Archdiocesan youth bring energy to March for Life rally in Washington

By Julie Brown
Special to The Criterion

WASHINGTON, D.C.—“Pro-Vida. Pro-life.”
“Abortion is homicide.”
“Rock for life.”

Thousands of pro-life signs were visible on Jan. 24 along Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C., as a hundred thousand pro-life supporters from across the United States gathered in the nation’s capital for the 32nd annual March for Life.

Pro-life supporters of all ages, but mostly young people, braved winter storms and bitterly cold temperatures to participate in the peaceful and prayerful rally for an end to abortion.

More than 500 students and adults from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis traveled to Washington on Jan. 22 to join the pro-life march. On each bus, a priest served as the bus captain and pilgrimage director, making the trip a meaningful as well as a spiritual experience.

Enduring the discomforts of long bus rides, cramped spaces in the crowded Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and sleeping on a gymnasium floor, the archdiocesan director, making the trip a meaningful as well as a spiritual experience.

“Part of every mission trip is to see the everyday life of its people,” said Carole Williams.

Traveling through a foreign land and seeing the everyday life of its people is something that few Catholic school teachers can afford to do—but that did—n’t stop Carole Williams.

The teacher at Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School in Madison, Ind., applied for—and received—a grant from the Fulbright Program.

The grant enabled Williams, who teaches art, English, journalism and creative writing, to spend a good deal of her time in Turkey and Cyprus.

She got to go on the trip with about 15 teachers from around the U.S., each of whom had been awarded similar grants after proposing a certain type of project in correlation with the trip. Williams proposed to learn how to make and use shadow puppets. The puppets are a regional creation that are delicate, thin, translucent and operated by sticks.

“A shadow puppet from Turkey is made from buffalo or camel skin,” she said, so obviously her creations will have to be improvised.

The trip was designed to help make Williams a better teacher.

By Brandon A. Evans

Archbishop Buechlein tells new archabbot to make prayer heart of his ministry

On Jan. 21, the feast of St. Meinrad, Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, during a festive Mass celebrated in the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln, solemnly blessed Benedictine Archabbot Justin DuVall, who was elected the ninth abbot and sixth archabbot of Saint Meinrad Archabbey on Dec. 31.

During the liturgy, following the proclamation of the Gospel, Archbishop Buechlein and the acclamation of the congregation confirmed the election. Archbishop Buechlein then questioned the new monastic leader regarding his willingness to take on the responsibilities of abbots, and then gave him instructions in the form of a homily.

“A litany of the saints was prayed for Archabbot Justin as he lay prostrate in the center of the monastic choir stalls. Following this, he received from Archbishop Buechlein the solemn blessing of the Church as well as various insignia of his office: the Rule of St. Benedict, a miter, crosier and ring. Archabbot Justin then received the sign of peace from Archbishop Buechlein, other visiting bishops and abbots, and the monks of Saint Meinrad.

Four abbots were present for the liturgy along with Archbishop Thomas C.

In his instruction to Archbishop Justin, Archbishop Buechlein, who was a monk of Saint Meinrad until being appointed bishop of Memphis, Tenn., in 1987, made a connection between St. Benedict’s teaching that in every monastery the abbot holds the place of Christ and the Year of the Eucharist.

“Father Abbot, serving the brethren and the primacy of the Eucharist are intimately connected,” he said. “Just as the ministry and leading of Jesus revealed the loving kindness of God our Father, so the word and example of the abbot is to reveal to his monks the justice, mercy and goodness of our Father in heaven. The motos you chose for your coat of arms sum it up, ‘Grace, mercy, peace.’ ”

Speaking from his own experience as archbishop and echoing his frequent emphasis on the primacy of the prayer, Archbishop Buechlein told the new monastic leader that prayer should rank first among his pastoral responsibilities.

“Father Abbot, you are respected as a serene and prayerful monk,” he said. “If you are to take the place of Christ in this community, I cannot imagine anything more important than [that] you be a man of prayer.”

“I believe it’s true to say that, like the first ministry of a bishop, your first ministry to this community, as abbot, is to be a man of prayer both in the community, with the community and also alone.”

Acknowledging that Archbishop Justin’s election, coming at the end of Saint Meinrad’s sesquicentennial, marks a new beginning for the monastery, Archbishop Buechlein later reminded the monastic community that the future of their new leader and their common life will in large part be controlled by themselves.

