WASHINGTON (CNS)—In a scene that may be repeated across the country as U.S. bishops take their own advice to dialogue with Catholic politicians about abortion, Archbishop Raymond L. Burke of St. Louis met with a U.S. congressman from Missouri on July 12.

Archdiocesan spokesman Jim Orso said the archbishop’s half-hour meeting with Rep. William Lacy Clay, D-Mo., took place in the congressman’s St. Louis office. Because it was a “pastoral meeting,” Orso added, both parties agreed not to make any public comment about it.

Clay, who is Catholic, said before the Mass that Archbishop Burke “has gone too far” and was “delving into politics” by saying he would not give Communion to Catholic politicians who support keeping abortion legal.

The meeting was the latest outgrowth of a controversy that began in January when Archbishop Burke—then bishop of La Crosse, Wis.—formally notified Catholic lawmakers in the Wisconsin diocese that they cannot receive Communion if they continue to support procured abortion or euthanasia.

“Catholic legislators who are members of the Diocese of La Crosse and who continue to support procured abortion or euthanasia may not present themselves to receive holy Communion,” the notification said. “They are not to be admitted to holy Communion, should they present themselves, until such time as they publicly renounce their support of these most unjust practices.”

The U.S. bishops as a whole, however, with the guidance of a top Vatican official, were taking a different approach to the Communion question. At their June meeting near Denver, the bishops approved a statement on Catholics in political life that said politicians who act “consistently to support abortion on demand” risk “cooperating in evil and sinning against the common good.”

In the statement, approved by a 183-6 vote, the bishops said that “all must examine their consciences” about their worthiness to receive Communion, including with regard to “fidelity to the moral teaching of the Church in personal and public life.”

The bishops were guided in part by a six-point memorandum from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican’s

Apostolic nuncio visits Saint Meinrad Archabbey to celebrate its 150th anniversary

By Sean Gallagher

ST. MEINRAD—The Benedictine monks of Saint Meinrad Archabbey have been celebrating their sesquicentennial throughout this year and will continue to do so in the coming months.

At the celebrations, various groups of people with special relationships to the monastic community have been invited as their guests.

On July 11, the focus was on Pope John Paul II’s personal representative to the United States as well as many of his brother bishops.

On that day, in the archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln, Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, the apostolic delegate to the United States, was the celebrant at a Mass in observance of the feast of St. Benedict and all Benedictine saints.

Fifteen other bishops from throughout the United States, including Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, as well as the Archbishop of Nassau in the Bahamas, concelebrated the Mass. This year, the monks of Saint Meinrad are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the founding of the archabbey.
Cardinal Ratzinger says he, U.S. bishops ‘in harmony’ on politics

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Following a rash of news reports that they had defied Vatican Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the heads of the U.S. bishops defied Vatican Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on the question of withholding Communion from Catholic politicians whose actions conflict with Church teaching on abortion, Cardinal Ratzinger said the bishops' statement on the issue is "very much in harmony" with his recently leaked memo on the topic.

In a letter dated July 9 and made public on July 12 by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith said the bishops' June 18 statement, titled "Catholics in Political Life," "is very much in harmony with the general principles [of] ‘Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion.’"

The Italian magazine L'Espresso obtained a copy of Cardinal Ratzinger's memo on general principles and published it online on July 9.

L'Espresso and numerous other news reports characterized the U.S. bishops' statement—which said a prudential judgment and decision whether to withhold Communion in particular cases rests "with the individual bishop" and "bishops can legitimately make different judgments" in individual cases—as conflicting with the principles outlined in the memo.


Cardinal McCarrick said, "I am grateful for his support of our statement and I look forward to continuing dialogue between our task force and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said the U.S. bishops' recent statement on "Catholics in Political Life" is "very much in harmony" with the general principles of worthiness to receive Communion.

"Over the past several months, I have had many conversations and communications with Cardinal Ratzinger regarding the work of the task force in recent last week," he said. "As I noted in the interim report I delivered to the bishops in June, His Eminence has consistently expressed his respect for the role of the bishops in carrying out their responsibilities in their own local situations."

"When the U.S. bishops met in Denver in mid-June, Cardinal McCarrick's task force presented an interim report of its findings on the issue of withholding Communion from Catholic politicians whose public policy positions conflict with fundamental Church teachings on issues such as abortion and euthanasia."

"It is hoped that this dialogue can continue, that our task force carries on its important work, and that other bishops and pastors and leaders in their own local situations are clear and constant and bishops will teach on issues such as abortion and euthanasia.

"The task force said it "does not advocate the denial of Communion for Catholic politicians or Catholics who act in these circumstances," but it acknowledged that in certain circumstances individual bishops might decide otherwise in a particular case.

"Speaking as chairman of the task force, Cardinal McCarrick told the bishops, ‘The question for us is not simply whether the denial of Communion is possible, but whether it is pastorally wise and prudent. It is not surprising that difficult and differing circumstances on these matters lead to different practices.’"

"Following the task force report, the bishops issued a statement saying Church teaching on the intrinsic evil of abortion are clear and constant and bishops will teach about the intrinsic evil of abortion on demand risks making them cooperate in evil in a public manner.

"On the basis of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the statement said, however, that because of the ‘range of circumstances involved in arriving at a prudential judgment on a matter of this seriousness,’ each bishop must decide on ‘the most prudent course of pastoral action’ in each case."

"While the bishops’ statement and Cardinal McCarrick’s comments on the topic emphasized the necessity of prudential pastoral judgments assessing the facts and circumstances in each case, the memo from Cardinal Ratzinger on general principles did not discuss the aspect of how a bishop should apply the principles in specific cases."

"A number of news reports on the memo, ignoring that context, inferred that the memo posited an absolute rule that all Catholic politicians who support or vote for public policy positions that are opposed to Church teaching on the intrinsic evil of abortion should not receive Communion until they change their views."

"This is the text of Cardinal Ratzinger’s July 9 letter to Cardinal McCarrick:

"Your Eminence:

"With your letter of June 21, 2004, I am pleased to assure you of a copy of the statement ‘Catholics in Political Life,’ approved by the members of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at their June meeting.

"The congregation is grateful for this courtesy. The statement is very much in harmony with the general principles ‘Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion,’ which stress prudential judgment and prudence to clarify the doctrine of the Church on this specific issue—in order to assist the American bishops in their related discussion and determinations.

"It is hoped that this dialogue can continue, that our task force carries on its important work.

"With fraternal regards and prayerful best wishes, I am.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

‘Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger’ "

Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick

The Criterion

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Little Sister of the Poor celebrates her golden jubilee

By Brandon A. Evans

While watching a Broadway musical—and after having directed school plays while formerly a teacher—a Lucille Freeman was raised as a Lutheran. She became Catholic, she wanted to share her vocation. "I'm very sensitive to the fact that you've got to evangelize, you can't just push people too hard," she said, but they don't push people too hard. "I'm just a grace . . . to be able to see these kids enjoying themselves," Johnson said. It is a joy for her to see the students grow in confidence and to see all their hard work come together.

Beryl, who plays Uncle Max in the current play, said that memorizing all the lines while you've got to evangelize, you can't just push people too hard.

