Saint Meinrad celebrates 150 years

By Brandon A. Evans

The Benedictine mission of prayer and work is a timeless ministry operating in time. Perhaps that’s why the Benedictines are one of the oldest religious orders in the Christian world.

With their lives based on The Rule of St. Benedict, written in the sixth century, the monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey have persevered in the changing landscape of Indiana since 1854.

So throughout this year, they are celebrating with those they serve and those dear to them. There are a variety of public and private events. The first major event will be on March 21 with a procession from Ferdinand, Ind., to Saint Meinrad in celebration of the first procession of monks 150 years ago to their new home. Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, himself a Benedictine who spent almost 30 years of vowed life at the Archabbey, said that the sesquicentennial is a cause for joy “because it’s a celebration of fidelity and stability in the work of God.”

“We are thriving,” said Benedictine Archabbot Lambert Reilly. “We’ve been able to move with the times in supplying the Church’s needs.”

Over the years, Saint Meinrad has not only done good work for the Church, but has also proved its fruitfulness by seeing five other Benedictine foundations spread out from its Archabbey. It started out, though, simply as a matter of need.

In 1852, a pastor in Jasper, Ind., Father Joseph Kundek, found himself at a lack to help the hundreds of families that needed him. With the permission of Bishop Maurice de Saint-Palais, fourth bishop of Vincennes, Father Kundek traveled to the Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln, Switzerland, and got them to send two monks to Indiana to study the possibility of establishing a new foundation.

It was to become a spiritual center and source of new, native clergy. And starting on March 21, 1854, it was just that. As many good things are done, so many bad.

Students get advice on strengthening their faith

By Sean Gallagher

BEech grove — “Who has the power? We’ve got the power!”

“Who’d you get it from? Jesus!”

These words echoed loudly in the recently dedicated Holy Name Parish Life Center on the morning of March 11 during the Youth Rally for Indianapolis South Deanery students.

Father Jonathan Meyer, the archdiocese’s associate director of ministry, youth and young adults, asked the questions and the nearly 600 seventh- and eighth-grade students from the schools of the South Deanery thundered back their response.

Father Meyer earlier had read Luke 9:1-6 in which Jesus gave power to the Apostles to cast out demons, heal the sick and proclaim the Gospel. His message to the youth that morning was that Jesus had given that same power to each of them.

“They are able to cast out demons through the sacrament of reconciliation, heal the sick through prayer for those who are ill, and proclaim the Gospel through speaking about Jesus and their good deeds, he said.

But Father Meyer was only preparing the youth for the keynote speaker for the day: Amy Welborn, the author of the popular Prove It series of books published by Our Sunday Visitor.

She gave the students three suggestions to help make their Catholic faith important to them.

First, she proposed that they begin to look at the Church from a new perspective.

“The Church is about Jesus,” Welborn said.

Catholic author Amy Welborn asks questions of her audience of nearly 600 seventh- and eighth-grade students from Indianapolis South Deanery schools on March 11 in the Holy Name Parish Life Center in Beech Grove.

Near overturn of Roe vs. Wade revealed in Justice Blackmun’s papers

WASHINGTON (CNS) — With the recent release of Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun’s personal papers, many people have been looking closely at his observations on one specific case: the near overturn of legal abortion in a 1992 decision.

Blackmun’s papers, all 1,585 boxes of them from his 42 years on the court, were made public on March 4, exactly five years after his death. They provide a behind-the-scenes look at two decades of court decisions and shed particular light on just how closely the Planned Parenthood vs. Casey case in 1992 nearly went the other direction.

Within his files, stored at the Library of Congress, are several drafts of the Casey ruling with Blackmun’s handwritten notes in the margins showing where he agreed with other justices or wanted to change their minds.

Particularly telling are notes about Justice Anthony Kennedy, who was initially voting in the Casey ruling to overturn the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision written by Blackmun. After writing the Roe majority opinion, Blackmun said he received more than 60,000 pieces of hate mail, a small sample of which is in the library collection of his papers.

The Casey case, which was upheld in a 5-4 vote, reaffirmed the “central holding” of the Roe decision, but as a compromise position it also upheld four provisions of Pennsylvania’s Abortion Control Act that it said would not pose “undue burden” on pregnant women, including informed consent, a waiting period, parental notification and other record-keeping prior to abortions.

According to reports in Blackmun’s files, Chief Justice William Rehnquist initially led a five-justice majority in the Casey case and he had been set to write the majority opinion when Justice Kennedy suddenly changed his mind.

Kennedy wrote to Blackmun saying he...
said, “And if you focus on Jesus as the center of your church life, you’ll never be bored at Mass again.”

Second, Welborn encouraged her audience to think of their faith as a gift. “It’s not ‘got to,’ it’s ‘got from’,” Welborn stated.

She then raised various examples from the life of the Church that are gifts for all of us, including the sacrament of reconciliation.

“One of you knows how guilt can cut away at you. You can be forgiven,” Welborn said. “Go and pour out your heart and be totally honest. It’s not because you have to, it’s because Jesus wants to give you forgiveness.”

Third, Welborn suggested to her audience to look to the examples that the Church offers us if they want happiness. And for her, those examples are nothing less than Jesus, Mary and the saints.

“The saints were real people that struggled with the same kinds of things that you did and who found joy,” Welborn said. “‘I will be all fear in this hour of God’s love. They were afraid of nothing. They weren’t afraid if what other people would say. They weren’t afraid of death. They were fearless.’

“Toward the end of her talk, Welborn also offered various ways for her audience to answer the same kind of questions about the Catholic faith that she received when she was in seventh-grade. She said that many of these questions are based on false notions about the Church’s beliefs about Mary, the Eucharist and other aspects of the life of faith. ‘Don’t you know what it means that Jesus is there?’ Welborn said. ‘If you trust Jesus and you trust that your faith comes from Christ, that means that your faith is true.’

“She suggested that if someone asks them why they worship Mary, first explain that Catholics don’t do this, but that they honor her. She then encouraged them to ask their friends why they don’t honor her. Welborn also encouraged the students to learn more about their Catholic faith.

“The more you learn [about the faith, the better off you’ll be],” Welborn said. “It’s 2,000 years old. It’s from Jesus. It’s a gift. We need to be fearless in our proclamation.”

“In closing, Welborn urged you to see the connection between their faith and the way that they look at themselves. ‘Every one of you is a total and absolute gift from God,’ Welborn said. ‘No matter how bad people treat you, no matter what you have to deal with because of the way you look or your interests, you are not an accident. God made you on purpose. And he gave you this Son that you can follow and love. Welborn seemed to have struck a chord with at least a few of the young people in her audience.