“Whether or not Archbishop Justin can become a good abbot depends a lot on you,” he said. “Whether or not this wonderful monastery continues to be a house of God depends on whether or not the abbot can take his rightful place as the one who presides and speaks in the place of Christ.”

Finally, Archbishop Buechlein noted that Archbishop Justin’s solemn blessing was a celebration of the entire Church, not simply of the monks who elected him.

“In this liturgy, the whole Church prays for you, Father Abbot, and for you, the monks of Saint Meinrad,” he said. “We need your witness more than ever before.”

In remarks just before the conclusion of the liturgy, Archbishop Justin, echoing the words of St. Benedict, reflected upon this witness that he and his monks are charged by their vows to provide for the faithful.

“The power and love of Christ transforms every aspect of the day-to-day life of the monastery,” he said, “so that abbot and monks alike may prefer nothing whatever to Christ.

“What is true for the monastery is true for the whole Church as well. And it is in that way the Church comes together for this occasion. It recognizes in the monastic life an image of the holiness to which every Christian is called. When we monks live as we have promised, then we offer the Church the conviction that Christ has truly redeemed us.

“Thus mindful of his place and the place of his monastic community in the wider Church, Archbishop Justin brought his remarks to a close with the recognition that the liturgy in which he received the Church’s solemn blessing usually does not put a spotlight only on himself. ‘This day belongs to no one person alone,’” he said. “It is a day of celebration for the Church, which loves Christ more than ever before. He alone lovingly sustains the Church, and longs for the day of his blessed appearing.”

T"
Several bills have been introduced this session of the Indiana General Assembly to protect the unborn, four of which the Senate Health and Provider Services Conference has marked as priorities.

The bills are:

• Abortion facilities license—Senate Bill 235, authored by Sen. Patricia Miller (R-Indianapolis) and Sen. Patricia Miller (R-Indianapolis), would require abortion clinics to provide a video and audio ultra-sound, as part of informed consent law.

The bill is awaiting a hearing in the Senate Health and Provider Services Committee.

• Conscience clause for pharmacists—Senate Bill 76, authored by Sens. Jeff Rokita (R-Westfield), would give pharma-cists the freedom to deny filling abortion-related prescriptions.

The bill is awaiting a hearing in the Senate Health and Provider Services Committee.

• Ban on human cloning—Senate Bill 208, authored by Sen. Patricia Miller (R-Indianapolis), would ban human cloning.

The measures declared as “abortion as a public policy and would prohibit the state, a state educational institution or a political subdivision of the state from using resources to knowingly participate in human cloning activities.”

Dr. Mary Fichter, executive director of the Catholic Conference has said that “issues such as equipment sterilization, and safety requirements,” Fichter said. “We are going to see fewer and fewer surgical abortions, but many more chemical abortions as drugs like RU-486 and others are more readily available. That is why the conscience clause for pharmacists bill [SB 48] is so important this session too,” Dr. Fichter said.

While Drozda believes the bill would give the medical facilities an opportunity to avoid abortions, he said it is imperative to address the issue of chemical abortions too.

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One informed Vatican official said the Church has been functioning in an overwhelmingly Muslim nation, Christians enjoy relative religious freedom under former President Saddam Hussein, who was otherwise oppressive, though secular, rule.

The U.S.-led embargo, then war and occupation of Iraq under the Hussein’s dictatorship, brought further hardship to the people there. Infrastructure damage and the resulting chaos has altered life for everyone.

“Christians live like all people in Iraq. They are seen as a same group or the apostolic nunnic to Iraq, Archbishop Fernando Filoni told a reporter in Rome on Jan. 18 between meetings with Vatican officials.

He added difficulties come when certain fundamentalist groups see the Church as a symbol or reflection of the Western world or when they assume Church members are collaborators with the U.S.-led occupying forces.

Syrian-rite Archbishop Basile Georges Camouso,.Compiler of Mosul, Iraq, told the Rome-based missionary news agency MENSA on Jan. 18 that Christians feel unsafe because “the U.S. is been deployed in Iraq, the parts of the country, and whom the local habi-tants see as occupiers, have helped create a new kind of Christianity among people of other faiths.”

But confusing the Church in Iraq as being an instrument of the West is itself offensive, especially to the Chaldeans, said Msgr. Robert L. Stern, secretary-general of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association.