Johnson said that after this production the group will decide what plays to present next. As for the future, she wants the group to continue working and glorifying God.

"I want to just keep going [and] doing what we're doing," she said.

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Indianapolis group offers teens a chance for theater

Archdiocese plans Advent pilgrimage to New York

A four-day archdiocesan pilgrimage to celebrate the Christmas season is being planned to New York City.


The trip is limited to 46 people. Already, several people have signed up, said Carolyn Noone, associate director of special events for the archdiocese. In previous years, this trip sold out within a few days.

The pilgrimage begins on Sunday, Dec. 10, departing on a flight from Indianapolis International Airport. Upon arrival, the pilgrims will attend Mass in Newark, N.J., at St. Lucy Church. The church contains the National Shrine of St. Gerard, who is called the patron of expectant mothers. In the afternoon, the pilgrims will view a maritime performance of the “Christmas Spectacular” at Radio City Music Hall then have a bus tour of Manhattan.

Saturday’s activities include Mass at the Church of Most Holy Crucifix in the Chinatown/Little Italy section of Manhattan. An Italian lunch will follow Mass at the famed Da Nico restaurant in Little Italy and the rest of the day can be spent shopping or going to the theater.

On Sunday, pilgrims will celebrate Mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Midtown Manhattan. In the afternoon, the group will attend the highly acclaimed concert of the Jubilaeo Deo Chorale and Orchestra, “Christmas: The Spirit of the Season,” which has been a popular concert with past pilgrims.

The last day of the pilgrimage begins with Mass in Lower Manhattan at Our Lady of the Rosary, the Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, who was the foundress of the parochial school system in the United States.

The cost of the pilgrimage is $839 per person based on triple occupancy, $889 per person based on double occupancy and $1,069 for a single room. The fee includes airfare, hotel, deluxe motor coach transportation, most meals, entrance fees, guide and tips.

(For more information, contact Carolyn Noone at 317-236-1428 or 800-382-9830, ext. 1428).
Finally, someone is paying attention

T he “invisible horror” — a term used here in a 1999 editorial to describe the humanitarian crisis in the Republic of the Sudan — has finally become visible to the world community of nations. An ongoing campaign of ethnic cleansing in the Darfur region in western Sudan recently brought both U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the troubled area. The United Nations calls the state of affairs in that region “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.” Sudan has been in a near constant state of civil war since it became independent of Great Britain in 1956. Until recently, the fighting was concentrated in the south, where predominantly Christian rebels fought repressive government forces. Recent violence in Darfur, an area about the size of France, has been between marauding, government-supported Arab militias, known as Janjaweed, and black African farmers—herders, who are primarily Muslims. This isn’t about religion; it’s a war about ethnicity.

In 2003, some of the regional tribes formed the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), which accuses the government in Khartoum of arming the Janjaweed, an accusation the government denies. The government reached a cease-fire agreement with the government in September of last year. Peace talks stalled, however, and fighting continued until April 2004 for another cease-fire agreement to be hammered out. Despite this, attacks by the Janjaweed militia have increased.

It is estimated that, over the years, the fighting has left more than 2 million people dead and 5 million displaced. According to Catholic Relief Services (CRS), nearly all of the infrastructure and telecommunication networks in the country have been destroyed. Roads are virtually impassable and, with the approaching rainy season, it will be nearly impossible for relief workers to get food, water and medicines to the refugees. And that assumes the government will give them the security and access they need to enter the most war-torn areas.

On June 28, 2004, Bishop John H. Ricard, S.S.J., of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee and chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on international policy, wrote to Secretary of State Powell expressing grave concern about the “humane catastrophe” in Darfur and thanking him for his upcoming trip to the region. In late-June meetings with the leaders of the Khartoum government, Secretary Powell threatened to bring in U.S-backed Sudanese forces to the region if the government failed to take immediate action on four issues: eliminating Arab militia attacks on villagers in Darfur, providing full access to the Darfur region for humanitarian aid workers, and a resumption of international cease-fire monitors and a resumption of full freedom of access to the Darfur region for humanitarians. The Sudanese sisters and brothers and all the Catholic Church in Sudan is small—just over 75 percent Muslim.

Sudanese girl carries brother back to their refugee camp in Chad, on July 1, Dan Griffith, Horn of Africa representative for Catholic Relief Services, said international agencies were racing against nature to prevent an “absolutely catastrophic loss of life” in the Darfur region, before the upcoming rainy season caused distribution of humanitarian aid.

We can be thankful that the world is now focused on this region of the world, which so often gets over-looked while other areas of the world—the Middle East, the Balkans, Asia—command our attention. ✪

—William R. Brans

Letters to the Editor

There’s no rationalization for voting for pro-choice candidates

Does this make sense to anyone? Catholic cardinals (actually, all cardinals—both those who are pro-choice and those who are not) are living in sin.

But voters are not committing sin if they vote for Catholic politicians helping to elect those cardinals into office so they can do their harmful work, as long as the voter continues himself or herself that they are voting for the candidate because they agree with their stance on Social Security, or welfare, or foreign policy, or for whatever, as long as they’re not voting for them because they are pro-choice. I think this is called rationalization.

We’re good at convincing ourselves that we’re doing right when we’re, in fact, doing wrong. Give people a loophole, and many are ready and willing to jump through it.

As an article in the July 2 issue of The Criterion quoted prominent cardinals, as I read it, as saying that it is all right to vote for these pro-choice candidates, and the candidates are, no doubt, saying “thank you, cardinals.” But will God buy this rationalization?

We need to pray, too, for our mis-guided politicians. What must they think of us, their people? Must they think God is pleased with them because we’re voting for them? We’re good at convincing ourselves that it is all right to vote for pro-choice politicians, for example, if we’re ready to jump back to their side when it comes to this very serious issue.

Too many Catholic politicians claim to be personally pro-life but are pro-choice at the same time establishing long records of support for abortion “rights,” including the use of public funds and procedure and the use of government funding for low-income women who cannot afford abortions.

Many of these politicians say they personally oppose abortion, but vigorously opposed informed consent measures, parental consent for minors and every legal protection for fetuses that are harmed or killed during the commission of violent crime.

Sad, many of the officeholders who rank highest in the esteem of pro-choice lobbyists and interest groups are Catholic. Regrettably, these officeholders don’t talk much about the sanctity of life when they vote or speak about this issue. Instead, they enthusiastically embrace the pro-choice movement, and actively seek and reap political benefits by speaking at rallies attacking pro-life candidates and organizations, and accepting political donations, endorsements and awards from abortion groups.

As a Catholic, I think the Church may be guilty of too far too many communion to Catholic officeholders who turn their backs on the Church’s teachings on abortion. But Catholic leaders need to remind the Catholics about the Church’s pro-life position and call into question the duplicity of Catholic politicians who say they are personally opposed to abortion, but take all of the political trophies they can amass by being politically correct.

Suzanne Murphy, Indianapolis

Evil should be fought at the ‘Communion rail’

In commenting on whether priests should deny Communion to Catholic politicians who support keeping abortion legal, Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick of Washington recently said, “The real battles should be fought not at the Communion rail, but in the public square, in debates and minds, in our pulpits and public advocacy, in our consciences and communities.”

