Storms damage St. Elizabeth’s, other properties

By Mary Ann Wyand

St. Elizabeth’s Pregnancy and Adoption Services’ facilities on the south side of Indianapolis sustained serious structural damage during a tornado that hit the Beech Grove area at about 7:20 p.m. on May 30.

All the residents and staff members escaped injury by going to the basement of the residential building when they heard the tornado siren.

The tornado, which was confirmed by National Weather Service officials in Indianapolis, toppled two chimneys and ripped off sections of roof on St. Elizabeth’s administrative and residential buildings at 2500 Churchman Ave.

Heavy rains caused extensive water damage to ceilings, walls and floors throughout much of the interior of both brick buildings, and damaged computer equipment, appliances and furniture.

Dozens of trees were felled on the nine-acre wooded property. Several trees were thrown against the buildings by high winds.

David Hodde, director of management services for the archdiocese, said Good Shepherd Church and Central Catholic School on the south side of Indianapolis and St. Jude Church in Spencer also were damaged by wind and rain when a series of tornadoes crossed the state on Pentecost Sunday.

Hodde said on June 1 that it is too early to estimate the cost of damages to the site.

Christian Awakening retreat helped set Eric Augenstein on path to priesthood

By Mary Ann Wyand

Combining his love of God and music, Deacon Eric Augenstein wrote a thanksgiving hymn titled “Come, Holy Trinity” for his first Mass—one on the feast of the Holy Trinity—at 3 p.m. on June 6 at St. Jude Church in Indianapolis.

“Grant us your wisdom,” the lyrics read in part, “as we seek to serve you, God in three persons. … God of all ages, living here among us.”

The words to his song are reprinted in the “My Journey to God” column on page 15 of this issue.

Augenstien, who is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis, and Deacon Brian Esarey, a member of St. Paul Parish in Tell City, will be ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein at 10 a.m. on June 5 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

“Ordination is a chance to celebrate the gift of the priesthood with so many of the people who have been part of my preparation and my formation for the priesthood,” Augenstein said during an interview at his parents’ home on May 25. “It’s not just mine. [The priesthood] belongs to the whole community.”

Father Joseph Moriarty, archdiocesan vocations director, said Augenstein “is genuine, authentic and very present in his ministry” and “holds a special place in the hearts of the community of St. Jude Parish, at Cathedral High School and in the Catholic community of Indianapolis.”

In every seminary evaluation, summer assignment and ministry opportunity, he said, “Eric has presented himself as a man of compassion who is present and available to the needs of others.”

In “The Prayer of St. Francis,” Father Gerald Kirkhoff, pastor of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis and former pastor of St. Jude Parish for 17 years, to be the homilist for his first Mass.

Concelebrants include Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general; Father Stephen Banet, pastor of St. Jude Parish; Father Rick Ginter, pastor of Cathedral Parish; Father Vincent Lampert, pastor of SS. Francis and Clare Parish in Greenwood; Father Daniel Staublin, pastor of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg; and Father John McCaslin, associate pastor of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis.

Augenstien said “a few other priests from out of town” will also concelebrate his first eucharistic liturgy.

He is excited about his ordination and happy that many of his recent men—
tors will help him celebrate at the ordination and his first Mass. On July 7, he will formally begin his priestly ministry as associate pastor of the Richmond Catholic Community of St. Andrew, St. Mary and Holy Family parishes. He also will serve as chaplain at Seton Catholic High School and teach religion classes there.

Augenstein said he is looking forward to assisting Father Todd Riebe, pastor of the three Richmond parishes, with a variety of ministries. To prepare for his ordination, he set aside three days this week for a self-directed retreat at St. Meinrad.

Augenstein said he first heard God calling him to the priesthood during a Christian Awakening retreat at Catholic High School.

"During my senior retreat in high school, I got a letter from a teacher asking if I had ever considered priesthood," he said. "This started the ball rolling, of spending the next four years thinking and praying about the priesthood while going to college at La Salle University in Indianapolis, and making my time to pray with that decision and to try to discern what God was calling me to do with my life."

At La Salle University, he participated in campus ministry and changed his major study from psychology to government and philosophy. During his senior year in college, he affiliated with the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and began preparing for seminary studies.

"I became more involved in the Church and saw God's work," he said, "and gradually, through all of that, came to be at peace with the decision that this is what God was asking me to explore in my life. Then that was confirmed when I started seminary at Saint Meinrad."

During his seminary studies at Saint Meinrad School of Theology in the fall of 2000, the Great Jubilee year.

"It's really no one point where I think anybody can say, 'This is the point when I knew that I was going to go to seminary or I knew that I was going to become a priest,'" he said. "It's more of a process of gradually becoming at peace with the decision." Augenstein said pastoral experiences at St. Aloysius Parish in Shepherdsville, Ky., as well as ministry assignments at St. Malachi Parish in Brownsburg and St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis helped him realize the specific gifts that God has given him for the priesthood.

At St. Aloysius Parish, he served as a chaplain for 12 children who were baptized at Easter.

"That was very exciting," he said. "I was also involved with RCIA [The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults]. Beyond that, I learned about the spontaneity and flexibility of parish ministry."

During his seminary studies at Saint Meinrad, he enjoyed the homiletics and scripture classes. Meinrad, he enjoyed the homiletics and Scripture classes. "It really opened my mind and is a tremendous organizer. He has a fine mind and is a tremendous organizer. He's self-assured, confident and well-grounded, and he has a wonderful smile." During his high school years, Cavanaugh said, he excelled in music and activity—teaching us what we need to know how they are alike and explaining the differences.

Dreyer said she thinks he chose the topic because his father is Lutheran and his mother is Catholic.

"He has a great gift for homilies and will be a great liturgist," she said. "His ability to keep your attention and to make the homily really meaningful is just remarkable. There are so many things about him that will make him a good priest. His personality and his smile are wonderful. He always has a smile. I thank God because I feel that I have received a gift just by knowing him. I believe he was called by name to the priesthood."
Federal Death Row inmate David Paul Hammer appeals June 8 execution

By Mary Ann Wyand

Federal Death Row inmate David Paul Hammer of Oklahoma is preparing to die by chemical injection on June 8 at the U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute even as his attorneys pursue appeals that would at least temporarily stay his execution.

Prosecution Sister Rita Clare Gerardot of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, one of his spiritual advisors, said in April that Hammer allowed his attorneys to initiate the appeals process again after he legally dropped it weeks ago.

Hammer is 45 years old and has spent the last 26 years in prison.

“He is tried of prison life,” she said on May 31, “but I think his desire to live is stronger than he thought when he dropped his appeals earlier this year.

“A decision has not been reached yet on whether the appeals will be reinstated,” Sister Rita Clare said on Monday, “The lawyers from both sides—the prosecution and the defense—argued the case last Thursday [May 27] before three judges in Pennsylvania, and we have not heard anything yet. We hope we might hear at least by Wednesday [June 2]. All they want is for the appeals process to be reinstated so it would go forward from there.”

Hammer’s execution is scheduled for 3 p.m. next Tuesday. He would be the fourth federal Death Row inmate executed at the death chamber at the Terre Haute penitentiary.

Convicted Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh was lethal injected on June 11, 2001. Texas drug lord Juan Raul Garza died by lethal injection on June 19, 2001, and Army veteran Louis Jones Jr. was executed on March 18, 2003.