Chaldean Catholics, who make up the majority of Iraq’s Christians, “resent the idea they are being identified as Western because they are original inhabitants” in Iraq, dating back to “before the time of Mohammed,” Msgr. Stern told Catholic News Service on Jan. 21 in Rome.

But not everyone interprets the violence against Iraq’s Christians as being just part of the general chaos or as a confused sense of the enemy.

Saddam Hussein’s otherwise oppressive, though secular, rule. Under Saddam, power was generally in the hands of the Sunni minority, while Shiite institutions were under strict control, from the hands of the Sunni Muslim, a different branch of Islam.

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The difficult politics of abortion

In the late 1980s, while working as special assistant for public policy in the East Coast diocesan Catholic Charities office, I experienced a “baptism of fire” in the politics of abortion. During that time, I worked with a small but dedicated group of pro-life advocates to pass state legislation requiring parental or guardian permission before a minor could receive an abortion. Because minors usually need parental/guardian permission just to get their ears pierced, one would think that passing a law requiring similar permission for a surgical abortion would be a breeze. Not so. In the struggle to protect unborn babies, moral and parental rights, common sense was out.

To counter the powerful campaign propagated by Planned Parenthood and the city’s leading newspaper, our little force fought back with a campaign of truth. We contacted all the Catholic pastors, asking them to encourage their parishioners to get actively involved. We prayed. We wrote articles. We met with every legislator. And we flew in from Chicago a constitutional attorney who represented Americans United for Life to testify before the entire state legislature. We should have won, but we lost. We lost because of Catholic apathy. The overwhelming majority of clergy and laity were just fine, in fact, as long as Catholic teachings were not violated. The notion that more robust inquiry is necessary—to say balanced instruction is too—was a “baptism of fire” for us.

—Daniel Conway

Douglass W. Kmiec
An advantage of Catholic education

The Supreme Court in the late 1980s held that public schools could not be required to teach creationism along with evolution. Sure enough, the leader of the Pennsylvania ACLU complains that design theory is “predicated on the idea that there is some creator out there.” (Sort of like the Declaration of Independence, but I disagree.)

The notion that more robust inquiry is an improper establishment of religion suggests how tangled the Supreme Court is on this topic. One hopes the good justices soon straighten this out. Meanwhile, thousands of students are wrongfully denied a complete education.

This is not to suggest that Catholic teaching is onesided to the extent that the Church always championed novel inquiry. But Galileo’s ninefold prosecution notwithstanding, the modern Church has made plain that there need be no animosity between reason and faith. The vital interest for the Catholic perspective is how the human body may or may not have manifested itself from pre-existing life than whether or not he understood the divine plan of Creation. In his words, “souls are immediately created by God.”

Politics is a rough game, especially when it comes to highly divisive issues like abortion. Most Catholics learned that most politicians do not see the light until they feel the heat. There’s no getting around it: We have got to up the heat.

Stay in touch with your state Catholic Conference. Learn about the pro-life bills they are promoting. And regularly write...
Blessed Mother Theodore Guérin was a model for today’s educators

C uando pienso en los maestros, administradores y voluntarios de nuestras escuelas católicas, pienso en la adoración de Cristo: “el que quiera ser como yo, que se entre todos, que se vuestra servido”, y el que quiera ser primero entre vosotros, que se vuestra esclavo.” Como líderes de la educación católica, nuestros educadores conocen la realidad de nuestro servicio. Ellos se merecen nuestro reconocimiento y gratitud.

Si tuviéramos que escoger a alguien como modelo de nuestro servicio en la enseñanza del ministerio en nuestra iglesia local, nadie sería más apropiado que la Santa Madre Theodore Guérin, la fundadora de las Hermanas de la Providencia de Santa María de los Bosques.

En 1840, en respuesta a una solicitud del obispo de la Diócesis de Vincennes, ella leía a un grupo de cinco hermanas en la United States to establish the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. In 1840, in response to a request from the bishop of the Diocese of Vincennes, she led a group of five sisters to the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

La Santa Madre Theodore Guérin es un modelo para los educadores de hoy en día

When I think of the teachers and administrators and volunteers of our Catholic schools, I think of the words of the Lord: “Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave.” As leaders of Catholic education, our educators know the reality of their service. They deserve our recognition and gratitude.