Elissa Nathan, an eighth-grade student at Our Lady of the Greenwood School and a parishioner at SS. Francis and Clare Parish in Greenwood, affirmed this. ‘I thought that she did a good job of explaining the answers in a clear way,’ Elissa said. ‘I learned a lot about our faith and how we’re not supposed to hide it.’†
McCarthy, administrator of St. Anne and St. Joseph parishes called “Prove It, God,” and St. Anthony parishioner Debbie Catholic women can counter the “post-Christian” culture at the University of Illinois, who will discuss how to the Holy Father’s call to ‘acknowledge and affirm the true and director of religious education at Holy Rosary Parish in director of the archdiocesan Office of Pro-Life Activities New Evangelization promoted by Pope John Paul II. energize, renew and send forth women as agents for the are praying that the Holy Spirit will use the gathering to their call to holiness and bear witness to the Gospel of April 24 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, ‘Treasuring Womanhood,” a one-day conference on "Treasuring Womanhood," a one-day conference on (Tickets for "Treasuring Womanhood" are $30 each and include lunch. Mail checks to the St. Michael Foundation, Marian Center of Indianapolis, 3356 W. 38th St., Indianapolis, IN 46222. For more information, call 317-924-3982, 317-888-0873, 317-236-1521 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1521.)
Letters to the Editor

No easy answers for cause of sexual abuse

I am writing in regards to the article in the March 12 edition of The Criterion regarding the report that Father Joseph Fessio gave on March 3 at Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis. Father Fessio is suggesting a cause and effect factor with the abuse of children by certain priests to a denial of the Church’s teachings on sexual morality. In particular, he refers to the rejection of Pope Paul VI’s encyclical, Humanae Vitae.

There has certainly been a decline in morality in society in general during the last 40 years. Various theologians and lay people may have a wide spectrum of opinion on the causes for such a decline. However, to draw the conclusion that the abuse by select priests who are properly characterized as pedophiles to Humanae Vitae is a gross oversimplification. Next year the study by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice nor a report by the U.S. bishops’ National Review Board made such sweeping generalizations about the problem of the abuse of children.

Father Fessio’s sweeping generalization does not do justice to the true problem of sex abuse among children and clerical bishops not taking the necessary actions to remove these priests.

Mary Targary, Indianapolis

Bishops should be more accountable for abuse

Our Roman Catholic Church and its people are suffering. Discovering the enormity of the abuse scandal, the laity and the clergy are struggling through many feelings: confusion, anger, betrayal, sadness, and embarrassment about the appalling realities among our leaders, our priests and our bishops. Our priests and bishops, especially consecrated as the sheep’s teachers and shepherds, know something

about what was going on in parishes, schools and seminaries for decades...

In our country, sexual abuse of a child is a crime! Not reporting probable knowledge of abuse is a crime! The priests and our bishops have performed days of fasting and prayer to show their sorrow. Some dioceses are paying huge amounts of money to victims. Most dioceses are offering counseling support to the victims. In addition, our bishops have worked together to formulate policies that we all hope will prevent any future problems of sexual abuse in our Church. These responses are all helpful.

In the name of Christ, I call any bishop who has known anything about sexual abuse incidents in our Church, but did not report them, record or even let the next parish know what was coming— I call each and every clergy bishop to tell us what he did or did not do to help. I also call each one to step down from his position of leadership in the Church.

Thomas Merton wrote to Dorothy Day in 1967 saying, "The moral insensitivity of those in authority—or certain portions of them—are utterly crucial for [human beings] and for the Church, has to be pointed out and if possible, confronted. If [such people] are not put to flight, we ourselves are perfect or infallible. But what is a Church after all but a community in which the sins of one are the sins of all?"

Suzanne M. Deitsch, Richmond

Building a healthier, safer Church

With the Feb. 27 release of the John Jay study along with the report of the National Review Board on Protection of Children and Young People, American Catholics can reflect on the causes of sexual abuse of minors by clergy and are stunned at the extent of the mismanagement of this problem by Church officials over the years.

This will surely generate a series of "what if?" in the minds of parishioners and, in turn, trigger thinking about structural adjustments to prevent repetition of past mistakes and reduce the probability of any child ever again being victimized by any Catholic.

What if every parish council, like every hospital board of directors, had a credentialed and quality assurance committee? Its job would be, among other things, to review the credentials and personnel files of any priest about to be assigned to a parish.

He would be reviewed and rated by this committee before being accepted to serve the parish community. For this screen to work, the confiden- tial personnel file would have to be up to date. And the dossier developed by the permanent superior would have to cooperate and abide by the credentialing committee’s decision.

What if a bishop or admitting provincial felt obliged to know the sexual history of every candidate for admission to a seminary? This is admittedly intrusive and invasive of the privacy our culture prizes. No candidate would be forced, however, to continue, or even to begin to participate in this conversation, but the conversation would enable Church leaders, especially like physical health, should be considered essential for admission to a seminary.

Every Catholic has a right and a need for one-on-one accountability conversation with every priest in his diocese? It is obvious from revelations associated with the sex-abuse scandals that many bishops simply did not know their men. They did not know their strengths and weaknesses, their fears and hopes. It is also obvious that some of the priest-perpetrators were not open to their bishops; they dissembled, hid, lied and knowingly violated sacred trusts.

What if every diocese in the process of awarding the appointment of a new bishop received public notification similar to the traditional publication of "banns of marriage"? Names of the men under consideration for appointment as bishop (usually three) would be announced from every pulpit in the diocese. Child sexual abuse is also a crime. The diocesan and seminary, the diocese where they currently serve and the diocese to which they will be appointed for service as bishop. If this disclosure practice were in place, a man with a sexual misconduct skeleton in his closet and someone who was unconditionally comfortable and unambitious to run the risk of public embar- rassment to himself and the Church would never be a bishop—no matter how brilliant the council really worked?

If the clergy accepted the fact that the parish is a "family-owned business" and all family mem- bers have a right to be kept informed on how the business is doing?

—John F. Fink

Editorial

Father Robert Rosensweig, associate professor of youth ministry and young adult ministry for the archdiocese, at the annual rosary procession as seminarians from Saint Meinrad carry a statue of Our Lady of Fatima during the Archdiocesan Youth Conference on Feb. 29 at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

The future Church

Our March 5 issue reported extensively on the Archdiocesan Youth Conference held on Feb. 29 at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. We know that the participants at that conference will be the leaders of the Catholic Church in years to come. But what will the Church be like in years ahead? How will it differ from today’s Church?