“I talked with David today,” Sister Rita Clare said on May 31. “He’s doing quite well. He’s not depressed. He is planning for his death. He doesn’t want to get his hopes up too high, of course, but we would welcome it if the appeals process was reinstated.”

Sister Rita Clare said Hammer appreciates the prayers that people throughout the country and the world are offering for him.

“He really feels the effect of prayers,” she said. “It’s given him the strength and the courage that he needs each day to deal with the possibility of his death next week.”

Hammer joined the Catholic Church on Oct. 27, 2000, while incarcerated at the Terre Haute penitentiary. He was sentenced to death on Nov. 4, 1998, after pleading guilty to first-degree murder for killing 24-year-old Nathaniel Woods. The sentence was vacated in October 2000. I have corresponded with him. I believe that he is sincere in his desire to live and his wish to go forward with the appeals process.

For heinous crimes, the Church favors life imprisonment without parole rather than death, and he said, and encourages rehabilitation of the offender.

“We believe life imprisonment without parole accomplishes the objective,” he said, by protecting society from dangerous criminals and trying to restore the right order violated by the crime.

“A criminal should pay a price for the offense committed,” the archbishop said, quoting Cardinal Avery Dulles of New York. “If possible, the victims of the crime should be compensated for the wrong suffered. This does not mean revenge.”

Archbishop Buechlein also cited Cardinal Dulles’ objections to capital punishment on the basis of the possibility of wrongful death, revenge but not justice, devaluation of human life and incompatibility with Christian forgiveness and the Gospel teachings of Jesus.

Quoting from the Declaration of the Catholic Church, the archbishop noted, “The direct killing of anyone is only justifiable in a case of self-defense when there is absolutely no other way to protect oneself, another innocent person, or society in general from violence or death. We believe that in this day and age, life imprisonment without the possibility of parole is an action sufficient to protect society from murderers” (G-2267).

Hammer asked his spiritual advisors, Sister Rita Clare and Mercy Sister Cirimele D’Arienzo of Glendale, N.Y., to witness his execution.

The following events open to the public have been arranged by various pro-life groups in the Terre Haute area, including the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Margaret Mary Parish and the Terre Haute Abolition Network:

Monday, June 7—5 p.m. prayer service at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods followed by 7:30 p.m. program of speakers and music at St. Margaret Mary Parish, Seventh and Voorhees streets in Terre Haute. People who wish to spend the night at the parish are welcome to do so but should bring a sleeping bag.

Tuesday, June 8—8:30 a.m. assembly for a 9 a.m. march at the Federal Building, Seventh and Cherry streets in Terre Haute down Cherry Street to the Vigo County Courthouse then down U.S. 41 (Third Street) to St. Margaret Mary Parish. At 10:45 a.m. opponents of capital punishment will plant a lilac bush in memory of David Hammer at St. Margaret Mary Parish. After an 11 a.m. lunch at the parish, participants will gather at 1 p.m. in Fairbanks Park on First Street between Farrington and Oak streets for a non-violent protest on the penitentiary grounds. At 1:15 p.m., people will be able to speak to the gathering in the pro-life area on the penitentiary grounds. At 2 p.m., participants will gather in a circle of silent witness then recite the “Prayer of St. Francis” at 2:55 p.m.

Those going to the prison site must bring picture identification and may also bring keys, a cell phone or pager, mediation, a rosary, a Bible or other book, a sign without supports, a candle with a wind shield and small snacks.

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St. Francis” at 2:55 p.m.

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Call for more information

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Volunteers of America is a faith based organization.
A member of the Jewish community was leading anti-Semitic graffiti on tombstones at the Jewish cemetery in Herrlisheim, France, on May 2. Several graves were desecrated with swastikas and slogans written in German, and experts indicated the trend was increasing. A week later, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger of Paris called the attack a “negation of faith and humanity.”

London last May, and Nazi slogans sprayed on headstones and a cemetery gate in Germany last October. The report recorded 350 anti-Semitic incidents in Britain in 2002 and said that figure increased 75 percent in the first quarter of 2003. But there have been even more incidents in France, where the chief rabbi has taken the step of warning Jews against declaring their identity in public.

The OSF article quotes Father Patrick Dobois, head of the French Church’s Commission for Dialogue with Judaism, as saying, “Anti-Semitism never went away in Europe. What’s different now is that it’s no longer taboo. At one time, people didn’t dare speak ill of the Jews because of the Holocaust’s proximity. Today, they no longer feel burdened by this dark legacy.”

Some of the anti-Semitic sentiment is coming now because some European governments are trying to make restitution to Jews for properties lost during the Holocaust. In Austria, for example, the government paid $18 million to Jews for Nazi seizure of goods. Jewish leaders say that this amounts to only 3 percent of the value of assets lost, including 95 synagogues, 46 cemeteries and 762 Torah scrolls.

The Polish edition of Newsweek’s April 4 issue has been accused of stoking anti-Semitism with its cover story “Jews are taking what’s theirs.” The story claimed that many Poles fear being expelled from their homes by returning Jews who have moved to the homeland of their ancestors has been likened to the return of Jews to Israel after the Babylonian captivity in the sixth century B.C.

France, though, has the largest number of Jews (600,000), followed by England (300,000). All other European countries have fewer than 100,000. Poland, where 3.5 million Jews lived before the Holocaust, today has only 8,000.

The national Catholic newspaper Our Sunday Visitor recently highlighted some of the anti-Semitic attacks, as reported by the European Union’s document “Manifestations of Anti-Semitism 2002.” They include such things as a Jewish school in Paris set on fire last November, 386 graves desecrated at a Jewish cemetery in

Letters to the Editor

We are either with God or against him.

In the May 21 edition of The Criterion, Father Peter J. Daly concluded in an article on “Submission for politicians” that there are three approaches to the problem. He called those three approaches “separatists,” “interventionists” and “transformationists.” As a lay person, I find myself in the uncomfortable position of being either very confused or surprised by Father Daly’s assertions that his self-described “transformationists” model allows bishops to tell Catholic politicians what public-policy positions to take and that it is “policy specific.”

I thought that the Church told us what positions to take to be faithful followers of Christ and Catholics. If a politician or anyone else chooses to ignore Church teaching in their secular life, the Church is powerless to prevent that. Such actions however, seem to make a clear statement about where one’s “interests” lie.

The Church is not separating itself from the person. It seems that the person is separating themselves from God and the Church. As John 5:44 states, “How can you believe when you accept praise from one another and do not seek the praise that comes from the only God?”

Abortion rights and those that support them are seen as very praiseworthy and popular within some political circles. It is contrary to God’s law and Church teaching. The politician that chooses to seek praise from the world should accept the reality that he/she has distanced himself from not only the Church but from the Lord. They have made their own choice!

The “transformationists” approach endorsed by Father Daly seems to ignore the reality that the Church has not moved away and that somehow we should find a way to minimise the rift and listen to opposing views. As our parish priest put it so eloquently in a recent homily, our relationship with God is not a democratic relationship. Our views are irrelevant on matters of doctrine and God’s law. We are either for God or against him.

If we choose to deny the sovereignty of our Lord and Savior over such a clearly sinful matter as abortion, we would seem to have completely denied our faith’s most basic tenets. I was always taught that forgiveness required repentance. What we have here is defiance. Maybe I’m ill-informed, but I don’t recall any teachings that the Church should tolerate continued active defiance of God’s Word and Church teaching, especially when the defiant person is working against the Church in an increasingly Christian-hostile secular culture.