Folks, this battle should be fought in the public square, as Cardinal McCarrick asserts. We must continue to be prophets for the Church with regard to the sanctity of life, including the unborn and elderly.

It is commendable for the cardinal to be concerned that public denial of the most Holy Eucharist to obstinately persistent, brave, manifest sinners (cf. CSR 195) could for some appear to make the Eucharist less than what it is—namely a perfect gift. We should want to remember that the sacrifice at Calvary, in which we participate every Sunday, doesn’t result in death. The failure of abortion is nothing less than that—death.

In fact, all evil is to be fought most effectively at the Communion rail. For it is there that we are most closely united to Christ—body, blood, soul and divinity. It is from there that we draw our strength to fight the most difficult and important battle of our lives—the battle for our lives.

We are at war with sin and the consequences of losing that war is our eternal soul. The only effective weapon against sin is Christ manifest in our lives through holiness.

Christ is constantly calling us to repentance so that we can receive him as gift. But Christ is present, that not being our reason for receiving Communion is a call from God to repent. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. Like any lover who is separated from his beloved, we long for a return to intimacy.

God stands ready to forgive us and is impelled only by our desire to accept his mercy. Those who fervently advocate for the “right” to murder innocent human life, demonstrate by their actions that they are not willing to accept that mercy.

Letters to the Editor

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Catholic Community Progress, 116).

Letters should be signed; reasons, names may be withheld. Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

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The readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
Mary, saints have valid role as intercessors
(Ninth in a series)

No hace mucho un joven que sirvió en una misa que celebré en una de nuestras parroquias preguntó si podía escribirme ya que tenía unas preguntas importantes. Intercambiamos correos electrónicos y recibí sus preguntas. Mi amigo dice que para él, la idea de “intercesión” y “mediación” significan lo mismo. Él quiere saber cómo podemos armonizar nuestras enseñanzas en cuanto a la intercesión y a la mediación de Dios con las almas. Es importante considerar estas preguntas ya que durante el mes de septiembre, el mes de María, profesaremos como benditas, “la santísima Virgen María, Madre de Dios.”

Para él, la mediación es que, primero de todo, hay un mediador entre Dios y el hombre. Él quiere saber de quiénes se trata estos mediadores. Si bien en el vocabulario común el uso de los términos “mediación” y “intercesión” se consideran sinónimos, la realidad teológica indica que estas dos ideas tienen diferentes significados.

La mediación es el hecho de haber interlocución entre dos partes. La intercesión, por su parte, es una acción de pedir, confesar, o suplicar para que las cosas se hagan de una determinada manera. Por ejemplo, cuando rezamos a Dios por nuestros padres, amigos, o incluso a la Virgen María, estamos actuando como mediadores entre Dios y las almas, solicitando que se hagan las cosas como deseamos.

Si bien en el latín “mediatus” significa “mediado” y “interceder” se utiliza para referirse a “lo que ha sido intervenido en”, y “intercedar” se utiliza para referirse a “lo que interviene”, en realidad estos términos tienen diferentes significados. Los mismos son aplicados para referirse a Dios en todas sus relaciones, pero son aplicados de una manera específica según la relación considerada.

En el Apócrifo de Isaias (Núm. 27, 12-13) se dice: “Entregad el reino y el poder, y el hervidero de la muerte, de la tierra y del cielo, en las manos de los santos.” Esta cita refuerza la importancia que tienen los santos en el contexto de la mediación y la intercesión.

La mediación y la intercesión son dos conceptos que se utilizan a menudo en el contexto de la fe católica. La mediación se refiere al hecho de que alguien actúa como intermediario entre dos partes, mientras que la intercesión se refiere a la solicitud de ayuda para una tercera parte, generalmente para que se haga algo positivo para la tercera parte.

En resumen, si bien en el contexto teológico el concepto de mediación y intercesión pueden ser usados intercambiablemente, es importante tener en cuenta que tienen diferentes significados y aplicaciones. La mediación se refiere al hecho de intervenir entre dos partes, mientras que la intercesión se refiere a la solicitud de ayuda para una tercera parte.
St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, 535 E. Edgewood Ave., in Indianapolis, is having its Summer Festival from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. on July 15-17. There will be food and games. For more information, call 317-787-8246.

St. John the Baptist Parish, 25743 State Road 1, in Dover, is having its Summer Festival from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. (EDT) on July 18. There will be a fried chicken dinner, games and a country store. For more information, call 812-576-4302.

St. Mary Parish, 7500 Navilleton Road, in Floyds Knobs, is having its parish picnic from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on July 18. There will be a family-style chicken dinner. For more information, call 812-923-5419.

Crossroads walkers from Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio, who are walking coast-to-coast to St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, 535 E. Edgewood Ave., in Indianapolis. The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be displayed at the church. There will be a reception and meal at 7 p.m. at St. Anthony Church, 379 N. Warran Ave., in Indianapolis. Our Lady of Guadalupe will be displayed during an 8:15 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Masses on July 16 at St. Anthony Church, 379 N. Warran Ave., in Indianapolis. Our Lady of Guadalupe will be displayed during an 8:30 a.m. Mass for the unborn on July 17 at St. Michael Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., in Indianapolis. Afterward, there will be a prayer service at an abortion clinic on West 16th Street, followed by Benediction at the church. Veneration of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe will take place from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on July 17 at Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., in Indianapolis. There will be a Mass at 4:30 p.m. The image will also be present at the 9:30 a.m. and noon Masses at Holy Rosary Church on July 18. The image will be present, along with the exposed Blessed Sacrament, from 2 p.m. on July 18 to 7 p.m. on July 19 at Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd. E. Dr., in Indianapolis. There will be a Mass at 7:15 a.m. on July 19 at the church. For more information, call 317-923-6246.

Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, is offering an Adult Art Class from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. on July 19 and 26 hosted by Carol Wagner, an art teacher at St. Pius X School in Indianapolis. The first class will be devoted to drawing skills and the second on painting with watercolors. The cost is $20 per session, which includes all art supplies. The retreat house is also having a fundraising dinner titled “An Evening with Bill Polian” at 6 p.m. on Aug. 1. Polian, the president of the Indianapolis Colts, will join participants for a served dinner. The cost is $30 per person, and full table discounts are available. A retreat on “The Lord’s Prayer” will be presented by John Shea, a theologian and writer, on Aug. 6-8. Through personal and Gospel story telling, he will explore the Lord’s Prayer as a framework for our daily lives. For more information, call the retreat house at 317-645-7681.

There will be a Divine Mercy Hour of Prayer at 4 p.m. on July 18 at St. Lawrence Church, 6944 E. 46th St., in Indianapolis. A framed copy of the image of the Divine Mercy will be displayed during the service. The program is sponsored by St. Joseph Council #5290 and Father Patrick J. Kelly Assembly #2850 of the Knights of Columbus. For more information, call the parish office at 317-546-4056.

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U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Office for Film and Broadcasting movie ratings

King, Arthur (Touchstone)
Rated L (Limited Adult Audience) because of intense battlefield violence, a shadowy sexual encounter, negative representation of Church figures and some crude humor. Rated PG-13 (Parents are strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.) by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA).
Senators urged to support marriage amendment

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Preserving marriage as the union of one man and one woman “is not simply a Catholic concern” but one shared by “believers and nonbelievers, Christians and non-Christians alike,” the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said in a July 6 letter to U.S. senators.

Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Ill., urged the senators to support the Federal Marriage Amendment and to oppose efforts to prevent a vote on a filibuster. The amendment, which would revise the U.S. Constitution to stipulate that marriage “shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman,” must be approved by two-thirds of each house of Congress, then ratified by the legislatures of three-quarters of the states.

Senators said in a July 6 letter to U.S. senators.

“The union of husband and wife becomes, over a lifetime, a great good for themselves, their family, communities and society itself.”

In the June 24 letter, the USCCB leader said the growing movement to give same-sex unions the legal equivalence of marriage “challenges Catholics—and all who seek the truth—to think deeply about the meaning of marriage, its purposes and its value to individuals, families and society.”

“The fact that marriage is the foundation of society, the union of one man and one woman “is part of the common moral heritage of humanity.”

It is precisely this moral heritage that must be protected today from the small but vocal minority that would alter the definition of marriage by making same-sex unions the legal equivalent of marriage,” he said.

“A same-sex union is not equivalent to marriage,” Bishop Gregory added. “It is not based on the natural complementarity of male and female; it cannot cooperate with God to create new life; it cannot be a true conjugal union.”

Calling marriage “more than a lifestyle choice,” the USCCB president said it is an “interspersal relationship with public significance.”

“The institution of marriage has been weakened and eroded by many forces,” he wrote. “The social cost is already too high.”

Support of the amendment is necessary, he told the senators, in order “to preserve and protect this vital institution that undergirds the well-being of spouses, children, families, communities and society itself.”

Two weeks earlier, Bishop Gregory wrote to his fellow bishops about the Federal Marriage Amendment, asking them to contact their senators directly to urge support for the measure.

In the June 24 letter, the USCCB leader said the growing movement to give same-sex unions the legal equivalence of marriage “challenges Catholics—and all who seek the truth—to think deeply about the meaning of marriage, its purposes and its value to individuals, families and society.”

Last September, the bishops’ Administrative Committee issued a formal statement calling for efforts at all levels of government to support traditional marriage, including a federal constitutional amendment.

Bishop Gregory encouraged other bishops to use that statement, “Between Man and Woman: Questions and Answers About Marriage and Same-Sex Unions,” as an educational resource in dioceses and parishes, and as a source of background information for pastoral leaders.

In a separate statement released on July 8, Catholic Charities USA said it backs the USCCB’s support for the marriage amendment.

“The union of husband and wife becomes, over a lifetime, a great good for themselves, their family, communities and society. Marriage is a gift to be treasured and protected,” the statement said, quoting the bishops.

In a July 2 statement, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson called on all Knights of Columbus to contact their senators and express support for the proposed marriage amendment.

“But if we, newcomers on the scene, honor this brief past of ours, it’s above all, to paraphrase G. K. Chesterton, to give votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It’s the democracy of the dead. You see, the Benedicinte tradition refuses to submit to that arrogant oligarchy who merely happen to be walking around.”

Nevertheless, some of those who were “walking around” on July 11 had a much longer connection to the monastery than others.

One of them was Benedicinte Father Rupert Ostdick. Ordained in 1948, Father Rupert was present nearly 50 years ago when on Oct. 13, 1954, the monks of Saint Meinrad celebrated the 100th anniversary of the founding of their monastery.

On that occasion, he served as one of the liturgical assistants to the apostolic delegate to the United States, Archbishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, who was the celebrant at a Mass at which were also present the abbot primate of the Benedicinte order, the abbot president of the Swiss-American Congregation (which Saint Meinrad Archabbey helped to establish) and the abbot of Saint Meinrad.

The apostolic delegate also bestowed on the monastery a special honor that day. By the decree of Pope Pius XII, Saint Meinrad was raised to an Archabbey, a title given to only nine other monasteries in the world.

At the luncheon that followed the Mass on July 11, Father Rupert looked back over the past 50 years of history of the monastery that he both witnessed and helped to fashion. But he also looked forward to its future.

“I’m glad to have survived,” he said. “The community is vigorous and healthy. That is something that I am grateful for too, because in the interim we’ve gone through the approach to Vatican II and all of the sequence of what happened afterward to the present.

“That was a marvelous experience for our community to have weathered the difficulties that marked that period. We have a group of young people in the community who are capable of carrying forward the life,” he said.

It was this future of Saint Meinrad Archabbey and the end of history to which all the faithful are called to await which was in the prayer that Archbishop Montalvo offered earlier in the day at the Mass.

“May Divine Providence bless this house with new vocations,” he said. “And may Mary, our blessed mother, inspire your … faithful perseverance … until Christ comes in glory.” †
Children’s banner at St. Simon Church celebrates Ordinary Time

By Mary Ann Wyand

St. Simon the Apostle parishioners are celebrating Ordinary Time in the Church calendar in a unique way this summer thanks to children in the Indianapolis East Deanery parish.

A new liturgical banner depicting Christ extending his hands to a large crowd of people hangs in the narthex of the church. It was created by fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students with help from teachers and parish quilting committee members Bonnie Wood, Barbara Brindle, Alice Smith, Vickie Smith, Mary Wasyk and Kay Otto.

The colorful banner features nearly 200 faces of adults and children made by the students. The faces illustrate the cultural diversity of the northeast-side parish.

“When I designed it, my idea was to have something that represented our community and focused on the Eucharist, which is the central element of our faith,” Wood said. “During religion classes, the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders helped us make all the people inside Christ’s arms. We gave them each a felt outline of a person and all the materials, and they came up with their own design to represent a person in our community. All the different cultures are represented.”

The banner was installed in June and will remain in the church narthex until the beginning of Advent.

Ordinary time, according to The Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and Celebration of the Eucharist 2004, consists of the 33 or 34 weeks of the liturgical year that do not celebrate a specific mystery of Christ, but are “devoted to the mystery of Christ in all its fullness.” This year, Ordinary Time began on Jan. 12, the day after the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, and continued through Feb. 24, the day before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Lenten season. It resumed after the conclusion of the Easter season on May 31, the day after Pentecost, and continues until the first Sunday of Advent on Nov. 28.

“The children were so excited,” Wood said of the banner project. “I was impressed with how they embraced it. Once we explained the purpose of it, they really enjoyed doing it. They all wanted to come up with a unique person, and they did that.”

“That’s my face,” Wood’s son, Grant, explained as he stretched to point out his artwork on the large banner. “My sister’s [face] is up there with the green bow.”

Wood said the children gather in front of the banner after Masses to try to find their faces and are happy they could help with the art and environment in the church.

“They love it,” Wood said. “The kids can come to church and say, ‘I did a part of this banner.’”

Galen Holley, director of religious education, said parishioners like the fact that they are not always encouraged to question the Church’s teachings.

“That’s what is so neat about it,” she said. “The kids can come to church and say, ‘I did a part of this banner.’”

Holley said religious education classes should challenge children to want to learn more about Scripture and the sacraments by making catechesis fun and interesting in age-appropriate ways.