First of all, the Catholic population in the United States will shift, mainly because of the influx of Hispanics. If present trends continue, the Diocese of Phoenix will be larger than the Archdiocese of Detroit, the Archdiocese of Atlanta larger than the Archdiocese of Boston, and the Archdiocese of Miami larger than the Archdiocese of New York.

In a recent column in the national Catholic newspaper Our Sunday Visitor, Fr. Owen Campion showed how the shift in the Catholic population is already here. The Diocese of Galveston-Houston, largest archdiocese, yet its Catholic population is twice the size of the St. Louis, New Orleans, Baltimore, Seattle, Columbus and Washington archdioceses, three times the size Denver, and five times larger than Indianapolis, San Francisco, Louisville, Kansas City, Kan., and Omaha, all archdioceses.

The Catholic concentration in this country is moving to the South and Southwest, an area of the country where religion is generally more accepted than in the Northeast, where Catholicism has historically been strongest numerically. In recent years has become the most secular part of the country.

If present trends continue, we could see a split between Catholics in the Northeast and those in other parts of the country. Already, polls show that Catholic mass attendance in the Archdiocese of Boston is down to about 16 percent. That part of the country appears to be going the way of European countries.

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That part of the country appears to be going the way of European countries.
E en mi columna del Miércoles de Ceniza los exhortaba a tomar en cuenta la asistencia a la misa, especialmente a la eucaristía dominical, como actividad vital de nuestra fe y como práctica intencional durante la época de la Cuaresma. Quisiera profundizar un poco más en esta reflexión sobre la eucaristía ya que es muy importante.

Mencioné la importancia de la misa como actividad vital de nuestra fe y nuestra necesidad de practicarla. La adoración del Sagrado Sacramento y la celebración eucarística a la comunión que se hace con el Cuerpo de Cristo.

Durante esta última década, cuando he tenido el privilegio de asistir a una de las 16 nuevas eucaristías inauguradas, recalco que al final, lo que hace que esos lugares sean sagrados es la presencia continua del Sagrado Sacramento. La lámpara encendida del sagrario sirve de recordatorio.

En un par de ocasiones algunos compañeros no católicos me han comentado que nuestras iglesias católicas se sienten diferentes a las suyas. Una mujer me contó que le encanta ir a la vieja iglesia de San Juan Evangélico en el centro de Indianapolis y sentarse allí. La llama flamenque de la vela significa algo importante para ella y la otorga paz. Otra mujer que vive en Roma mencionó que le gusta mucho ir a la Basílica de San Pedro porque siente una presencia especial allí. Si nuestras iglesias fueran inertes no serían más que salas de reuniones, o poco aun, museos. Son casos de oración, especialmente durante la misa, aunque también en otros momentos. Todos compartimos la responsabilidad de verlas como verdaderas casas de oración.

La adoración del Sagrado Sacramento fuera de la misa constituye una tradición de nuestra Iglesia que ha perdurado por siglos. Es cierto que, en algunas etapas de la vida de la Iglesia, la adoración privada de Cristo en la eucaristía redujo la vitalidad de la eucaristía. Cuando en el siglo X se restauró el uso de la eucaristía como acto de comunión en la misa, la eucaristía eclipsó la eucaristía como el acto central de comunión. Pero la eucaristía como comunidad que se hace con el Cuerpo de Cristo.

El Concilio Vaticano Segundo reestableció acertadamente la presencia de la misa como el acto eucarístico con el que participamos activamente a través de los cantos, escuchando la Palabra de Dios, en oración reverente y en la comunión. Luego existió por un tiempo la noción de que la adoración privada del Sagrado Sacramento fuera de la celebración eucarística debía hacerse a un lado. Cuarenta años después del Concilio nos damos cuenta de que necesitamos un equilibrio entre el acto eucarístico comunitario y la adoración particular.

El día de hoy la eucaristía es un acto de comunión, un acto que requiere la asistencia de la comunidad. La eucaristía significa que Dios es cercano, que Dios nos escucha, que Dios nos atiende.

Lo dijo la bendición a las iniciativas recientes para brindar alianzas benéficas en nuestras parroquias. Elogio a aquellas comunidades parroquiales que pueden ofrecer adoración perpetua, así como la presencia continua que requieren. No todos pueden lograrlo. Hay que convencerse de que estas nuevas iniciativas atienden a necesidades adicionales a nuestra arquidiócesis, especialmente para nuestras iniciativas vocacionales.

Ante la aseveración de que “puedo rezar igualmente bien en el bosque, en la libertad de la naturaleza”, el Cardenal Josef Ratzinger respondió en una ocasión: “Ciertamente se puede. Pero si sólo se trata de eso, la iniciativa de la oración desaparece realmente de nosotros; por lo tanto, Dios sería una hipótesis mental. Si responde, si contesta o quiere hacerlo, es cuestionable. La eucaristía significa que Dios ha respondido: La eucaristía es Dios como respuesta, es su presencia como contestación. Ya la iniciativa no depende de nosotros, de la voluntad de Dios, sino de Él, y cobra gran solemnidad. Es por ello que en el ámbito de la adoración eucarística, la oración alcanza un nuevo nivel: es un intercambio y por lo tanto ahora es verdaderamente solemne. De hecho, ya no se trata simplemente de un intercambio, sino que los incorpora a todos: cuando rezamos en la presencia eucarística, nunca estamos solos. Pronto toda la Iglesia que celebra la eucaristía está rezando con nosotros... sólo aquellas iglesias que rezan son receptivas. Sólo ellas están vivas e invitan a otros a unirse. Les ofrecen compañía y a la vez, un lugar de recogimiento” (God is Near Us, Ignatius Press, p.90).

Traducido por: Language Training Center, Indianapolis

Las intenciones vocacionales del Arzobispo Buechlein para marzo

Los jóvenes: que ellos acepten el ánimo del Espíritu Santo, para que puedan discerner su papel en la Iglesia, especialmente la llamada de Dios a hacerse sacerdote y entrar en una vida religiosa.
Women interested in learning more about distance education options at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College are invited to attend the Program Spring Chat. There will be a campus tour at 4 p.m. For more information and answer questions at each event. A current Women’s External Degree (WED) program student will also be available to share her experiences. There will be an open house and tours of the parish convent and former grade school, which have been renovated in part with funds from the archdiocese’s Legacy of Hope from Generation to Generation campaign. The tours will begin at 1 p.m. and continue every 15 minutes. For more information, call the parish office at 317-634-4478.