As a police officer, I see much more of the dark side of our culture than I would like. For those of you that are lucky enough to see it, let me assure you it’s probably worse than you ever imagined.

As Catholics and Christians, I pray that more of us decide where our treasures lie, choose sides and make a stand.

I’m very proud of the bishops that have done so on the abortion issue. Until the time that abortion advocates are willing to accept God’s sovereignty and see the truth about this horrendous act, they’re not on the other team. It is a team that is destroying not only innocent unborn children, but our families, our faith and the very basis of our being.

Should supporters of war receive Communion?

We have been hearing and reading a lot about U.S. bishops wanting to refuse the Eucharist to politicians who are anti-life and to those who vote for them. What about those denying Communion to those who pay U.S. income taxes?

It is these taxes that pay for and make possible the wars and related anti-life atrocities the United States is promoting and conducting all over the world.

And as we all know, not just Catholics, that warring is anti-life and a mortal sin.

Bob Nowicki, Indianapolis

Disenchanted with the U.S. bishops

I have been Catholic for 82 years, but the older I have become the more disen- chanted I have become with the Church hierarchy.

The bishops who knowingly moved around pedophile priests and exposed hun- dreds of children to sexual abuse were not excommunicated. Now I am being told how to vote—or else.

Maybe it is time to change my Church affiliation.

Mary Ellen Boyle, New Castle, Ind.

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be informed, relevant, well-expressed, concise and courteous.

The editors reserve the right to select and edit the letters. Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717.

Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.

Church Facts

CATHOLIC POLLING

Catholics in early 2004 identifying themselves as

How Catholics voted in 2000...

Republican

31%

Democrat

39%

Other

22%

Don’t Know/ Other

47%

Republican

(last)

Democrat

50%

Other

43%

Source: “Catholics in early 2004 identifying themselves as…” from March 2004 telephone survey of 1,039 Catholic adults or older with a sampling error between 3.1 and 3.5 percent. “How Catholics voted in 2000” from Voter News Service exit poll.

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La posición católica frente al matrimonio va en contra de la cultura

**Techo de la serie**

Hace unas semanas celebré el vigésimo aniversario de mi ordenación como sacerdote. Conforme pasó el tiempo, cuento los años como un privilegio extraído de poder servir a Dios y a la Iglesia como sacerdote y obispo. Al mismo tiempo, no puedo evitar reflexionar sobre lo mucho que ha cambiado nuestra sociedad durante estos años. Recientemente escribí acerca de la importancia de tener en cuenta el bien común de nuestra sociedad a la luz de tanto consternación con los derechos individuales. Como Iglesia que se preocupa por la justicia social, tengamos muy claro que la dignidad de la persona humana es de suma importancia. Pero también lo es fomentar el bien común y la familia humana. Nunca me habría imaginado cuántos años atrás, o sin ir más allá, diez, que nuestra perspectiva sobre la sagrada institución del matrimonio se tomaría contraria a la cultura. Nunca me habría esperado que me pidieran que escribiera sobre la posición de la Iglesia en cuanto a la cuestión de los “matrimonios” del mismo sexo. Sin embargo, el activismo judicial (y en algunas ciudades, el activismo de los alcaldes) en los últimos meses ha generado gran confusión y consternación en cuanto a las uniones del mismo sexo.

Es importante reconocer que la controversia que envuelve a este tema se ha traducido en dos lenguajes diferentes, es decir, el lenguaje de la sociedad y el de los derechos individuales frente al lenguaje de la naturaleza misma del matrimonio. Debemos preguntarnos, ¿acasé le cedemos al Estado el derecho de definir el matrimonio? El Estado no inventó el matrimonio. El Estado debería asistir en los límites de la ley y opor...
The Class of 1944 of the former St. Mary Academy in Indianapolis will have their 60-year reunion at 7:30 p.m. on June 8 at Hollyhock Hill, 8110 N. College Ave., in Indianapolis.

The third annual celebration of Catholic Social Services Adult Day Services, called Summer Breezes, will be held from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. on June 26 at Marian, Inc., 1011 E. St. Clair St., in Indianapolis. There will be a social hour at 6 p.m., a dinner at 7 p.m., dancing at 8 p.m. and a silent auction from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., with a closing drawing of the evening. A portion of the evening’s proceeds will benefit the 100 Club, a portion of each ticket is $50 per person. Adult Day Services has two sites in Indianapolis and both are supported by this event. For more information, call A Caring Place at 317-466-0015 or Holy Trinity Place at 317-638-8322.

A women’s summer retreat titled “A Journey to a New Summer” will be held from 7:30 a.m. on June 26 to noon on June 27 at Mother Redeemer Farm in Bloomington. The retreat, which will be led by author Lisa Marie Taylor, will help participants understand God’s love for them and learn his will for their lives. The cost is $75 per person for double occupancy or $95 per person for a private room. Registration due is June 15. The retreat will be offered again in October. For more information, call 317-881-0662 or e-mail ltrvmmkemnite@zeronet.net.

Oldenburg Academy is having its Pro/Am Golf Classic on July 12 at Hillcrest Country Club, 850 N. Walnut St., in Batesville. The format of play is a Florida scramble with each foursome being paired with a pro. Tee times are at 7 a.m. and 1 p.m. EST. The cost of a foursome is $850 and includes cart and green fees, a continental breakfast, buffet lunch, beverages and snacks, a VIP dinner party and dinner. The events will support Oldenburg Academy seniors. For more information or to register, call the Indianapolis Office of Saint Meinrad School of Theology at 317-955-6451.

VIPs . . .

Al and Mary (Guzman) Hernandez, members of St. Gabriel Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on June 13 with a Mass at their parish followed by an open house for family and friends. The couple married that date in 1954 at St. Jude Church in Chicago. They have seven children: Vicky Monaco, Linda Zabona, Alfie, Henry, James, Joe and Roy Hernandez. The couple has 16 grandchildren.

Awards . . .

Father Ron Knott, a priest of the Archdiocese of Louis- ville, Ky., has been named director of continuing formation for priests and presbyters for Saint Meinrad School of Theology in St. Meinrad. Father Knott will oversee the planning, launching and direction of a new program of continuing formation for priests. The program will include initiatives to strengthen local presbyters and assist them in helping newly priests take an active role in their presbyteries. He will also assist with the formation of seminarians in the School of Theology, serving as a spiritual director and mentor to seminarians. Most recently, Father Knott served as director of vocations for his archdiocese.

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Boston archbishop urges unity despite closing of 70 parishes

BOSTON (CNS)—It came in a thin, white Federal Express envelope—Archbishop Sean P. O’Malley’s answer to the question that Catholics in the Archdiocese of Boston have been asking for weeks: “Will my parish remain open or will it be closed?”

As those overnight letters arrived on the morning of May 25, clergy and parishioners at 70 of the archdiocese’s 357 parishes faced the grim reality that their parish would be suppressed in the coming months.

In addition to the suppressions, five new parishes will be formed and five other church buildings will remain open as “worship sites” maintained by nearby parishes, resulting in a net loss of 60 churches in the archdiocese.

At a press conference later that day, Archbishop O’Malley appealed to Catholics to remain unified despite the loss and to look beyond parish boundaries and understand that the changes are necessary for the archdiocese.