“One of the things we want to avoid is children being bored or feeling a sense of disconnectness with the liturgy,” she said. “We want to really take to heart the teaching of Vatican II, which says that everyone should have a full and active participation in the liturgy. We certainly take that to mean children as well.”

Vacation Bible School is another important way to involve children in their faith and parish life, Holley said, by offering them creative faith-based activities and opportunities to get to know other children.

It’s also a wonderful way to evangelize, he said, by welcoming children from families that are not members of the parish.

Because Vacation Bible School happens during Ordinary Time and summer vacation, he said, it also gives children a new experience of Church.

“It’s a way to sacramentalize their lives throughout the year,” Holley said. “It’s a way for them to feel a sense of belonging and connection to the life of the parish.”

Vacation Bible School programming also includes opportunities for Christian service.

“There are so many ways to work toward building the kingdom of God,” he said. “Because we enjoy so many benefits, we feel that it’s our obligation to build the kingdom through things like charitable work. It’s always good to show children who have grown up in a favorable environment that there are others who have not enjoyed the same favorable circumstances.”

Parishioner Teresa Graff coordinated this year’s Vacation Bible School, which was based on the theme “God gives life, love, gifts, sharing and caring.” Children brought donations of food, toiletries and baby clothes to be given to needy families in the Indianapolis area.

Graff said donations went to the Gabriel Project, St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, Lord’s Pantry, and Holy Cross Parish and School, which is St. Simon’s “sister” parish.

Charitable service is an easy way to teach children about Christ, Holley said. “Just as we see Jesus in the Gospels fraternizing with and extending his arms toward both the poor and the downtrodden, bringing donations to Vacation Bible School is a concrete way of living out that gospel example of Jesus.”

Father Robert Sims, pastor, said there are a number of unchurched people living within the boundaries of St. Simon Parish.

“We want to invite them to participate in the good things that are going on at St. Simon Parish,” Father Sims said, “and in the Church universal.”

Parishioners and guests of all ages also are encouraged to ask questions about the Catholic faith by placing written inquiries in a decorated box in the narthex that is labeled “Ask Father Bob.” Their pastor often answers the questions during his homilies so everyone can learn more about the Catholic faith. ✩
Poverty is a reality that often goes unnoticed

By Fr. Herbert Weber

Shortly after I finished a degree in social work and began working at Catholic Charities, I visited my mother in the rural community where I grew up. I shared with her some of her situations of poverty experienced by my clientele. She was moved by the descriptions. Then she added, “Thankfully, there is no poverty here where we live.”

Indeed, most people in that small town were not poor.

Nevertheless, I had to disagree with Mom. I reminded her of the widow for whom she regularly would buy groceries and the family that nearly froze one winter until she and some neighbors arranged for them to receive a load of coal.

Her response was, “Oh, I guess I never thought of that as poverty. That is just people down on their luck.”

Poverty, hunger, malnutrition, lack of health care and homelessness all exist even in the most developed of countries. It doesn’t take the eye of the proverbial blighted downtown sections of cities to find examples of the poverty of Haiti or the sub-Sahara does. It is invisible in the most developed of countries. It is often invisible.

Part of the difficulty comes in defining “poverty.” To say there are fewer persons on welfare rolls than a few years ago does not mean there are fewer poor people.

An understanding of poverty requires that we examine family income, the ability of the family head(s) to earn what is needed for a decent standard of living and how needs change over time. The level of education and the health of family members enter into the poverty equation.

I have discovered a couple of stereotypes about the poor.

People quickly equate poverty with families on welfare for several generations. They frequently assume laziness or self-imposed poverty. Politicians often talk about the “deserving poor,” with the implication that some poor people do not deserve attention or assistance.

The other frequent image of poverty is that of inner-city dwellers who live in the blighted downtown sections of cities. However, a great deal of poverty is caused by situations. It can take place in any community and can happen to almost any family in the community without a spouse, loss of a job and divorce all can lead to difficulties. Women and children are especially affected by situational poverty.

When I first met Ellen, she and her two children were receiving monthly welfare checks. Even at that, they would not have made it without the help of Ellen’s father, who frequently assisted them.

The situation that led to poverty for Ellen’s family was her divorce. Her children were preschool age. The cost of child care was more than she could afford with the types of jobs available to her so she chose to stay home with the children.

As the children got older, Ellen re-entered the work world, although her first job was part-time, low-paying and without benefits. Eventually, her part-time job became full-time with benefits so she was able to re-establish herself.

Other poverty comes from unemployment. A person works but can’t provide basic needs for self or family.

Maggie, a single mother, has some college education and works as a clerk. She drives an old car on which she still is making payments and lives in a simple apartment.

Nonetheless, her monthly bills exceed her monthly income. The parish’s St. Vincent de Paul Society chapter continues to help her as she pays her bills. She needs a better paying job.

Julie’s situation is a bit different. She has various physical limitations due to cerebral palsy. She walks with a limp, is sight-impaired, has some hearing loss and has limited use of her hands and fingers.

Julie receives disability checks and lives in subsidized housing for which she is very grateful. Yet she is not happy at her job. Her depression comes from a constant awareness that she always will be counting pennies and wondering how to pay her bills.

Sadly, those are only a few examples of people who live in poverty in the midst of affluence. Many more family stories become evident to me through our parish school families. Many often ask for tuition assistance, something that we are able to provide because of an annual campaign.

Parents ask for help because of loss of jobs, sickness or other crises.

Constantly, I discover families who seem to be very much “middle class” who are struggling.

When the local steel mill closed down while a new caster was built, a number of families found themselves on the verge of losing their homes, cars, houses or more.

Poverty is a reality that often goes unnoticed. For the Christian, the poor cannot remain invisible. To not see them is to not see Christ.

(Father Herbert Weber is pastor of St. Peter Parish in Mansfield, Ohio.)

Two girls play in a bedroom in Alpine, N.Y. One in every six U.S. children lives in poverty. For the Christian, the poor cannot remain invisible. To not see them is to not see Christ.

Many ministries serve the poor

By Brian T. Olszewski

“Each of us is one paycheck away from needing the help of St. Vincent de Paul,” Diane McKern used to tell those from whom she solicited assistance during six years as district council president of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for the Diocese of Gary, Ind.

Working closely with township trustees, Catholic parishes, other churches and private as well as government agencies, the St. Vincent de Paul Society helps more than 20,000 people every year in four counties in the Gary Diocese.

The society raises and spends approximately $400,000 annually to help the poor and volunteers more than 81,000 hours to distribute items.

McKern said the St. Vincent de Paul Society often is the Band-Aid providing people with food, clothing, overnight lodging or assistance in paying utility bills or purchasing prescriptions.

The diocese began providing longer-term help three years ago when it entered a partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

That relationship and the houses it built “generated a lot of enthusiasm,” said Jesuit Father Thomas Gannon, the diocese’s liaison with Habitat.

The Gary Diocese purchased two lots across from Holy Angels Cathedral then donated them to Habitat. Two low-cost change collections in the parishes raised $50,000 toward building each house in 2002 and 2003. Contractors donated more than $30,000 of services, including masonry, electrical wiring, plumbing and heating for each house.

Father Gannon said the diocese has committed to building one Habitat house every two years.