A Holy Week Triumvirate Silent Retreat is scheduled for April 8-11 at the Benedictine Emergency Services Retreat Center, 1402 South Ave., in Beech Grove. The retreat will be a chance to withdraw from the hectic pace of life to focus on Jesus during these holiest days of the Christian year. There will be quiet time for personal prayer, reading and reflection as well as Mass and prayer with the Benedictine community of Oldenburg Abbey. Lectio Divina, group Scripture reflection, use of the art room and pool, and private spiritual direction. The registration deadline is March 25.

For more information, call 317-788-7581 or e-mail benedictin@yahoo.com or log on to www.benedictin.org.
Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. The following is a list of penance services that have been reported to The Criterion.

**Batesville Deanery**
- March 24, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Rock, Batesville
- March 28, 2 p.m. at St. Maurice, Napoleon
- March 28, 4 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhousen
- March 29, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
- March 30, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg
- March 31, 7 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County

**Bloomington Deanery**
- March 23, 7 p.m. at St. Jude, Spencer
- March 24, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
- March 30, 7 p.m. at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington
- March 31, 7 p.m. at St. John the Apostle, Bloomington

**Connersville Deanery**
- March 23, 7 p.m. at St. Elizabeth, Cambridge City
- March 31, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Connersville

**Indianapolis East Deanery**
- March 24, 7 p.m. for SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, St. Mary and Holy Cross at Holy Cross
- March 24, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Connersville
- March 31, 1 p.m. at St. Philip Neri
- April 1, 6:30 p.m. at St. Rita

**Indianapolis North Deanery**
- March 23, 7 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary
- March 30, 7 p.m. at St. Luke

**Indianapolis South Deanery**
- March 22, 7 p.m. at Holy Name, Beech Grove
- March 23, 7 p.m. at St. Mark
- March 29, 7 p.m. at St. Roch

**Indianapolis West Deanery**
- March 21, 7 p.m. at Holy Trinity
- March 22, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel
- March 23, 6:30 p.m. at St. Thomas More, Mooresville
- March 24, 7 p.m. at St. Christopher
- March 25, 7 p.m. at St. Malachy, Brownsburg
- March 25, 7 p.m. at Holy Angels
- March 28, 2 p.m. at St. Anthony
- March 31, 7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville
- March 31, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph

**New Albany Deanery**
- March 24, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight
- March 28, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
- April 1, 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul, Sellersburg
- April 4, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany

**Seymour Deanery**
- March 25, 7 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist, Seymour

**Tell City Deanery**
- March 27, 7 p.m. at St. Isidore the Farmer, Perry County
- March 31, 7 p.m. for St. Martin of Tours, Siberia; St. Boniface, Fulda; and St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, at St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad

**Terre Haute Deanery**
- March 21, 6 p.m. at St. Patrick, Terre Haute
- March 25, 7 p.m. at Holy Rosary, Seelyville
- March 27, 10 a.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods
- March 29, 7 p.m. at St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute

**Video:**

**A work by Pietro Perugino, once hailed as one of Italy’s finest painters, depicts Christ on the cross. The art of Perugino, whose work was surpassed by that of his student, Raphael, is on exhibit in Perugia, Italy.**

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Author challenges women to make a difference in the world

By Mary Ann Wyand

“Rejoicing With Those Feisty Gospel Women,” a one-day Lenten retreat, gave women from many parishes an opportunity to celebrate their faith together during the second annual Catholic women’s convocation on March 6 at St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis.

Author and educator Kathy Coffey of Denver was the keynote presenter for the convocation, which explored how “those feisty Gospel women” significantly affected the life of the early Church.

Coffey is the author of Hidden Women of the Gospels and God in the Moment: Making Every Day a Prayer as well as other books and catachetical resources. A former professor at the University of Denver and Regis Jesuit University, she is nationally known as a retreat presenter and also works as an editor for Living the Good News.

Many accounts of women’s roles in the early Church were probably edited out of the books in the New Testament over the years, Coffey said, but Christ enjoyed friendships with the women of his day and appreciated their contributions. He even disregarded social traditions to associate with them. “You are the feisty Gospel women of today,” Coffey said, “and Jesus delights in you.”

She reminded the women that their roles as peacemakers and nurturers make a positive difference in society. “Our spiritual health is our gift to the world, to our families and to our friends,” she said, “and nurturing is one of the most important things we can do for ourselves. The world desperately needs your peace and your spiritual health.”

The gathering gave women of all ages a break from the busy pace of their lives and a chance to spend time meditating on Scripture passages then discussing them in small groups.


“The imagination is one of the best gifts that God ever gave anyone,” Coffey said before leading a guided meditation on a Scripture passage using a Jewish technique called midrash, which dates back to the first century B.C. “The world in which Scripture was written was not necessarily the world in which [the people] were living,” Coffey said. “They had to fill in those gaps [in the Bible], and so they did that imaginatively.

“The root of the word [midrash] means ‘to seek, to inquire, to investigate,’” she said. “It certainly isn’t irreverent. It is used to make the Bible speak more clearly in our own day and age. The midrashic stories enhance bibli cal [passages] imaginatively, filling in the blanks and expanding on undeveloped or missing events, or putting them into a contemporary setting or language. Midrash explores the Bible, not as an analysis, but through the imagination.”

With this technique, people can “imagine” women back into the Gospel passages where they logically would have been present, she said. It’s important for women to do that, and to teach their daughters how to do that, in order to gain a better understanding of Scripture.

“We were present from [the time of] Jesus’ conception through his resurrection,” Coffey said, “but over time, they may have been edited out of the stories by the men who wrote them. . . Our calling is to be the image of Christ—Christ’s heart, Christ’s hands—in our world today.”

Christ—Christ’s heart, Christ’s hands—in our world today. And if there is a barrier to that, we need to work around that. Jesus always treated women as equals, and touched them, befriended them and taught them. He broke every taboo in the book [to treat women as equals].”

The Christian tradition of Mary and the other “feisty Gospel women” in the early Church is the antidote to correcting harmful and negative popular culture images of women today, Coffey said. “In the early Church, who do you think gathered the people and told the stories and brought them bread? The early Church was galvanized by women. We need our young women to hear the stories of Jesus.”

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Author Kathy Coffey of Denver discusses the “feisty Gospel women” who made a positive difference in the early Church during a March 6 women’s convocation at St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis.

Karen Eppert of Indianapolis dances to “Amazing Grace” at the start of the Lenten gathering for women.