If we were to choose someone as a model for our service in the teaching ministry of our local Church, no one would be more appropriate than Blessed Mother Theodore Guérin, the founder of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

In 1840, in response to a request from the bishop of the Diocese of Vincennes, she led a group of five sisters to the United States to establish the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en febrero

Adultos jóvenes: que tú puedas conocer el valor de nuestra presencia en las parroquias y tengas la generosidad y el valor de considerar el ser servidor en la iglesia, especialmente como sacerdotes y religiosos.

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en febrero

Young Adults: that they may realize the importance of their presence in our parishes and have the generosity and courage to consider serving in the Church, especially as priests and religious.

The Criterion  Friday, January 28, 2005

Page 5
The Athletic Booster Club of Cardinal Ritter High School, 3360 W. 30th St., in Indianapolis, is hosting a chili supper to benefit the high school’s athletic program from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 4. The cost for the supper is $5 per person. After the supper, the boys’ varsity basketball team will play the Roncalli Rebels at 6 p.m. and the ladies’ seniors will play the same school at 7:30 p.m. Tickets for the game are $5 per person. For more information, call Meredith Rhudy at 317-927-7825.

“A Healing Through the Power of Jesus Christ,” a Catholic Conference, will be held from 8:15 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on February 19 at Batesville High School, 24065 State Road 46 West, in Batesville. The event will feature music, presentations, Mass and prayer. The speakers will be Johnnette Benkovic, founder and president of Living His Life Abundantly International Inc., a Catholic evangelization apostolate; Father Gregory Bramlage, pastor of four parishes in the Batesville Deanery; and J. Brennan Mullaney, a Christian counselor. The suggested registration donation is $19 per person; there is no charge for priests or religious. For more information, call 812-933-0730.

A workshop on “Forming a Sacramental Life for Service in the Church: The Sacraments of Healing and Vocation” will be offered by Saint Meinrad School of Theology from 9:30 a.m. to noon on Feb. 16 and 23 and March 2 at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, 5333 E. Washington St., in Indianapolis. The courses, presented by Sherie Berg, will consider the sacraments of penance and reconciliation, anointing, marriage and holy orders. Anyone involved with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) or other sacramental preparation programs will benefit from attending. The cost is $60; less for seniors. For more information or to register, call the Indianapolis Office of Saint Meinrad School of Theology at 317-955-6451 or e-mail indyprops@stmeinrad. indiana.edu.

The Notre Dame Club of Indianapolis and Cathedral High School are presenting “The Hesburgh Lecture Series” on Feb. 2 and 24 and March 31, all at 7 p.m. in the Student Life Center of Cathedral High School, 5225 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis. John Borkowski, a member of the faculty of the University of Notre Dame since 1967, will speak on Feb. 2 on “How Parents Can Help Their Children Achieve in a Changing World.” Holy Cross Sister Francis O’Connor, adjunct professor in religious studies at the university, will speak on Feb. 24 on “Following Jesus in a Post-Modern World.” F. Clark Power, chair of the Program of Liberal Studies at the university, will speak on March 31 on “Can Virtue Be Taught? Moral and Character Education in America.” The lecture series is named in honor of the president emeritus of the University of Notre Dame, Father Theodore Hesburgh. For more information, call the high school at 317-542-1481.†

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

Are We There Yet? (Columbia)
Rated A-II (Adults and Adolescents) because of recurring crude humor and comic violence, and some mildie crass language.
Rated PG (Parental Guidance Suggested) by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA).

Assault on Precinct 13 (Rogue)
Rated L (Limited Adult Audience) because of graphic and bloody violence and related gore, much rough, crude and profane language, and some sexual innuendo.
Rated R (Restricted) by the MPAA.

Coach Carter (Paramount)
Rated A-III (Adults) because of much crude language, drug dealing, some violence, abortion, suggestive dancing, and some archbishops.

Blessing of the lambs

Pope John Paul II extends his hand over two lambs in his private study at the Vatican on Jan. 21. Pure wool from the lambs will be used during the year to make a liturgical vestment called the pallium, a narrow circular band worn around the shoulders of the pope and some archbishops.
youth embraced those difficulties as ways to strengthen their faith. St. Anthony of Padua parishioner Jennifer Prickle of Morris, a senior at East Central High School in Batesville, said “this trip has helped me grow in my faith and show others that I’m not afraid to stand up for what I believe in.” Although the cold weather was daunting, it didn’t keep many people from participating in the pro-life pilgrimage.