“We may think of ourselves as liberal Catholics, as Latin-Mass Catholics, Irish Catholics, Italian Catholics, Lithuanian Catholics, Hispanic Catholics, French Catholics, Vietnamese Catholics, Haitian Catholics, Cape Verdean Catholics, the Voice of the Faithful or the silent majority,” he said. “We need to put the accent on Catholic and come together as one people ready to make sacrifices for our Church,” he said.

“My hope is that the major step we are taking today will set us on firm ground so that we can focus our attention once more on our primary mission to preach the truth of our Catholic faith in both word and deed,” the archbishop continued.

Archbishop O’Malley said, as he has throughout the reconfiguration process, that the need for the parish closings was brought about by demographic changes, the growing shortage of priests and the mounting cost of maintaining aging buildings.

According to Archbishop O’Malley, 130 of Boston’s pastors are over 70 years of age and one-third of all parishes are “operating in the red.” In addition, he said, in the city of Boston alone parishes are in need of approximately $100 million from repairs.

“The alternative to going through this exercise would be that we would experience a continual decline in some areas of our archdiocese, closing parish after parish, school after school, outreach program after outreach program, all because the archdiocese would be unable to subsidize these entities,” the archbishop said.

Though the process of reducing the number of parishes has been ongoing for years—the archdiocese has suppressed 55 since 1985—the need to accelerate the process is widely seen to have been precipitated by the drop in donations and Mass attendance in the aftermath of the clergy sexual scandal.

Yet, in his remarks, the archbishop stressed that the parish closures are unrelated to last year’s multimillion dollar clergy abuse settlement.

“The decision to close parishes is in no way connected with the need to finance the legal settlement with the victims of clergy sexual abuse,” he said, adding that the sale of the former archbishop’s residence and surrounding land has raised the needed $90 million.

Instead, the archbishop said, proceeds from the sale of closed parishes will be used to support remaining parishes as well as prop up the funds that provide health and pension benefits to archdiocesan employees.

“This process of reconfiguration is directed not toward the past, but toward the future mission of the Church,” Archbishop O’Malley said.

One hundred forty-seven parishes had been recommended for closure at some point in the reconfiguration process, and there had been speculation that as many as 90 parishes would ultimately need to be closed.

But, responding to a reporter’s question, the archbishop also expressed his belief that no similar wave of closures would be required in the near future.

“We hope this is it for a long, long time,” he said.

“Why are in need of approximately $100 million in repairs?

According to Archbishop O’Malley, 130 of Boston’s pastors are over 70 years of age and one-third of all parishes are ‘operating in the red.’ In addition, he said, in the city of Boston alone parishes are in need of approximately $100 million in repairs.

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Instead, the archbishop said, proceeds from the sale of closed parishes will be used to support remaining parishes as well as prop up the funds that provide health and pension benefits to archdiocesan employees.

‘This process of reconfiguration is directed not toward the past, but toward the future mission of the Church,’ Archbishop O’Malley said.

One hundred forty-seven parishes had been recommended for closure at some point in the reconfiguration process, and there had been speculation that as many as 90 parishes would ultimately need to be closed.

But, responding to a reporter’s question, the archbishop also expressed his belief that no similar wave of closures would be required in the near future.

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PITTSBURGH (CNS)—While one has a “clear and grave obligation” to vote against legislation that bolsters abortion, the view of refusing Communion to politicians who support keeping abortion legal is not part of the pastoral tradition of the Church, Pittsburgh Bishop Donald W. Wuerl said in a May 25 address.

“Given the long-standing practice of not making a public judgment about the state of the soul of those who present themselves for holy Communion, it does not seem that it is sufficiently clear in the matter of voting for legislation that supports abortion such a judgment necessarily follows,” he said.

Bishop Wuerl said the responsibility of such a judgment first rests on those presenting themselves for holy Communion, he added.

Bishop Wuerl addressed the issue of “Faith, Personal Conviction and Political Life” during his annual Loebig Lecture before the St. Thomas More Society on May 25 at the City-County Building in downtown Pittsburgh.

Saying that people in a democratic society must bring their moral values into the voting process, he pointed to the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s 2002 “Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life,” which reminded the faithful that it is wrong to perform an abortion or support legislation that enables it.

The bishop noted, however, that while the doctrinal note highlights the evil action of abortion, it does not propose disciplinary actions on politicians.

“In fact, there seems to be a practice both in Rome and throughout the diocesan Churches in Europe of refraining from disciplinary actions in such circumstances,” he said.

Bishop Wuerl said the responsibility of a bishop includes making judgments on how best to achieve the spiritual conversion of intellect, will and heart.

The initial step, he said, is to provide clear and adequate teaching on the issue of abortion and the issue of voting to support abortion legislation. Private discussion with legislators on the issue could follow. Further steps could include a public declaration that a legislator’s actions contradict Church teaching.

The bishop said actions against politicians must be clearly explained so the faithful do not get the impression the Church is attempting to force its will on legislation.

“Before taking disciplinary action, if such a route were chosen, there would have to be a clear explanation about what action is being taken, why it is being taken and how it is justified,” he said.

Bishop Wuerl noted, however, that politicians who support abortion legislation should not be surprised if they are not welcome in certain Catholic circles, or do not have the doors of Catholic facilities open to them in the same manner as those who support the Catholic tradition of faith and morals.

He said efforts must be made to more clearly expose the evil of abortion, and to debunk the theory that abortion is acceptable simply because some Catholic politicians support it.

“All of us have an obligation to be informed on how critical the life-death issue of abortion is, and how profoundly and intrinsically evil is the destruction of unborn human life,” Bishop Wuerl said. “Our political actions, out of which come the laws of this country, must be based on the natural moral law and the most basic of all human rights—the right to life.” †
archdiocesan Church properties.

“There is a lot of roof damage and water damage,” he said. “Good Shepherd Church was damaged when a cross snapped off and broke windowpanes in the cupola. There was water and glass in the church. The storm blew windows out of a couple of the classrooms and in the principal’s office at Central Catholic School.”

Hodde said “a broken tree limb knocked a hole in the roof of the church in Spencer.”

David Siler, executive director of Catholic Charities and Family Ministries for the archdiocese and former executive director of St. Elizabeth’s Pregnancy and Adoption Services, said two teen-age clients who are pregnant were examined at a hospital after the storm and were fine.

Michelle Meier, the current director of St. Elizabeth’s, is vacating with family members out of state.

The tornado scattered dozens of felled trees around the scenic wooded property and against the exterior walls of the Catholic Charities agency, which serves low-income expectant mothers and their children.

St. Elizabeth’s provides support to women and families experiencing crisis pregnancies, including counseling and residential services, as well as adoption services to families and programs for parent and child development.

Siler said the facilities require extensive repairs that are expected to take several months. Ten residents and their babies will stay at another Catholic facility in Indianapolis this summer while repairs are made to St. Elizabeth’s buildings.

He said the archdiocese’s insurance will cover structural repairs to the buildings, but St. Elizabeth’s needs donations to cover a lot of other clean-up expenses, including tree removal on the grounds.

“St. Elizabeth’s sits on about nine acres of heavily wooded property,” he said, “and there are very few trees that aren’t already down or are going to have to come down.”

Siler said there were 10 teen-age girls and eight babies with staff members in the residence when the tornado struck the property.