When the federal government cut off supervised-housing funds in 1985, Father Stephen Vrabely, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Hammond, Ind., provided soup and a sandwich three days a week to anyone who came to the rectory.

The five-day-a-week interfaith lunch program, known as the St. Joseph Soup Kitchen, serves 200 people each day and is supported entirely by donations.

(Brian Olszewski is editor of the Northwest Indiana Catholic for the Diocese of Gary.)

Discussion Point

Friendship is part of serving poor

This Week’s Question

What does the Church in your community do that seriously confronts the realities of poverty?

“We [Sacred Heart parishioners] have a St. Vincent de Paul Society, and they do an excellent job. But it’s more than a matter of giving food to someone. It’s more important to identify with the fundamental aspirations of the poor. We would rather be known for this than for just meeting a person’s physical needs.”

(Father Eugene Michel, O.F.M., St. Paul, Minn.)

“Many of our parishioners [at St. Charles Borromeo Parish] enjoy monthly hot casseroles. We have a monthly food collection that goes to Catholic Charities. We run a monthly thrash shop.

program in support of Catholic Charities as well. Additionally, we have a monthly collection for First Way, an organization serving the needs of pregnant women.”

(Deacon William Sepich, Cinnaminson, N.J.)

“We [Blessed Sacrament Parish in Cocoa, Fla.] have an outreach program. We run a thrift shop, and all proceeds go to help people in need in our area.”

(Paul Gannon, Port St. John, Fla.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: How does your parish or diocese serve people grieving the loss of a loved one?

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

There’s something in human nature that longs to organize everything.

Maybe we’re not God who is the very definition of order, but we feel a need to sort out our exist-
ence. We sense that order, control, and closure doesn’t come natu-
rally. Naturally. We tend to plan and list and sort.

Some of us are better at it than others (or possibly worse, depending on how
your point of view is chosen from several possibilities. We think
about the qualities of someone we’d like to know, or how we’d like to be chosen to
knowing, or get others to do our chores.

Later on, we plan our education or training to fit a career path. We choose from several possibilities. We think
about the qualities of someone we’d like to know, or how we’d like to be chosen to
knowing, or get others to do our chores.

We tend to plan and list and sort.

I was delighted that
she shares a story told to her in 1990 by
an Augustinian priest.

When we’re planning
information from the author. I experi-
enced the rosary in a new and better
light. The book includes a rosary, too.

Myriam, Mary of Nazareth,” she writes.

For a Protestant writer-poet friend, Sara
Vogler Meister, a member of
the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, is a
regular columnist for
Booklist.

As a book reviewer for Booklist,
I was delighted that
she shares a story told to her in 1990 by
an Augustinian priest.

When we’re planning
information from the author. I experi-
enced the rosary in a new and better
light. The book includes a rosary, too.

Shirley Vogler Meister
"Write without the sense of necessary confes-
sion of everyday faults [venial sins] is
nevertheless strongly recommended.”

In recent years, countless I have studied Catholics’ participation in the sacra-
ment of reconciliation—a 1995 national survey of 1,053 American Catholics and a 2003 survey of 1,119 U.S. Catholics, which sociologist Dean Hoge of Catholic University and I did for the University of Notre Dame.

The two studies revealed essentially the same rates of participation. In 1995, 43 percent of Catholics went to confes-
sion at least once a year; 57 percent did not.

In 2003, 46 percent said they had never gone to confession once a year or more; 53 per-
cent said they never or almost never do.

The 2003 study indicates that the confession is linked to participation in other reli-
gious practices. For example, two-thirds of Catholics who say they usually attend
the Holy Communion weekly also go to confession at least annually, compared to less than only 20 percent of Catholics who seldom or never pray.

A more direct link has to do with Catholics’ beliefs about the importance of confession. The 2003 study, only 38 per-
cent of Catholics believe private confession to a priest is “essential” to their vision of the Church. "There is still a significant range of opinion from "may or may not be essential," and 35 per-
cent think it is "not essential.”

Catholics’ beliefs about the importance of confession—overall and specifically with regard to confession—the more Catholics partici-
Rate of participation. Among Catholics who say confession is essential, 65 percent go to confession at least once a year. Among those who say they are not sure of the sacra-
ment’s importance, 54 percent participate. Among Catholics who say confession is not essential, the figure is only 23 percent.

Thus, the more successful the Church is in fostering regular practices and practices—overall and specifically with regard to confession—the more Catholics partici-
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ment’s importance, 54 percent participate. Among Catholics who say confession is not essential, the figure is only 23 percent.
The Book of Genesis is the source of this weekend’s first reading. In the several thousand years of present-day Bible, Genesis appears first. However, it is not the oldest literature in the world. It certainly refers to the earliest times in human history, giving a religious message about not only the origins of humans themselves but of all creation itself. Thus, appropriately, it has the title of Genesis.

As one of the first five books of the Bible, it forms the basic statement of Judaism. It is the Torah. Fundamental to Jewish self-understanding as a race, but also as individuals, is the notion that all people descend from Abraham. Scholars believe that Abraham was an actual person, not the mere product of an ancient author’s imagination.

In this reading, three figures, who look as if they were men but actually were disregarded representatives of God, came to the home of Abraham and his wife Sarah. Abraham and Sarah warmly welcomed them. He and his wife set food before the visitors, and it was special food. Sarah prepared choice broods. She and Abraham offered fresh milk and the meat of a steer recently butchered to their visitors.

Sarah was past the childbearing age and the couple was without children. For a Jewish woman, this was the greatest humiliation and indeed the greatest failure. The great duty of Jews was to produce new generations to recognize and acclaim the one God of Israel. God came to Abraham and Sarah in their need. Through God’s power, Sarah conceived.

In the Gospel, Mary displays an eagerness to know God. Martha also loves God, but Mary is more fully aware of her need. Ignoring conventions, the Lord is with them.

Jesus has responded wonderfully to these needs. The Church continues to call us to be disciples, reminding us that God is concerned about our need for God, a need resembling, but greater than, the human need for food. But, reassuringly, it reminds us that, in the greatest love, God will literally come to the home of Martha and Mary, believed to have been in Bethany, now an eastern suburb of Jerusalem. Mary sits at the Lord’s feet to learn the teachings of Jesus. Martha is preparing the meal and asks Mary to help her. Jesus tells Martha that Mary has chosen the better way.

The passage has profound and, for its time, amazing lessons. Ultimately, the point is that salvation is for all people. For persons in America in 2004, it all seems very routine and understandable. However, 1,970 years ago, when Jesus lived on earth, and especially in the Jewish culture of the time, it would have been shocking for an unmarried man, or actually for any man, even to speak to a woman in public.

Certainly, no one would have imagined an unmarried man entering a woman’s home and then, to heighten the drama even more, Jesus was there for a meal. This reading has been debated for centuries. The meaning seems clear. Jesus’ and God’s Revelation through Jesus—are the most important considerations in life.

Reflection

For weeks, the Church has been calling us to discipleship. In these readings, the Church repeats this theme.

The first reading, from Genesis, recalls Abraham and Sarah. Sarah had no children. For a Jewish woman, this was the greatest humiliation and indeed the greatest failure. The great duty of Jesus was to produce new generations to recognize and acclaim the one God of Israel.