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Little Sister of the Poor Mary Geraldine Freeman talks about the Little Sisters’ devotion to St. Joseph on March 5 at the St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis. Each Little Sister carries a small statue of St. Joseph in her pocket with her rosary.

Carmelites, Little Sisters of the poor often turn to St. Joseph

By Mary Ann Wyand

Deviations to St. Joseph, the protector and provider for the Holy Family, have grown in popularity among Catholics in recent years, but two women’s religious orders in the archdiocese have always relied on their patron saint for help in times of need.

The Discalced Carmelite sisters at the Monastery of St. Joseph in Terre Haute and the Little Sisters of the Poor at St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis can tell many stories about how prayers to God and St. Joseph were answered with miraculous results.

In gratitude, they honor their patron saint on the feast of St. Joseph, March 19, and on the feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1 as well as on many other occasions throughout the year.

The sisters love to tell St. Joseph stories as a way to share their devotion to him.

Last spring, when straight-line winds estimated at 80 mph felled 50 trees on the grounds of the Carmelites monastery on a hill south of Terre Haute, the sisters barely had time to utter prayers as they hurried to close windows against the sudden storm.

The Carmelite sisters pray to St. Joseph to ask for his care and protection every day, and they believe their fervent prayers were heard and answered on May 10.

No trees were hurt in the windstorm, which caused two trees to fall on the slate roof of the monastery chapel. Most of the felled trees landed near the brick and stone monastery without causing any structural damage.

At the time, Carmelite Mother Anne Brackmann, prioress, said the sisters believe God and St. Joseph protected them and their monastery from the storm.

“The monastery had some damage, but not what it could have been,” Mother Anne said. “St. Joseph has always protected us.”

She said a statue of St. Joseph, seated and holding the child Jesus, was completely covered by felled pine trees in the courtyard but was not damaged.

“The statue of the child Jesus has an arm outstretched,” Mother Anne said. “It was not harmed.”

The Little Sisters of the Poor include petitions to St. Joseph in their daily prayers, and often place prayer requests at the base of St. Joseph statues in their home for the elderly poor or tuck them inside the miniature St. Joseph statues they carry in their pockets with their rosaries.

An 80-year-old book in their convent library describes the order’s devotion to St. Joseph and relates numerous miracles attributed to him. But the Little Sisters don’t need to read the book to believe in his miracles. They all have their own amazing St. Joseph stories.

“It is the custom of the Little Sisters of the Poor to have, every year, a Mass of Thanksgiving in honor of St. Joseph for our friends and benefactors,” explained Mother Geraldine Harvie, superior. “Blessed Jeanne Jugan, our foundress, had recourse to St. Joseph as ‘protector and provider’ of our congregation, and we have continued this until the present day.

“St. Joseph provides for the material needs of our elderly residents,” she said, “through the generosity of all those who contribute to the work of the Little Sisters.”

Sister Celestine Mary Meade said the Little Sisters place statues of St. Joseph throughout their homes for the elderly poor, including near the boiler in the basement.

When Sister Celestine was a young nun ministering at her home for the elderly poor in Pittsburgh, she was in charge of checking the water in the boiler every day.

One night, the water level was above the half-full level, but she was worried about it so she called an engineer for advice. He told her not to worry because an automatic shut-off valve would turn off the boiler if it overheated.

Still worried, she rushed to the basement early the next morning, before prayer time with the sisters, and discovered that all the water in the furnace had gone dry and the extreme heat had blistered the paint on the basement walls.

She shut off the boiler then called the engineer for help. When he arrived a short time later, he was shocked to see the overheated furnace.

“He was white as a ghost,” Sister Celestine recalled. “He said the boiler got so hot that it should have blown up, and it was a miracle that there was no explosion. We believe St. Joseph kept us safe from harm. We always ask him to watch over the home and our residents.”

The Little Sisters continue to offer thanks to God and St. Joseph for providing the location of their first home for the elderly poor in downtown Indianapolis.

After they inquired with the diocese about opening a home in 1872, they received a letter from the Sisters of Providence on the feast of St. Joseph. The letter explained that the Providence sisters were selling some property and asked if the Little Sisters would like to buy it.

Not long after opening their first home on East Vermont Street, the diocese founded a new parish in the neighborhood, built the church nearby and named it for their patron saint.

“Many a time, we’ve put prayer requests for our neighbors before St. Joseph,” Sister Mary Geraldine Freeman said, “and they came out exactly that way.”

For their needs in Richmond, Va., Sister Mary Geraldine said, the sisters wanted to build a larger home for the elderly poor on land that had been donated to them.

The bishop said they could not begin construction without a certain amount of money. They turned to St. Joseph for help, and later that day a check arrived in the mail that was the exact amount they needed for the down payment.

“St. Joseph is really wonderful,” Sister Mary Geraldine said. “It’s amazing the things he does for us. He’s our protector. We pray a special prayer to him every evening, alternating between English and French, and he provides for our needs.”

Little Sister of the Poor Mary Geraldine Freeman talks about the Little Sisters’ devotion to St. Joseph on March 5 at the St. Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis. Each Little Sister carries a small statue of St. Joseph in her pocket with her rosary.

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ministry of Saint Meinrad started out as a very small thing—just a small cabin. One hundred years later, Saint Meinrad Abbey was named an Archabbey by Pope Pius XII to honor its role in founding other abbeys in the United States.

Saint Meinrad Abbey will offer several events this year in honor of its sesquicentennial. Some of the events are for the public, while others are invitation only.

Saint Meinrad Archabbey will offer several events this year in honor of its sesqui-

centennial. Some of the events are for the public, while others are invitation only.

Prayer, while the center of the monk’s life, is not the whole picture. The work of

Benedictines is the work that the Church cries out for in need in each epoch.

“There’s work and the work of the monks this far—from the days of St. Benedict to the Abbey in Switzerland to the

monastery, you remain in that particular

place in St. Cloud, Minn., where he served as bishop, to the Archabbey cemetery.

“Nothing is more important than the apostolate of prayer,” he said.

“The main thrust of Benedictines is

prayer and work,” Archabbot Lambert said.

“And the prayer remains the same: It’s the ofﬁcial prayer of the Church in expression through the liturgy.”

To illustrate the power of prayer, the archabbot pointed to Benedictine Father Theodore Heck, who, at 103, is the world’s oldest Benedictine monk.

“And he’s at every prayer hour and
every community exercise,” the archabbot said.

“Monks, generally speaking, live to be old men, and they do that because they learn not to worry and they learn to pray.”