Father Jonathan Meyer, associate director of the archdiocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry and associate pastor of Our Lady of the Good Shepard Parish in Greenwood, was surprised by the huge turnout in the wake of a snowstorm.

“We went on the trip not knowing exactly what was going to happen, thinking that the numbers were going to be down because of the weather,” Father Meyer said. “But when we arrived in D.C., specifically at the Basilica of the [National Shrine of the] Immaculate Conception, we realized that the weather had not stopped anyone from coming, so great is the love for the pro-life movement and the unborn, bringing thousands upon thousands together to pray.”

On Jan. 23, the night before the march, pro-life supporters filled the basilica for the National Mass for Life and prayer vigil to pray for an end to abortion, for the more than 44 million babies killed in abortion, for the spiritual conversion of abortion providers and for God’s protection for those marching the next day.

Hundreds of pro-life supporters addressing the pre-march rally, saying, “Terri Schindler Schiavo, who is brain-damaged. Florida law that allowed Gov. Jeb Bush to continue."

"To be able to worship God with people of the same mind through adoration and songs was definitely a huge part of my experience,” said Ben Lehmer, a Ball State University sophomore and member of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Muncie, Ind.

The events leading up to the march created a spiritual mood that affected everyone in a beneficial way. Many pro-life supporters prayed the rosary or Chaplet of Divine Mercy and sang songs during the march.

Although the goal of the March for Life is to send a pro-life message to members of Congress, the objective also is to send the same message to the American people.

While in Washington for the march, archdiocesan teenagers stayed at The Catholic University of America adjacent to the basilica, where they had an opportunity for praise and worship, confession and all-night adoration. Many of the youth took advantage of this prayer time, and felt that participating in these activities with other pro-life supporters added to the spirit of the pilgrimage.

“We went on the trip not knowing exactly what was going to happen, thinking that the numbers were going to be down because of the weather,” Father Meyer said. “But when we arrived in D.C., specifically at the Basilica of the [National Shrine of the] Immaculate Conception, we realized that the weather had not stopped anyone from coming, so great is the love for the pro-life movement and the unborn, bringing thousands upon thousands together to pray.”

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**Supreme Court declines to act in case of brain-damaged woman**

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to review a lower court decision overturning the Florida law that allowed Gov. Jeb Bush to order reinstatement of a feeding tube for Terri Schiindler Schiavo, who is brain-damaged.

The decision, issued without comment on Jan. 24, moved forward the efforts of Schiavo’s estranged husband, Michael, to remove her feeding tube again although other court actions initiated by the woman’s parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, continue.

“What they’ve [the Supreme Court] done here today is incredible. It’s judicial homicide,” said Bob Schindler. He was attending the March for Life in Washington.

Brother Paul O’Donnell, a member of the Franciscan Brothers for Peace, also addressed the pro-march rally, saying, “Terri Schiavo has a right to life. Today is not the final word.”

Schiavo, 40, has been impaired for the past 14 years. She can breathe on her own, but requires nutrition and hydration through a feeding tube.

Michael Schiavo, who now has two children by another woman, says Terri would want the feeding tube removed. The Schindlers say that she would want to live, in part because of her Catholic beliefs.

Terri Schiindler Schiavo, who lives at a nursing home in Pinellas Park, Fla., has been on a feeding tube since 1990, when she collapsed at her home in St. Petersburg as the result of what doctors believe was a potassium imbalance, causing her brain to be deprived of oxygen for several minutes.

She was taken off the feeding tube Oct. 15, 2003, but it was restored a few days later, on Oct. 23, by Bush’s executive order. He issued the order after the Florida Legislature passed “Terri’s Law,” which allowed the governor’s intervention in cases in which the patient has no living will, is in a persistent vegetative state and has had nutrition and hydration tubes removed and a family member has challenged the removal.

Nearly a year later, on Sept. 24, 2004, the Florida Supreme Court said the law violated the state Constitution’s requirement of separation of powers by allowing the state Legislature and the governor to overturn a lower court decision. A spokesman for Bush said the governor had no more legal options in the case now that the U.S. Supreme Court has let the previous ruling stand. †
President tells March for Life of efforts to foster ‘culture of life’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—President George W. Bush, speaking via telephone to March for Life participants, said the federal government is “to promote compassion for women and their unborn babies.”