God came to Abraham and Sarah in their need. Through God’s power, Sarah conceived.

In the Gospel, Mary displays an eagerness to know God. Martha also loves God, but Mary is more fully aware of her need. Ignoring conventions, the Lord is with them.

Jesus has responded wonderfully to these needs. The Church continues to call us to be disciples, reminding us that, in the greatest love, God will literally come to our home.

A Your instincts are correct. There is something wrong with a person who feels that willingness to forgive bestows the right to publicly discuss what happened.

It is true that forgiving and forgetting are not the same. If someone deliberately injures us or hurts someone we love, it is possibly beyond our power to totally forget. Despite our best intentions, the memory may resurface often, especially if later circumstances create the opportunity for a repeat of the injury.

An essential element of authentic forgiveness is willingness to give up resentment and ill will, and letting go of the desire to “get even” and take revenge on the person who has us wrong. To willfully destroy another person's good name is a serious injury and sinful. To willfully destroy another person's reputation is destroyed.

Even if you're willing to forgive, isn't it wrong to expose someone's faults? Perhaps the person who has been hurt “feels better” after talking about the problem, but it still sounds like pure gossip to me. (Illinois)

My Journey to God
Come To Me All You Who Labor

Have you a father, mother, Son or daughter, Someone whom you love, Who has strayed From Light to Darkness And now weighs upon Your aching day?

God sees you and He loves you But He calls you to remember Words He spoke in Matthew, He gives you life to Him.

Better far to come to Him, Give your burden to Him. Your trust will then empower Him More than any crose or shame To pour His Love upon you Take away your pain.

Rest for your aching heart, Grace for your loved one’s spirit.

By Conor Ward

(Conor Ward lives in County Sligo, Ireland. He sent this poem to his sister, Mary Gannon, who is a member of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Franklin. She sent it to The Criterion with his permission.)

Daily Readings

Monday, July 19
Micah 6:1-4, 6-8
Psalm 50:5-6, 8-9, 16-17, 21, 23
Matthew 12:38-42

Tuesday, July 20
Apollinaris, bishop and martyr
Micah 7:14-15, 18-20
Psalm 85:2-8
Matthew 12:46-50

Wednesday, July 21
Lawrence of Brindisi, priest and doctor
Jeremiah 1:1-10
Psalm 71:1-6, 15, 17
Matthew 13:1-9

Thursday, July 22
Mary Magdalene
Jeremiah 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13

Psalm 36:6-11
John 20:1-2, 11-18

Friday, July 23
Bridge of Sweden, religious
Jeremiah 3:14-17
Response Jeremiah 31:10-13
Matthew 13:18-23

Saturday, July 24
Shahel Malakhan, priest
Jeremiah 7:1-11
Psalm 84:3-6, 8, 11
Matthew 13:24-30

Sunday, July 25
Seventeenth Sunday in
Ordinary Time
Genesis 18:20-22
Psalm 138:1-3, 6-8
Colossians 1:18-20
Go to 2:12-14

Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen
Forgiving others doesn’t mean public confessions

Q I’m concerned about some “forgivers” who insist on telling others about the person and deeds that give them forgiveness. Twice this has happened recently that the one doing the forgiving tells friends about it, and the offender’s reputation is destroyed. Even if you’re willing to forgive, isn’t it wrong to expose someone’s faults? Perhaps the person who has been hurt “feels better” after talking about the problem, but it still sounds like pure gossip to me. (Illinois)

A Your instincts are correct. There is something wrong with a person who feels that willingness to forgive bestows the right to publicly discuss what happened.

It is true that forgiving and forgetting are not the same. If someone deliberately injures us or hurts someone we love, it is possibly beyond our power to totally forget. Despite our best intentions, the memory may resurface often, especially if later circumstances create the opportunity for a repeat of the injury.

An essential element of authentic forgiveness is willingness to give up resentment and ill will, and letting go of the desire to “get even” and take revenge on the person who has us wrong. To willfully destroy another person’s good name is a serious injury and sinful. To willfully destroy another person’s reputation is destroyed.

Even if you’re willing to forgive, isn’t it wrong to expose someone’s faults? Perhaps the person who has been hurt “feels better” after talking about the problem, but it still sounds like pure gossip to me. (Illinois)
Serra Club vocations essay

Priests and religious bring God’s saving grace to others

By Stacey Wagner

What do you want to be when you grow up?
This simple question posed to a group of children may prompt some interesting responses—a fireman, an astronaut, a sports hero. But how many of these children would consider bringing God’s life to his people on Earth?
The few brave men and women who choose to join the priesthood and religious life have the rare and beautiful opportunity to do just that—to change the world one person at a time through the glorious gift of God’s grace.

As we grow older, away from our childhood dreams of fighting fires and embarking on voyages to the moon, we begin to yearn for meaning in our lives.
When choosing what to study in college and ultimately what to do with the duration of our time here on Earth, we seek a career that is immensely rewarding each and every day. We long to make a difference in our world. I have spent a great amount of time contemplating this type of lifestyle, but I continue to return to the internal conflict that has haunted me since the third grade.

At the age of 8, I was introduced to the concept of God calling me to do something. I have always felt a force inside of me pulling me toward the religious life, but have pushed it to the far corners of my heart due to my lack of bravery. I was not sure if I could be a bearer of God’s light to his people every day. I was selfishly apprehensive about being held to such a high standard and about dedicating my entire life to bettering the lives of others. It is because of my own lack of courage that I have so much respect for those who have made personal sacrifices and accepted God’s will.

Through administration of the sacraments, charitable works for the less fortunate, countless prayers for those in need and acting as a constant reminder of God’s presence and guidance among us, these courageous men and women are continually spreading God’s saving grace throughout the world.

Without people on Earth acting on God’s behalf, the path to heaven would be immeasurably difficult to find. Through the guidance of these holy men and women of the priesthood and religious life, countless followers are led to the loving arms of their heavenly Father.

(Stacey Wagner is a member of St. Luke Parish in Indianapolis and is a junior at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis. Her essay won the first-place award in the 11th-grade division of the Indianapolis Serra Club’s vocations essay contest.)

The Active List, continued from page 12

Fatima Knights of Columbus, 1040 N. Post Road, Indianapolis, Eudios, 1 p.m. Information: 317-638-8416.

First Mondays
St. Peter Church, 1207 East St., Sellersburg, Holy hour for religious vocations, Benediction and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 8 p.m. Mass.

St. Joseph Church, 2605 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg, Holy hour for religious vocations, Benediction and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 7 p.m. Mass.

First Tuesdays
Divine Mercy Chapel, 3,354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis, Confession, 6:45 p.m., Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament for vocations, 7:30 p.m.

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament after 8:30 a.m. Mass-9 a.m. Sat., reconciliation, Fri. 4-6 p.m., Sat. 8-9 p.m., “Children of Hope” program, holy hour for children.

Information: 812-277-6539.

First Fridays
St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1723 “T” St., Bedford, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 8:30 a.m. Mass-9 a.m. Sat., reconciliation, Fri. 4-6 p.m., Sat. 8-9 a.m., “Children of Hope” program, holy hour for children.

Holy Name Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove, Mass, 8:15 a.m., eucharistic adoration following Mass until 5 p.m. Benediction. Information: 317-784-3454.