Archbishop Buechlein said that “it’s like bringing the father home after many

years before the Second Vatican Council, the Archabbeby operated a minor and major seminary in which priestly forma-

tion was spread out over 12 years. Now, as the Church reaches out in differ-

et ways to meet the needs of the faithful, Saint Meinrad has consolidated into a School of Theology that serves not only to train future generations of priests, but also to train lay ministers and permanent dea-

cons for several dioceses.

Archbishop Buechlein acknowledged that the archdiocese should be proud of Saint Meinrad, particularly for the hun-

dreds of archdiocesan priests trained there. It is the training of priests that also makes Saint Meinrad so relevant for our age, he said.

More than 12,000 students have studied at Saint Meinrad and, of them, 3,750 are priests. Among the alumni is one car-

dinal, 22 bishops and 25 abbots.

The archbishop was the president-rector of the School of Theology, and later the col-

lege as well, for many years—right up to his nomination to the See of Memphis.

“Being rector from ’71 to ’87 was a challenge in turbulent times,” he said, speaking of the renewed way of under-

standing the training of priests after Vatican Council II.

“The way we dealt with it was to develop a new approach to priestly forma-

tion,” he said. Those struggles made him a better priest, he said.

The heart of the work of the monks of Saint Meinrad has stayed ever constant as well: the care of souls.

“We were invited over here from Einsiedeln by the German-speaking Catholics who needed pastoral ministry,” the archabbot said. “So, from the begin-

ning, we have been in pastoral ministry.”

There are 11 monks serving in the arch-
diocese, and more serving in the archdioces-

es of Chicago, Louisville and Washington, D.C., as well as the dioceses of Evansville and Lexington, Ky., to name a few.

Benedictine monks from Saint Meinrad also serve as chaplains in prisons, religious communities and the military.

And their prayer, their work—and the Archabbeby itself—continue to attract a new generation of monks.

The archabbot looked back on what first drew him to Saint Meinrad, when he joined in 1955. He had been sent to the Archabbeby to study at the seminary to be a priest for the Diocese of Pittsburgh. He ended up ask-

ing his bishop to be released so that he could stay at Saint Meinrad as a monk.

“What attracted me, most of all, was the regularity of the life and the serenity of the surrounding atmosphere,” he said. He was also drawn to the Benedictine vow of stabil-

ity, “which means when you join a monastery, you remain in that particular

monastery or are tied to its work.

“I think the best way to describe the vow of stability, if one wants to take it on, is the knowledge that one has fallen in love with the place and its work,” the archabbot said. “In other words, why didn’t I join some other monastery? I fell in love with Saint Meinrad.”

Archbishop Buechlein said that he was attracted to Saint Meinrad by the “Benedictine spirituality and the seminary apostolate.”

In his time there, he said that he learned a love of the liturgy, the habit of prayer and a love for the priesthood.

As new seminarians pour into the School of Theology and new monks continue to profess their vows, Saint Meinrad is taking steps to ensure that its mission and ministry continue to stay relevant.

Currently, the Archabbeby is in the midst of a $50 million campaign to pro-

vide for a new guest house, better health coverage for the elderly monks, renovation of the residence halls, and youth and voca-

tions programs, to name a few.

In short, the campaign, which has already garnered about $26 million, will help to provide a better future for Saint Meinrad.

Already, one donor has offered to match the donations of any first-time giver who are under 55 years old—up to $1 million.

Regarding the future of Saint Meinrad, the archbishop simply said that the Archabbeby “will live with and for the Church.”

Given that such a purpose has carried the monks this far—from the days of St.

Benedict to the Abbey in Switzerland to the “mission territory” across the ocean and then over the span of 150 years—the future seems bright and certain.

An undated photo shows a memorial stone, left, next to the graves of former Saint Meinrad abbots. The marker honors the first

abbot, Martin Marty, whose body is buried in St. Cloud, Minn., where he served as

bishop. His body will be moved to the Saint Meinrad Archabbeby

cemetery in a private ceremony on Sept. 19.
Faith-sharing groups strengthen relationships with God

Small faith-sharing groups facilitate discussions about faith. A small group might discuss changes in the Mass, how to pray, whatever happened to sin, why their adult children won’t go to Mass anymore, what heaven is like (and who is going there) and much more. Stories and memories spilled forth. A women’s group might gather at a coffee shop to talk about teen-agers, carpooling, aging parents, problems at work, gardening, parish news and God.

Sometimes faith-sharing happens in everyday places. A parish staff member claimed that she deserved a pay raise because of the extra ministry time she puts in at the grocery store, where parishioners stop her to talk about parish concerns, family crises or other faith-based issues.

People long to connect with others in meaningful ways. They yearn to express, deepen and apply faith to their lives. These points become the impetus for efforts in many parishes aimed at forming and nurturing faith-sharing groups for young adults, retirees, women, men, married couples, singles, saints and sinners.

Some groups use discussion guides such as the Archdiocese of Hartford’s “Quest,” or RENEW International’s “Impact Series.” Other groups, wanting to move closer to the body of Christ, have created their own guides for small faith-sharing groups to assist them.

Faith-sharing opportunities often happen in everyday life situations and places because people long to connect with one another in meaningful ways.

Faith-sharing illustrates God’s love

This Week’s Question

Describe a parish small group in which you participated and what its members did or discussed.

“Faith-sharing groups help me feel closer to the Church and what it means for us to be returning.” (Mary Sells, Omaha, Neb.)

“I met with a small faith group once a week, generally during Lent and Advent. Basically, we read the Sunday Scripture readings in advance and then discuss what they mean to us.” (Nancy Rohling, Nashville, Tenn.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: Do you ever meditate or pray while running, walking or participating in another form of exercise?

To respond for possible publication, write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100.
Mark's account of Jesus' Passion and death

Let me interrupt my series of columns about American Catholic history for four Lenten columns focusing on the four Gospel accounts of the Passion and death of Christ. I can't cover everything in those Gospels in three columns, so I invite you to follow along each week by rereading Mark's Gospel narratives. What could be a finer preparation for Holy Week? 

The primary message of Mark's entire Gospel was that Jesus is the Son whom God the Father sent to rescue humanity by serving and sacrificing his life. As he quoted Jesus, "The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mk 10:45). Jesus' entire mission was summed up by his death for others. In his recitation of the events surrounding Jesus' Passion and death, Mark is brutal with the Apostles, his closest followers. Throughout his Gospel, Mark structures the Apostles' inability to understand Jesus. Now, they sleep at the Garden of Gethsemane while Jesus prays for them; they flee when his Father's will is quickly scattered when Jesus is arrested by a mob led by one of the Apostles, Judas. The Apostles' leader, Peter, who pledged that he would die with Jesus, denies even he knows him.