They had the weather radio on so they knew the storm was coming,” he said, “and they went down to a secure hallway in the basement of the residence. They spent last night in a motel. Two of the residents’ rooms were heavily damaged.

“The ceiling caved in when the wind blew two large brick chimneys over,” he said. “The chimneys came through the ceiling and pushed the whole contents of the ceiling and all the insulation down into the rooms. A large part of the roof was torn off and there is a tremendous amount of water damage all the way down to the basement.”

Siler said he had “no idea yet what kind of money we’re looking at to remove the downed trees and repair the buildings.”

He said the administrative building was damaged more than the residential building.

“The water leaked through the walls and ceilings,” Siler said. “It’s even down in the basement. Walls are going to need to be torn apart and ceilings are going to have to come down. They’re telling us now it could be 60 days or so before we’re able to be back in the administrative facility.”

Siler said he hopes that St. Elizabeth’s offices will be temporarily relocated to the Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center this week.

“We need to continue to do the adoption work and be able to answer phone calls to help women in crisis pregnancies,” he said. “The phones will be forwarded to the other offices.”

Siler said it will be at least 30 days before clients can move back into the residential building.

“We’ve moved the mothers and babies into another Catholic facility in Indianapolis,” he said. “All of our essential services will be able to continue in a new location. The daycare facility and reflection room were not damaged, so we’ll take portable cribs from the daycare to the new location.”

Siler said the clients are attending summer school classes, but St. Elizabeth’s van was not damaged so they will be transported to school from their “temporary residence.”

“Right now, it’s really hard to say how much damage there is,” he said.

A staff meeting was planned for June 1, Siler said, and some employees may not be able to work for a few weeks.

Staff members and volunteers began removing twisted and broken trees from the grounds on Memorial Day.

Construction workers covered the roofs to prevent further water damage and started removing insulation and drywall from the interior of both buildings.

“We’re grateful that no one was hurt,” Siler said. “We just had an assessment done on the three-story residential facility, which was built in the 1960s and needed new furnishings and carpeting, but this wasn’t the way we thought we would go about replacing those things. The administrative building was built in the 1970s and is one story with a lower-level conference room.

“This is a chance for the community to become even more aware of what we’re doing and offer some additional support for our ministry. Staff members have salvaged the essential records so they can continue to take care of our clients.”

The west side of the buildings sustained the most damage, he said, and the roof of the computer room was torn off.

“We’re not sure yet if our computer servers are still functioning,” Siler said. “The power is out in the building. Luckily, we have taped back-ups if the servers were destroyed.”

Ron Lenz, president of St. Elizabeth’s advisory council, used a chain saw to help cut up dozens of trees in the front side and back yards.

“We could use lots of help in all kinds of ways,” Lenz said. “We need prayers, financial assistance and hands-on volunteer labor. St. Elizabeth’s is a not-for-profit ministry, and we operate on a tight budget. Now we need a lot of repairs. We’ll be putting a list together of all the things we need. St. Elizabeth’s has been around for 90 years and we’ve faced many challenges. We just have a temporary setback.”

Rosemary Meyer, director of marketing and development, said May 30 was a sad day for St. Elizabeth’s, but fortunately the women, children and staff are fine.

“We thank God that no one was hurt,” Meyer said, “and we are trusting him as we begin to rebuild. We have lots of damage and lots of repair work to do. We have a message on our telephone line to let people know how they can reach us for help or how to help us. We are asking people to pray for us, for the girls and for everyone involved in the clean-up effort. We also need contributions because there are many things that the insurance does not cover.”

St. Rose of Lima parishioner Tony Bordenkecher of Franklin was among the volunteers who brought his chain saw and helped clean up the property on the holiday.

“I just thought it was the right thing to do,” Bordenkecher said. “I got the day off, so why not come and help out?”

(If you would like to help St. Elizabeth’s Pregnancy and Adoption Services, call 317-787-3412 for information about volunteer service opportunities or financial needs.)

Above, the west side of St. Elizabeth’s Pregnancy and Adoption Services’ administrative and residential buildings sustained structural damage during a May 30 tornado on the south side of Indianapolis. Dozens of trees on the wooded lot were felled by high winds and scattered around the property.

Left, David Siler, right, executive director of Catholic Charities and Family Ministries for the archdiocese, watches as workers remove damaged drywall from a ceiling in a bedroom at St. Elizabeth’s Pregnancy and Adoption Services’ residential building.
CATHEDRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Congratulations to the Class of 2004!

Ninety-nine percent of the Class of 2004 will be attending 67 different colleges and universities next fall.
Strong core of Catholic values in Roman: Unparalleled Outrage

Roman: Unparalleled Outrage

Published by 1stBooks Library, now AuthorHouse, it’s available in dust jacket hardback ($28.95, 260 pages); paperback ($14.95); and electronic book ($5.95) at www.1stBooks.com.

Reviewed by Shirley Vogler Meister

Before current media coverage about sexual abuse cases and the associated curiosity about the Catholic seal of confession, these topics piqued John William McMullen’s interest when he discovered they were in the public light in Indiana in the 1800s. McMullen heavily weighed the relevance of publishing a book about his findings, then went forward with Roman: Unparalleled Outrage. This was a wise and principled decision.

Research proved that a young immigrant priest from Alsace, France, was caught in a situation that scandalized the Church because of ongoing negative press—even in Europe. McMullen’s essentially true historical fiction is braced by a strong core of Catholic values. He substantiates the courage and holiness of a much-maligned Roman, who came to America in 1839 and was ordained in Vincennes, Ind., as a diocesan priest.

While Father Roman Weinzoepfel helped pastor an Evansville, Ind., parish, he suffered cruelly—emotionally and physically—because a young woman falsely accused him of raping her when she went to confession. His subsequent trial and imprisonment, as well as the previous controversy, are so vivid and true to the times. McMullen flushes out his people with colorful precision, using flashbacks to heighten the suspense.

Another person in his story with special holiness and courage is Blessed Mother Theodore Guérin, well known to Catholics. She was beatified in 1998 by Pope John Paul II. She and five other Sisters of Providence emigrated from France to Vincennes, Ind., in 1840, founding a motherhouse and academy for young women at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, near Terre Haute, the following year.

Both she and Father Weinzoepfel had ongoing disagreements with the authoritative Bishop Célestin de la Hailandière of Vincennes, who turned out to be more foe than friend. Eventually, he was known as “The Bishop without a Seat.”

Mother Theodore and Father Weinzoepfel reacted differently to Hailandière, but each teaches the reader the importance of prayer and patience have in everyone’s life. The near-explosive exchanges between Mother Theodore and the bishop, documented in correspondence, also come to witty life.

Also portrayed well are the young woman responsible for the scandal, trial and imprisonment, whose father and husband were partly responsible for what happened; the trial lawyers, whose special interests—for or against Father Weinzoepfel—add spice and depth to the story; the Catholics and Protestants who believed in Father Weinzoepfel’s innocence and acted accordingly; and many peripheral personalities.

After the controversy ended, Father Weinzoepfel returned to his Evansville parish, served as novice master and principal of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis. (Shirley Vogler Meister is a columnist for The Criterion and a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis.)
The human body is a precious gift from God

By Fr. Robert L. Kinast

Recently, a promotional catalogue listing resources for an alternative spirituality arrived in my mail. It emphasizes body purity and exercises to achieve uniqueness.