Stick with the Best! Stick with the Best!

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Holy Name Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove, Mass, 8:15 a.m., eucharistic adoration following Mass until 5 p.m. Benediction. Information: 317-784-3454.

St. Peter Church, 1207 East Road, Brookville, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 7 a.m. until Communion service, 7 p.m.

St. Francis and Clare Church, 3901 Olive Branch Road, Greenwood, Mass, 8 a.m., adoration, 8-9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sacred Heart Chapel, 8:30 a.m., Divine Mercy Chapel, 3 p.m. Information: 317-859-4673.

St. Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd., E. Dr., Indianapolis, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after 7:15 a.m. Mass-5:30 p.m. Benediction and service.
Priest echoes pope’s anti-war comments

By Mary Ann Wyand

“War is always ‘a defeat for humanity,’” Father Bernard Survil said, quoting Pope John Paul II, “yet the U.S. Congress authorized $417 billion in funding for the Iraq war and preparation for war.”

Father Survil was the visiting celebrant for the weekend Masses on July 3-4 at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Indianapolis just 24 hours after he was arrested by Correctional Institution McKean at Bradford, Pa., for preaching to pacifists when Catholics are more comfortable espousing pacifism, he said, as member of the Latino Day weekend. But he was encouraged by the friendly reception he received at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish.

Now a priest for the Diocese of Greensburg, Pa., Father Survil is a graduate of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis and a former priest for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Father William Munshower, pastor of the Indianapolis North Deenary parish, was his classmate.

Father Survil was imprisoned for several months for trespassing on federal property at Fort Benning, Ga., on Nov. 23 during the 2003 School of the Americas War protest of the U.S. government’s Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation.

Father Survil has dedicated his priestly ministry to peace-making, which led him to join Pax Christi, dig bomb craters on federal property at Fort Benning, Ga., and pass on the peace for Central America and demonstrate at Fort Benning.

When Father Survil preaches about peace, he often quotes Pope John Paul II. “I think the Catholics don’t always agree with his message. ‘Father Munshower opened the doors of the church, not only to me but to other peace activists (and homosexuals) Gumbolton of Detroit and Father Roy Bourgeois [founder of the School of the Americas], and that doesn’t happen many places,’” Father Survil said. “I was the one who demonstrated during the Iraqi invasion and war, when I would quote the Holy Father—and I often did in those days because the Holy Father and the Vatican were saying excellent things about this war being a defeat for humanity—I had people at the door of the church challenging me, even rejecting the guidance of our Holy Father.”

Father Survil said his prayers for peace continue daily.

“There’s just so much being said about Iraq still and it’s, of course, becoming an issue for the presidential campaign,” he said. “I would just want to step back and say that when we discuss peace-making, we have to deal with more fundamental things, such as $417 billion that Congress has voted for war-making.”

“Even if Iraq should be pacified, as a country we’re getting ready for more wars,” Father Survil said. “We in Pax Christi reject war and preparation for war. There’s much work to be done even—and God grant it—the situation in Iraq is very grave. We have much homework and we want this nation to get away from war-making and preparation for war. My prayer is that as a nation, as especially a Catholic Church, we will follow the guidance of the Holy Father and say that war is always ‘a defeat for humanity.’”

Father Munshower said he admires his longtime friend’s dedication to pacifism and ministry in Central America.

“I think we need to hear alternative thinking,” he said. “Father Survil gave us some options to reflect on. One doesn’t have to totally agree with Pax Christi or Father Survil to see the value of those options.”

Adleite Beitäns was diocesan priest

Adleite (Adele) Beitäns, a member of the Catholic Association of Indiana, was 80. She was born on Feb. 6, 1924, in Asune, Latvia, and was a member of the Catholic Association of Indiana.

She was ordained to the priesthood on June 3, 1950, at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Terre Haute. She was born on Feb. 6, 1924, in Asune, Latvia, and was a member of the Catholic Association of Indiana.

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ELECTION (continued from page 12)

Food for Life: The Spirituality and Ethics of Eating.

Yet translating a theology of ecology into effective public policy is a tough nut to crack on both the theological and political sides of the equation.

“The world that God created has been entrusted to us. Use of it must be directed by God’s plan for creation, not simply for our own benefits,” the U.S. bishops said in their quadrennial election-year statement, “Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility,” issued in September 2003.

“Our stewardship of the Earth is a form of participation in God’s act of creating and sustaining the world. In our use of creation, we must be guided by a concern for generations to come,” they said. “We show our respect for the Creator by our care for creation.”

On agricultural concerns, the bishops said, “The first priority for agriculture policy should be food security for all.”

They added, “Those who grow our food should be able to make a decent living and maintain their way of life. Farmers who depend on the land for their livelihood deserve a decent return for their labor. Rural communities depend on farmers to promote it. If you’re good at growing crops, you ought to figure out how to sell more of the crops. And we’re the best in the world at farming and ranching,” he said. “Here’s my attitude about trade: If you’re good at something, you ought to promote it. If you’re good at growing crops, you ought to figure out how to sell more of the crops. And we’re the best in the world at farming and ranching,” he said.

A policy memo posted on the Bush campaign’s Web site on July 2 said Bush is working to pass a comprehensive energy bill, which it estimates would increase U.S. net farm income by an estimated $2 billion to $4 billion per year by 2012. (Kerry also backs increased use of renewable fuels from corn, soybeans and other sources grown on farms.) The balance of the memo points to policy initiatives and laws enacted during Bush’s term in office. The memo mentions increased farmers’ equity and sales, including exports; the 2002 farm bill, which restuctured commodity payments to farmers; $18 billion in investment in rural infrastructure; a $25 billion commitment over the next 10 years for rural health as outlined in the new Medicare prescription drug law; and the elimination of the estate tax, which it said is “helping farmers keep family farms.”

The Kerry campaign completed an Independence Day weekend swing through farm states touting the candidate’s views on agriculture. Kerry favors a ban on meatpackers’ ownership of live-stock as well as discriminatory pricing practices; improving the federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program to help farmers better manage their lands; and ensuring more prompt help rural hospitals and health care providers find qualified nurses.

On environmental matters, Kerry is behind a “Green and Clean Communities” initiative that would remove the threat of toxins from communities, reinvent the Superfund cleanup program, improve parks, and take on traffic congestion and sprawl. If elected, he said he will create a task force on toxic substances at the Environmental Protection Agency. He would also create “environmental empowerment zones” to ensure that environmental justice is considered in decisions that affect these communities, and enter into a “conservation covenant” for cleaner air and water.

Bush has had to defend the Healthy Forests initiative which became law last year; critics have contended it’s a blank check for loggers to take timber from federal and national lands. The same criticism has been lodged against Bush’s Clear Skies initiative, not yet law, which opponents say would cause more pollution, not less. The president has also had to take flak for not signing the Kyoto Accord on global warming; Bush holds it would destroy jobs, cost hundreds of billions of dollars and have a negligible effect on climate. Bills in the hopper favored by Bush on his environmental platform include a hydrogen fuels initiative, a program to cut emissions from diesel-powered heavy vehicles by 90 percent and funding for the technology to produce a no-emissions coal plant.