There are also, though many, people who demonstrate loyalty to Jesus, begin- ning with the unnamed woman who anoints Jesus in the house of Simon. (John tells us that it happened in the home of a ruler called Simon.) And that the woman was Mary.) Then there are the faithful women, Mary Magdalen and "many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem," who stood by the cross.

The story of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin that condemned Jesus to death and led him to Pilate, gathered his courage to ask for Jesus' body so he could bury him. This is not the Gentile centurion who proclaimed the message Mark wanted to emphasize, "This was the Son of God!" (Mk 15:39). These people—women, a member of the opposition, and the centurion—demonstrated true faithful discipleship.

That Gentile centurion was only acknowledging the Gentile "apostles'" proclamation. While standing as a prisoner before the Sanhedrin, and asked if he was "the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One," Jesus said boldly, "I am; and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power (Israel) and coming with the clouds of heaven." (Mk 14:62). The Jews understood— that he was alluding to Psalm 110:1 and the prophecy of Daniel 7:13. This, Mark tells us, is how we will see Jesus in the future. For now, though, he is not the type of Messiah who will liberate Israel as the Jews expected. He is the liberator of all humanity through the sacri- fice of his life. 

Food is the basis for life. We all need to eat a certain amount just to stay alive, not to mention food from that aid our ability to function and grow well. It's no coincidence that Jesus and our Lord gave bread and wine to enable us to have communion with him.

Still, it's some relief that we try to deny ourselves during Lent. Not only are we intending to sacrifice for the good of our bodies, but the self-denial we practice as part of our Lenten observation seems to make us focus more on other food!

Suddenly, all references to food or eating are everywhere. Why? I think people may be watching a movie in which eating is used as a method of seduction. The hero and heroines must eat, and the sometimes beautiful but in some cases repulsive experiences center on eating.

Of course, he's right, but it's pretty true for everyone, not just old folks. It seems our social life is always attached somehow to a lunch, dinner, meeting before a concert, snacks after a ballgame or whatever. We are what we eat, as they say, a fact that no doubt contributes to our national obesity problem. We are what we eat, as they say, a fact that no doubt contributes to our national obesity problem. 

We tend to spend more money in order to eat less, in line with the old go-dfood-shopping-on-an-empty-stomach rule.

Ladies talk to their girlfriends on the phone, but not about the usual family gos- sip. Rather, they discuss details of the meals they fixed during the past week. People look at photos of past trips they took in order to reminisce about amaz- ing meals eaten in exotic places. Or not.

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Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogel Meister

Photograph resembles thoughts on Tolkien

Last month, Criterion reporter Sean Gallagher wrote an excellent two-part article on how Catholics can benefit from both J.R.R. Tolkien's famous The Lord of the Rings trilo- gy and the current movies based on the book. A photograph accompanying Gallagher's sec- ond column (about 2 percent).

The situation has changed in recent years. Catholics have had an increasing influence on the court, declining from 64 percent of all Supreme Court justices between 1807 and 1936, to 25 percent between 1940 and 1936, and 36 percent between 1930 and 2003. However, because Episcopalians, Presbyterians and UCCs comprise only about 10 percent of the U.S. population, there are still more Establishment justices on the court than one might expect based on the Establishment's numbers in the U.S. population.

Just before Justice Brennan's retire- ment in 1990, two other Catholics were appointed to the Court: Anton Scalia (1986-) and Anthony Kennedy (1988-). Since then, another Catholic, Clarence Thomas (1990-), has been added. As a result, Catholics are now over-represented on the court (one-third of current justices) relative to their numbers in the U.S. popula- tion (one-quarter).

The situation also has changed for Jews. Just before Fortas' retirement from the court, there was a 24-year period during which there were no Jews on the high court. That drought was broken when President William Clinton appointed two Jewish justices, Steven Breyer (1994-) and Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1993-). With these two appointments, Jews also are over-represented on the court (22 percent) relative to their numbers in the U.S. popula- tion (about 2 percent).


### Daily Readings

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### Feast of Annunciation

Feast of Annunciation is excellent occasion to promote respect for life

Q \*Am\* puzzled by the relative lack of importance attached to the feast of the Annunciation (March 25) by the Church. Dec. 8, the feast of Our Lady’s conception, is a day of obligation, but the feast of Our Lord’s conception is not. The Church teaches that life begins at conception. The Annunciation marks the event when the Word became flesh. It would be helpful for celebrations of this feast would both honor our Lord and emphasize our commitment to the Church’s teaching about the origin of life. Our Catholic paper not long ago had an article about a Catholic English martyr, Margaret Clitherow, whose feast is on March 25. Clearly, is on, is it not, the feast of the Annunciation?

A Your question is a good and interesting one, particularly since the Annunciation is apparently the first moment of human life to be honored liturgically by Christian people. In fact, it was widely believed in the early centuries of Christianity that March 25 was the day of Christ’s death. St. Augustine (died 430) echoed a long tradition when he declared that Jesus was put to death on March 25, the same day of the year on which he was conceived (“De Trinitate,” Book 4). By that time, a church had been built in Nazareth to commemorate the Annunciation, which would seem to indicate some liturgical celebration of that feast already.

Thus, the feast of the Annunciation would have developed into a more solemn celebration except for one fact. For centuries, in both Eastern and Western parts of Christianity, the widely accepted practice was that no eucharistic liturgy could be celebrated during Lent except on Sunday. In fact, no feast at all was to be observed during what then was called the “great fast.”

However, as with March 25, feasts of several saints are observed every day of the year, most though of them not on the calendar for celebrations by the universal Church. Even Dec. 25 has at least half a dozen saints whose feast day occurs along with the birth of Christ.

Q With all the theories today about UFOs and interspace travel, does the Catholic faith have anything to say about life on other planets? Could there be? If there is, how can we be sure it exists, or know whether it is of any intelligent life somewhere else, would Jesus Christ need to die on every planet to save the people? (Wisconsin)

A There’s no way the Catholic Church would know anything about anyone else. We are not going to live in any other worlds. The pro-life implications of this feast are not overlooked. Increasingly today, parishes and dioceses give special attention, liturgically and in other ways, to the fact that since we honor the presence of the Word in the womb of his mother from the beginning of her pregnancy, so we should respect the sacredness of human beings from the moment of their conception.