The same week, I received a letter from the Catholic Theological Society of America announcing that the “Resurrection of the Body” is the theme of next year’s convention.

In our culture today, the nutritional information printed on packaged foods, popular nutritional programs such as the Atkins or South Beach diets, physical fitness gyms and home workout equipment, as well as advertisements for all sorts of medicines and health aids keep our attention focused on the human body.

Medical research continues to astound us with breakthroughs that combat bodily illness and disease. On the other hand, alternatives such as eating organic foods, vegetarian diets, herbal remedies and holistic health practices stress the primacy of the body from a different perspective.

And the advertising, fashion and entertainment industries continually bombard us with their images of physical beauty and bodily experience. While all this has been going on in culture, theologians and pastoral ministers have been striving to affirm the body as a blessing from God and to balance a cultural preoccupation with the physical body by presenting a more complete appreciation of human embodiment.

Vatican Council II extolled the beauty, value and dignity of the human body while dispelling negative and distorted attributions of it (Church in the Modern World, #14). The focus for the council’s view was marriage, highlighted by its discussion of the physical expression of marital love (Church in the Modern World, #649).

At the same time, the council’s vision of the consecrated life prescribed that traditional vows of poverty and celibacy not as denials of bodily enjoyment, but as a means for deepening bonds of love and service, and of witnessing to the fullness of life to which bodily existence leads (Decree on Religious Life, #13-14).

This position of the council has been given practical expression in the church’s commitment to health care and its defense of a person’s dignity even when the body is limited, disabled or worn out. Advocacy on behalf of the physically disabled as well as protection of the unborn, the aged and the mentally restricted reaffirm that the body is a blessing—not because it is physically perfect but because it embodies a human person.

As women in the Church have articulated feminine experiences, they have reminded us that they are uniquely embodied and express their femininity in forms of grace and action different from those expressed by men.

And isn’t incidental that the impact of women’s experience in the Church has helped to turn theological attention to a new appreciation and concern for the natural world in which we live.

Protecting the environment’s life-giving and life-sustaining resources is not solely a woman’s issue, but women have taken the lead in heightening our awareness of the physical world’s value, nurture and irreplaceable beauty.

The blessing of the human body is not just in its physical beauty and bodily experience. A personal retreat can also be helpful.

This Week’s Question

When you are feeling tired and “run down,” how do you refresh your spirit?

“I take a walk and say a little prayer.” (Kathy Glass, Hanover, Md.)

“And I meditate on the mind-body interplay between what I am feeling and how I am thinking.” (Cynthia Winters, Collegeville, Minn.)

“I listen to music and especially to Meditation” (Christopher D. Lancy, Columbia, S.C.)

“Go outside and sit, pray, read the Bible.” (Fr. Andrew K. Canavan, Washington, D.C.)

“Go on retreat.” (Father Perry Kenaston, Hoonah, Alaska)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: What does the Church in your community do that seriously confronts the realities of poverty?

To respond for possible publication, write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100.

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From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

The Civil War’s ‘Nuns of the Battlefield’

Most of us recognize how important religious orders of women were to the great cause. The Catholic Church in the United States. But how many of us realize how important they were for the armies of both the North and South during the Civil War? There’s a monument— Washington, D.C., called “Nuns of the Battlefield.” It was dedicated after the Civil War to the women who served as nurses for the North during the war. It was the Catholic religious orders that provided women to care for the wounded. The nuns worked immediately behind the battle lines. They used barns and warehousing as hospitals, and usually sanitary conditions were impossible. The soldiers of the Civil War called the nuns “Angels of Mercy.”

The nuns did more than care for the wounded. Although the Church provided as chaplains as it could to serve as chaplains, there were many more nuns than there were priests, and the nuns had to serve as spiritual directors as well as the physical needs of the soldiers. Historian Theodore Maynard wrote, “Often, after having made all efforts to save a life, they had to show men how to die.” Of course, these sisters didn’t minister only to Catholic soldiers. They helped many Protestant soldiers make their peace with God.

Among the religious orders that provided sisters as nurses were the Sisters of Providence, Sisters of Charity, Sisters of Mercy, Ursulines, Sisters of St. Dominic, Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis, Sisters of St. Joseph, Sisters of the Holy Cross and Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

However, it was the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, the fore-runners of the sisters who operate St. Vincent Hospital and Health Services in Indianapolis, who seems to have provided the most volunteers: 231 nurses plus an additional 87 who served in the ambulance corps that followed the troops into battle. In St. Louis, according to St. Mary’s Gettysburg, there were 26 Daughters of Charity.

(Unfortunately, there don’t seem to be any records of the numbers of nuns who worked as nurses for the South.)

The Civil War had lasted a time when there was still a great deal of anti-Catholic prejudice and bigotry. The sisters had to work hard toward the Catholic Church. They were responsible for numerous converts. As for priests, 40 chaplains were assigned to the armies of the North and 28 to the South. The future Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Holy Cross Father William Corby from Notre Dame distinguished himself before a battle by mounting a horse and dashed along the front lines telling the men to be sorry for their sins because he was going to give general absolution.

But it was the nuns who served as nurses who were most remembered by the men who served the war.

Concupiscia/Cynthia Devyes

Everything’s relative at reunion time

“For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone from the flowers appear upon the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the relatives is heard in your ears.” (With apologies to the Song of Solomon.)

Sometimes it is relative, especially in the summer when family reunions dot the calendar. This is the time for making up for lost acquaintance with the fringe ones, deepen the bond with the beloved ones and assess the health of the family tree in general.

And every year, along with reunions, come the memories of the circle of circum- stance, past or present. You know, the few who are celebrated or rich, and the many who are eccentric or ordinary, not to mention annoying. Sometimes they can be all of those things, and still endure themselves to you.

Now, my Uncle John was a case in point. He was clever, creative and alco- holic. The two are not uncommon happen- enances, but he was in and out of rehab and I only took an interesting person indeed. We kids all loved him because he was fun, but the grown-ups were wary of his binge’s and emotional eruptions.

One Uncle John was the only Seabee in World War II who came home with an honorable discharge due to what was then called “shell shock.” He’d only gone as far as Hawaii during his service, so we never could quite figure out what happened to him.

Uncle John told hilarious stories. He could fashion terrific topics from junk he found hidden in the corners of our apartment, as well as turn out elegant cabinetry for Chris Craft luxury boats. He could also tease his sister, my mom, into laughing when she was trying to be firm with him, which was most of the time.

Mom also had a cousin, Ray, who was really something. No sentence passed his lips without at least one swear word in it, usually of the worst kind. He was a nice, kind man, but seemed not to notice how shocking his conversation was, jabbering on while innocent by- standers paled.

Ray drive what he called a “funeral car,” an old limousine he bought second- hand from a funeral home. It had a roll- up window between the driver and the passengers, and we loved to roll it up and be a part of the funeral processional. I would sit with it across her lap, sewing the through the Mae West, and he would come in and turn it for her. What a pair.

You might say, so what? Everyone has relatives, including peculiar ones. But it’s in observing that they recognize God’s gifts, variety and goodness. Love is indeed a many-splendored thing, and it’s mostly relative.

(Cynthia Devyes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, is a regu- lar columnist for The Criterion.)

Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

Troubling turns over to God’s power

Last fall, I ran into a friend, Janet, who was undergoing intensive cancer treatment. I was torn— hold- ing you in my prayers,” I told her. And she accepted—to me, thanking me, she showed how her only path was to be honest and circum- stances is “Thy will be done.” Then she went on, “What else is there to say?”

Christ taught us as “Thy will be done” in “The Lord’s Prayer” from the 28th chapter of the 6th of the New Testament. Even under severe stress in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus knew that the Father’s will was right and this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” I saw Janet again. Her health had improved considerably. I told her how much I admired the simplicity and truth in her answers.

Yet, when I faced wrist surgery in late March, what did I pray? Instead of “Thy

will be done”? (Mt 6:10), I asked God to give me a sign important enough to can- cel surgery. I then received three good signs, which my husband called “excuses.” However, Paul also agreed we give me a sign important enough to can- ceal surgery. I then received three good signs, which my husband called “excuses.” However, Paul also agreed we need to do what we want, even though it might not be what is rightfully yours. Fear and suspi- cion come in with every new thought. For the sake of your own happi- ness, let go.

I once heard an older widow say, “I’m not praying less. It takes too much effort to train a man.” With that kind of attitude it’s best that she remain single because none of her children will be able to bear her as her living basic parameter. Nor do women do. Essentially, that is. The words are a trigger for her. All marriages are really unions between two incompatible people who are joined together by a commitment to love one another no matter what. Prayer often softens the edges of discord, and helps bring about compromise and for- give. If it is rooted in jealousy, it needs to be purged. That vice torments the mind with jealousy but in the spirit of perfectionism.

“Letting go

The Prayer of Letting Go

I place you lovingly in the care of the Father. I release you from my anxiety and care.

I let go of my possessive hold on you. I am willing to free you to follow the dictates of your own conscience. Dear husband (dear wife, son, daughter, brother, sister, friend),

I no longer believe that you are too important in God’s larger plan. I no longer care how you may experience.

I no longer believe that you are too important in God’s larger plan. I no longer care how you may experience.

I bless you, I have faith in you and I behold Jesus in you. Amen.
Feast of the Most Holy Trinity/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, June 6, 2004

- Proverbs 8:22-31
- Romans 5:1-5
- John 16:12-15

The Book of Proverbs, the source of this feast’s first reading, is part of a collection of Scripture called the Wisdom Literature. Of the other books in this collection, Proverbs is thoroughly rooted in a deep faith in God, in the majesty of the God so lovingly and patiently experienced in all of creation and, most especially, in God’s loving mercy.

This book, as the others of the Wisdom category, validates human reason and therefore human wisdom. Humans can recognize what is real, and they are able to dismiss what is unreal. Putting these two processes together, namely profound religious faith and human wisdom, these books, including Proverbs, fundamentally say that trust in God, and belief in God, are not far-fetched and unreasonable. To the contrary, belief in God, and all the consequent resolutions about behavior, are reasonable to the utmost.

Proverbs is a series of maxims and statements of advice. Many of these maxims have found their way into commonplace speech.

Since it draws its messages from many Middle Eastern cultures, and from many experiences of the Hebrew people, over a period of centuries, it is difficult to date. Suffice it to say that it is ancient, and the pious have treasured it for many, many years.

A literary device in the Wisdom Literature, to personify wisdom, occurs in this reading. The Wisdom of God becomes a person and speaks. Of course, believers always have seen God, or Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, as this person.

In any case, this reading establishes God as the Almighty, and as the Creator, possessing an unchallenged power to give life and form evidenced throughout creation.

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, the second reading this weekend, declares that those who have accepted Jesus as Lord are at peace with God. Moreover, as a result of this bond with Jesus, and as proof of this peace, true discretion have within themselves the very life and love of the Holy Spirit.

For the last reading, the Church on this feast selects a part of St. John’s Gospel. It is the word of Jesus, spoken to the disciples. Splendid itself in a Gospel renowned for its eloquence and depth, Jesus promises the disciples that the Holy Spirit will be with them. The word is so reassuring, but they also reveal the oneness of the Lord with the Holy Spirit. Jesus and the Spirit are one. Therefore, Jesus, the Spirit and the Father are all one. Followers of Jesus are linked with God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—inseparably and eternally.

Reflection

Last week, the Church celebrated the feast of the Pentecost, when it asked us all to remember the unity we have in the community of believers, the Church, and the power to live virtually that comes to us in the Holy Spirit.

In a sense, this weekend’s feast, that of the Holy Trinity, and Pentecost both occur in the aftermath of the Ascension, celebrated a week before Pentecost.

At the Ascension, human and divine, crucified but risen, Jesus returned to the glory of God. But Jesus did not leave us. This feast reassures us about the presence and guidance of God with us, as we were assured at Pentecost.

These readings emphasize that Jesus is God, perfectly living with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The evidence of God’s life, indeed the essential outcome of life in God, is creative and undying love.

As Christians are asked to imitate Jesus, they necessarily are asked to love others. It is not easy. Yet, despite our weaknesses as humans, despite our sins, we have with us, and in us, the life of God, with all its joy and its eternity, for Jesus is with us!

Question Corner/Rev. John Dietzen

May crowning is a form of paraliturgical prayer

A local Catholic high school, where a relative of mine is principal, is embroiled over a May crowning that he and some parents want to observe with the students.

The head of the religion department, a woman once, objects to the tradition on the basis that this ceremony was started in the Middle Ages to entice non-believers into adoration of Mary and that this ritual was denounced at Vatican Council II.

My family and I attended grammar school after Vatican II, and we remember that the Queenship of Mary, celebrated now on Aug. 22.

There is no need, therefore, to see May crowning as anything more than a form of devotion to the mother of Christ that enhances honor for him, the rite is encouraged.

The Church, of course, has a feast of Mary, the Queen of the Apostles.

I realize this response will not reach you during May, but I have no idea why this woman would think Vatican II “denounced” May crowning ceremonies. It’s just the opposite; if it is a form of devotion to the mother of Christ that enhances honor for him, the rite is encouraged.

The Council of Ephesus in 431 defended the teaching that Mary is the Mother of God, not first to honor Mary but to clarify Catholic belief that Jesus is one (divine) person with two natures, human and divine.

Following this council, Catholic honor of Mary increased greatly, a fact that the Church generally saw as fulfilling her words in the Magnificat, “From now on will all ages call me blessed; the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is my name.”

Throughout the centuries, certain forms of devotion to Our Lady tended to cloud the vital distinction between her role and the role of her Son. Some prayers appeared, for example, seeming to place her on an equal footing with Jesus as redeemer of the world.

So it is true that Vatican II told theologians and preachers to be alert to treat correctly the unique dignity of the Mother of God. They should, said the council, “equally avoid the falsity of exaggeration on the one hand, and the excess of narrow-mindedness on the other” ( Constitution of the Church, 967).

It insists, however, that traditional practices and exercises of devotion toward her be treasured, as approved by the Church through the centuries, since “Mary shines forth on earth...as a sign of sure hope and solace for the pilgrim people of God” (668).

If there’s a problem with Mary being called, or crowned as, queen, that too is unfounded.

The concept of Mary as Queen, a prestigious title often given to the mother of a king in ancient times to signify her particular influence with her son, has good scriptural and traditional roots. (See, for example, Solomon and his mother, Bathsheba.)

The Church, of course, has a feast of the Queenship of Mary, celebrated now on Aug. 22.

