on Sundays for Mass. They performed service projects, raking leaves for the elderly in the fall. They also held a Bible study session on Monday evenings.

"One thing that bugs me about Catholics is that we tend not to read the Bible as much as we should," said Knust, 22, who also competed in track and field

in college as a pole vaulter. "If you want to try to find out what God wants for you, it's in Scripture. When you're talking to Protestants, that's where you have to start. It's essential to help you stand up for your faith."

Lindsey Loffer was another leader of the Catholic Student Association this year, a year in which she and another non-Catholic student entered the Church at Easter.

"I was so hungry for the Eucharist and being part of everything in the Church," said Loffer, who is 22.

Her path to becoming a Catholic in college has also made her realize just how important it is to help Catholic college students keep their faith and deepen it during this crucial time in their lives.

"People are so vulnerable at this age," she says. "They're away for the first time from the guidance of their parents. That's why we try to reach freshmen in the first six weeks they're on campus."

"If you don't connect with them and let them know that they can continue to grow in their faith, they'll fall away. I've seen so many people fall away because they start to get involved with the wrong crowd and

wrong activities."

As dedicated as the members of the Catholic Student Association are to their faith, they are also equally "very inviting," says David Wilson, the parish life coordinator at Good Shepherd Parish in Indianapolis.

"Their faith is deep, and they're very sincere in bringing other students into the faith and encouraging other Catholics on campus to deepen their faith," Wilson says. "They're wonderful. No one is telling them to do this. This is all self-initiated on their part."

Knust believes it's the best way for Catholics to approach their faith in college and in their lives.

"You have to be a voice for Christ and the Church," he says. "You want people to know what Christ did for them. The more people know about Jesus Christ, the better. The more we follow him, the better."

Having graduated in early May, Knust will pursue a master's degree in education, hoping to become a physics teacher in high school.

Submitted photo



Members of the Catholic Student Association at the University of Indianapolis pose for a photo at Good Shepherd Church in Indianapolis. Good Shepherd Parish has been a spiritual home for members of the association, a group that works to deepen the faith of Catholic students and to bring non-Catholics to the faith.

He leaves college knowing that two students have already agreed to continue the leadership of the Catholic Student Association on campus. He also mentions that Father Nagel plans to help him get involved with the archdiocese's efforts to connect with college students and other young adults.

"I'm looking forward to it," Knust says. "We want to reach out and show them the importance of developing their faith." †

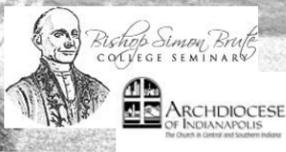
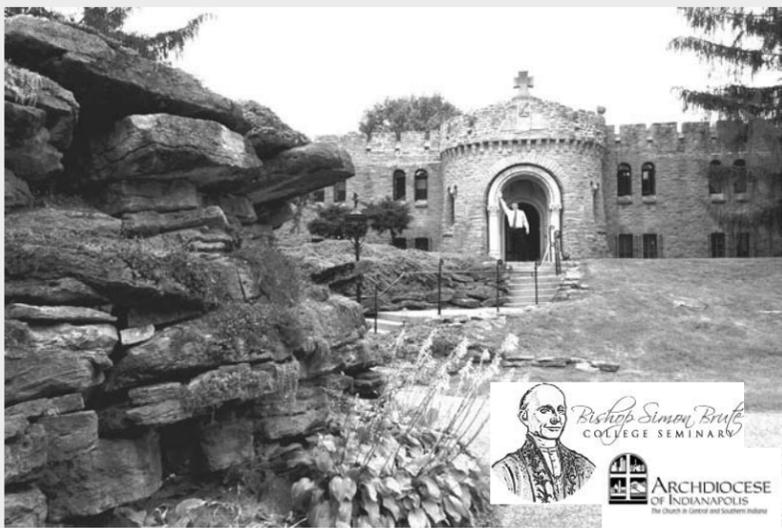
Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary

OPEN HOUSE—PUBLIC INVITED

May 17, 2009 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Come and see Indy's best kept architectural secret! Former home of the Carmelite Nuns, this magnificent building now is the home of college seminarians in formation for the priesthood. Join us for a walk through the facility and experience what we have found in our first year—a very special place!

2500 Cold Spring Road
Indianapolis, IN 46222
(Former Carmelite Monastery)
South of 30th Street on the
west side of Cold Spring Road.



True wealth is about more than money. It's about achieving life.®

Let us help you achieve what matters most to you. Contact a Merrill Lynch Financial Advisor today.



The GME Group
Peter G. Gundy, CRP®, CRPC®
Jason A. Murdock, CFM
Darin L. Etchison, CFM

(317) 848-5543
www.fa.ml.com/GMEGROUP

Future seminar dates are
6/16, 7/14 and 8/18.
Look for inserts with more details.

Brenda Dages, Jason Murdock, Jynene Fry,
Peter Gundy, Rachel Grabb and Darin Etchison



Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated is a registered broker-dealer and a wholly owned subsidiary of Bank of America Corporation. Investment products:

Are Not FDIC Insured	Are Not Bank Guaranteed	May Lose Value
----------------------	-------------------------	----------------

It's about achieving life and Total Merrill (design) are registered service marks of Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc. Total Merrill is a service mark of Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc. © 2009 Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated. All rights reserved. Member SIPC.