### Question Corner/Fr John Dietzen

Holy Week, in which case the feast may be observed later, during the Easter season. The forensic implications of this feast are not overlooked. Increasingly today, parishes and dioceses give special attention, liturgically and in other ways, to the fact that since we honor the presence of the Word in the womb of his mother from the beginning of her pregnancy, so we should respect the sacredness of human beings from the moment of their conception.

Finally, as with March 25, feasts of several saints are observed every day of the year, most though of them not on the calendar for celebrations by the universal Church. Even Dec. 25 has at least half a dozen saints whose feast day occurs along with the birth of Christ.
Author says ‘rapture theology’ of Left Behind books is dangerous
By Sean Gallagher

Living, as we are, 2,000 years after Christ, it can be easy for us to give little thought to his second coming and the end of history. But the Church’s beliefs regarding this are important for all of us.

Catholic author Paul Thigpen spoke about these and other related issues on March 10 at Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis in the second session of the parish’s Lenten “Spaghetti and Spirituality” series before about 225 people.

Thigpen is the author of Rapture Trap: A Catholic Response to End Times Fever (Ascension Press, 2001). In particular, Thigpen focused his listeners’ attention on the dangers of the so-called rapture theology promoted in the popular Left Behind series of novels written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.

In short, these authors promote a belief that Jesus will return not once, but twice. The first time will be a secret snatching, then wouldn’t we have heard about it before the late 1700s?” Thigpen asked. “Wouldn’t we have heard about it from the Apostles or the earliest Church fathers, or the great medieval theologians and scholars, or even the Reformation scholars themselves?” Nevertheless, the rapture dominates the culture of many Christians, including the one in which Thigpen himself grew up. He became Catholic as an adult.

He recalled singing a song at Church camps in his youth about the rapture that had a rather chilling chorus: “There’s no time to change your mind. The time has come and you’ve been left behind.” “It permeates the culture that I lived in,” Thigpen noted, “and still permeates the culture of a lot of people.” But he also fears that it is starting to filter into the thinking and believing of Catholics, many of whom are among the millions who have bought the Left Behind novels.

Thigpen raised the story of the Millerites to illustrate the dangers of holding unconventional end times teaching. In the 1840s, William Miller, a native of upstate New York, predicted that Jesus would return at a specific date. Hundreds of thousands of Americans believed Miller and left their own Churches to follow him and his beliefs. Many sold all of their possessions and abandoned their families. But the appointed day came and went without Christ’s return. Many people eventually lost their faith altogether. Some even committed suicide.

“You really put your life on the line with a lot of this thinking and believing of Catholics, many of whom are among the millions who have bought the Left Behind novels.”

Thigpen argued that this is especially true regarding the authors of the Left Behind novels.

“People who write these books and others like them want you out of the Catholic Church,” Thigpen said. “They think that it is a pagan, false religion.”

Turning away from the dangers of the rapture theology, Thigpen suggested his listeners consider the good news to be found in the Church’s teaching on Christ’s second coming, to be found especially in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 668-682.

In particular, Thigpen encouraged them to turn their hearts to the coming of Christ that happens every day in the Eucharist. “That is the most glorious thing of all. I don’t have to wait until the end of history,” Thigpen said. “He comes to each of us on the altar every day.”

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Pope says Catholics must use dialogue, culture to promote faith

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II said Catholics must use dialogue, reason and culture to introduce themselves to the message of Christ.

“It is up to pastors and the faithful to discover and delve into the basic questions and aspirations of people today,” to dialogue with them and “propose the Gospel message and person of Christ, the redeemer, in the Gospel message and person of Christ,” he said.

Catholics must use dialogue to open people up to the word of Christ. The papal leader said.

Some 55 people, mostly Church leaders and Catholic experts, attended a March 11-13 gathering of the council to find ways the Church could respond to the growing phenomenon of indifference to religion.

The pope said alongside an increasing expression of unbelief and indifference toward traditional religions, many people were still looking to understand the deeper meaning of their existence, to respond to the fundamental questions concerning the beginning and end of life, and to head toward the source of happiness they aspire.

He called on Christians to make a new leap in the intellectual sphere by “aiming to propose powerful reflections” that could show “younger generations the truth about man and God and invite them to embark on an ever keener intelligence of faith.”

He said “the world of culture, art and literature must be supported” in order to contribute to “the strengthening of a society built not upon a foundation of materialism but upon spiritual and moral values.”

Cardinal Paul Poupard, president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, said plenary participants also emphasized the need for young Catholics to enter public debate.

In an interview on March 15 with Catholic News Service, Cardinal Poupard said: “In the name of respect for liberty, the Church kept hidden and (faith) became something lived in the public sphere can help young people integrate their faith with everyday life.

Young people have responded very positively to the joyous message of Christ as seen by the success of World Youth Day events,” he said.

He said meeting participants offered several proposals to help bishops develop programs that would help the Church be more engaged in today’s culture.

James D. Davidson is a professor of sociology at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind. His most recent book, Lay Ministers and Their Religious Practices, was published by Our Sunday Visitor Publishing in 2003. †
Join your Spiritual Director, Father Charles Kline (Pastor of St. Francis Xavier, in Atica, Indiana) on this 19-day vacation departing October 13, 2004. Your group will fly to Los Angeles for you ride. On October 14, Your Man Taxis will take you on a city tour of L.A., Hollywood and Beverly Hills plus a scenic drive to San Diego where you’ll board your deluxe five-star ship, the luxurious Queen Elizabeth II. We’ll be on board ship for those in the group wishing to participate, you’ll first sail on the gun-drenched Mexican Riviera. Ports include Cabo San Lucas, Ensenada, Puerto Vallarta, Guadalajara then Montreal. Then, cross on to Puntaarenas, Costa Rica Next, the highlight, the day-long Panama Canal crossing which will be raised and lowered by giant locks, then you’ll cruise the rugged continental divide via 45 miles of canals and the largest man-made water body in the world, Gatun Lake. Additional ports include Colon, Panama, Grand Cayman Island, and Cozumel, Mexico. On October 30th you’ll arrive in Tampa. Prices start at only $2369 for inside cabins, $2503 for outside cabins, and $2641 for a suite. Rates are per person, based on double occupancy and includes taxes, port charges and airfare from Indianapolis. Cabs at these prices will sell out fast, so book yours now. Family and Friends are welcome. For information, reservations, brochure, and Father’s letter call 1-800-986-7626.

—See ACTIVE LIST, page 17

Operation Rice Bowl February 25 – April 10, 2004

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