Almost any devotions, from the Stations of the Cross to novenas, can be abused, distorted or misunderstood. But that is only a reason to be thoughtful and careful that these celebrations fit within authentic Catholic tradition and teaching. It is not a reason to forbid them.

( A free brochure answering questions that Catholics ask about receiving the holy Eucharist is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 325, Peoria, IL 61613. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address or by e-mail in care of jjdietzen@aol.com.)

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

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

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

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, P.O. Box 325, Peoria, IL 61613 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.

My Journey to God

Come, Holy Trinity

Come, Holy Trinity, pitch your tent among us. Bathe us in beauty, in your image shining. Grant us your wisdom, as we seek to serve you, God in three persons.

Come, Holy Trinity, tree of life and glory. Transform our Eden into wounded Calvary. Rise over sin and death, shine from tomb now empty, Fill all creation.

Come, Holy Trinity, breathe new life Within us. Wash us in water, cleanse us in your mercy, Clothe us in splendor, radiant in your brightness, Sealed as your chosen.

Come, Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, God of all ages, living here among us. Bind us in glory, now and through all ages, We’d never ending.

By Deacon Eric M. Augustein

(Deaner Eric M. Augustein is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. He will be ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein on June 5 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. He wrote these lyrics for a thanksgiving hymn for his First Mass, which he will celebrate on June 6 at St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.)

Daily Readings

Monday, June 7
1 Kings 17:1-6
Psalm 121:1-8
Matthew 5:1-12

Tuesday, June 8
1 Kings 17:7-16
Psalm 4:2-5, 7-8
Matthew 5:13-16

Wednesday, June 9
Ephrem, deacon and doctor of the Church
1 Kings 18:20-39
Psalm 16:1-2, 4-5, 8, 11
Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday, June 10
1 Kings 18:41-46
Psalm 65:10-13
Matthew 5:20-26

Friday, June 11
Barnabas, apostle
Psalm 98:1-6
Matthew 5:27-32

Saturday, June 12
1 Kings 19:19-21
Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-10
Matthew 5:33-37

Sunday, June 13
The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
Genesis 14:18-20
Psalm 110:4-5, 1
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
Luke 9:11b-17

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Page 15
The Criterion Friday, June 4, 2004
Indianapolis, Evening 1 p.m.
Information: 317-638-8146.

First Mondays
Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis. Guardian Angel Guild, board meeting, 9:30 a.m.

First Tuesdays
Divine Mercy Chapel, 334 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. Confes-
sion, 5 p.m. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament for voca-
tions, 7:30 p.m.

St. Joseph Church, 2650 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. Holy
hour for religious vocations, Benediction and exposition of
the Blessed Sacrament after 7 p.m.

Berebeef Jesuit Preparatory School, 2001 W. 46th St.
Indianapolis, Indiana Autism and Special Needs Group meet-
ing, 7:30 p.m.; child care provided. Information: 317-885-7295.

First Fridays
St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1723 S. Bedford St., Indianapolis.
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 8:30 a.m.; Mass, 9 a.m. Sat., rece-
cordion, 4:30-6 p.m., Sat. 8:30 a.m., “Children of Hope”

Holy Name Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Mass,
8:15 a.m. Eucharistic adoration following Mass until 5 p.m.
Information: 317-784-5454.

St. Peter Church, 1207 East Road, Brookville. Exposition of
the Blessed Sacrament after 8 a.m. until Communion service,
1 p.m.

Holy Guardian Angel Church, 405 U.S. 52, Cedar Grove.
Eucharistic adoration after 8 a.m. Mass-3 p.m.

SS. Francis and Clare Church, 5900 S. Shadow Branch Rd.
Greenwood, Mass, 8 a.m., adora-
tion, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Sacred Heart Chapel, 8:30 a.m. Divine
Mercy Chapel, 3 p.m. Informa-
tion: 317-859-4673.

St. Joseph Church, 1375 S. Mill Creek Ave., Indianapolis.
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 4 p.m.; rosary, 5 p.m.,
Benediction, 5:30 p.m., Mass, 5:45 p.m. Information: 317-244-
9002.

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indian-
apolis. Sacred Heart devotion, 11 a.m., holy hour, 6-7 p.m.
Information: 317-632-9349.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 1530 Devin St., Indianapolis.
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 7:30-10:30 a.m. Informa-
tion: 317-638-5551.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Chapel, 1752 Selcher Lane,
New Albany. Adoration con-
cluding with confessions at
6 p.m. Benediction, 6:45 p.m.

St. Joseph Church, 113 S. 5th St., Terre Haute. Eucharistic adora-
tion, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Benedic-
tion, rosary, noon, Mass,
5:15 p.m. Information: 812-235-
4996.

First Saturdays
Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St.,
Greenwood. Devotions, Mass;
7:30 a.m.; exposition and trans-
lation, rosary, meditations fol-
lowing Mass.

Holy Angels Church, 740 W. 28th St., Indianapolis.
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 7:15 a.m. Mass,
5:30 p.m. Benediction and ser-
dvice.

Holy Rosary Church, 520 Ste-
ves St., Indianapolis. Adora-
tion of the Blessed Sacrament
after 5:45 p.m. Mass-9 a.m. Sun-
day. Information: 317-636-
4478.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 533 E. Washington St., Indian-
apolis. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, prayer service,
7:30 p.m.

St. Anthony Church, 379 N. Warman Ave., Indianapolis.
Exposition of the Blessed Sacra-
ment after 3:30 p.m. Mass. hour of silent prayer and reflection
followed by Benediction of the
Blessed Sacrament.

St. Joseph Church, 1375 S. Micky Ave., Indianapolis.
Adoration of the Blessed Sacra-
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Greenwood. Devotions, Mass;
7:30 a.m.; exposition and trans-
lation, rosary, meditations fol-
lowing Mass.
The annual pilgrimage Mass is usually held the Sunday before the Memorial Day weekend and commemorates those who have died in defense of their country. About 1,600 people attended the liturgy.

Archbishop O’Brien asked the worshipers to pray in thanksgiving for all those currently serving in the military as well as for “past generations of our armed forces who have willingly given their lives in service of our country and enormous accomplishments for justice and peace.”

“…”It is indeed a noble vocation to give one’s life in defense of our country and enormous accomplishments for justice and peace.”


Archbishop says U.S. soldiers carry out ‘noble vocation’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—At an annual military pilgrimage Mass, the head of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services said the “barbarous acts” of a few U.S. soldiers should not overshadow the “noble vocation” of military service or the enormous accomplishments of most American men and women in uniform.

“This is not a political statement but a matter of fact,” said Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien in his homily at the Ascension Sunday Mass on May 23 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

By combining the expertise of our cancer care specialists, the effectiveness of the most sophisticated treatment methods available, and the support of an entire team dedicated to your recovery, we can help you become cancer’s biggest fear. Call (111) 784-7404 for information.

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Elementary School Principal
St. Ambrose Catholic School in Seymour, Indiana is seeking qualified applicants for the position of school principal. St. Ambrose is a pre-school through 8th grade school with an enrollment of about 150 students.

We are looking for a professional educator with strong leadership and communication skills who has experience in curriculum building. Applicant should be a practicing Catholic who can lead the Catholic formation of our students and staff. Applicant should hold a license in supervision/administration.

Please send résumé to:
St. Ambrose Search Committee
C/o Carole Williams
Office of Catholic Education
1400 N. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46206

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