The president spoke for about five minutes at the beginning of the Jan. 24 rally. "We know that in a culture that does not value the life of an innocent child, the handicapped, the elderly, the unborn or [those who are] simply inconvenient become increasingly vulnerable," he said.

Bush pointed to laws passed during his first term in office, including the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act in 2003. Implementation of the law has been upheld by three separate federal district courts—in New York, Nebraska and California—which have declared it unconstitutional.

Under the measure, “infants who are born despite an attempt at abortion are now protected by law,” he said to applause. “So are nurses and doctors who refused to be any part of an abortion.”

And, under the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, which he signed into law last April, "prosecutors can now charge those who harm or kill a pregnant woman with harming or killing her unborn child," Bush said.

The president said, “The America of our dreams, where every child is welcomed in law and in life, and protected in law may still be some ways away, but even from the far side of the river … we can see its glimmerings.”

In an allusion to federal funding for cloning and for stem-cell research, Bush added, “We’re also moving ahead in terms of medicine and research for the future. The facts of science are consistent with our highest values of freedom, equality, family and human dignity. We will not sanction the creation of life only to destroy it.”

The president made his remarks from Camp David in Maryland, but March participants could see the White House from their vantage point during the rally on the Ellipse, with the Washington Monument behind them. The rally preceded their annual march to the Supreme Court building.

The March for Life usually takes place on the Jan. 22 anniversary date of the Supreme Court’s 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision, which declared the right to an abortion a standard part of health care and family planning. This year, organizers choose the follow- ing Sunday so participants can lobby their respective legislators on pro-life issues.

Despite a weekend snowstorm that socked in much of the East Coast and the Midwest with up to two feet of snow, march organizer Nellie Gray estimated that 100,000 took part in the rally and march.

By the time other speakers finished and Cardinal William H. Keeler, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Conference on Pro-Life Activities, was able to introduce 16 of his fellow bishops, many in the crowd had left the rally to get to the beginning of the march route. Fewer still saw the closing prayer uttered by Coadjutor Bishop Robert W. Finn of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo.

On the eve of the March, Cardinal Keeler celebrated a vigil Mass opening the National Prayer Vigil for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. There he told a congregation of more than 5,000 people not to give up hope for efforts to change the country’s abortion laws. “The evil must end,” he told those at the Mass.

Delivering the prayer that opened the rally on the Ellipse, the Rev. Luke Ralley of the University of Mary Africa Methodist Episcopal Church in Frederick, Md., said happy are the people “whose quiver is filled with children.”

Metropolitan Herman, head of the million-member Orthodox Church in America, said the November election shows that there are many people “with us than against us.”
Barbara Mauch has been teaching at St. Monica School in Indianapolis for 17 years, and wasn’t about to stop when she started chemotherapy for breast cancer last summer.

The emojis meant that she was going to miss one or two days of school each week until the end of October.

But while she was doing her best to get to school as often as possible, her new class of fifth-graders was figuring out how to help her.

A group of three girls, assisted by their parents, wanted to get at least 25 other students to join them in the “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer” walk on Oct. 9 at White River State Park in Indianapolis. The proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society.

The “March for Mauch” ended up more successful than they thought.

“We got 70 kids,” said Kayla Delaney, a fifth-grade student. The students raised more than $2,000, and also got parents and teachers to join the walk.

“But Mauch is a great teacher and we wanted to do something special for her to support her in her cancer,” said Jordan Diagostino, a fifth-grade student.

Everyone who walked had a good time, she said. “You could tell—they liked it.”

Michael Conway, a fifth-grade student, added that when the class told her about the plans, Mauch was overwhelmend.

“I’m so proud of them—all after this, it’s totally amazing,” Mauch said. This shows that her students are “just exactly what we want Catholic school children to be.”

Part of her surprise when she found out about the walk was that she had just met her new class of fifth-grade students. “I cried,” she said.

The opening ceremony on the day of the walk—a Saturday—was at 7:30 a.m., so the students made, for them, a considerable sacrifice.

“And it was a cold morning,” Mauch said. “I mean, it was not pleasant to be down there.”

“She’s his teacher, Michael said, and he cares about her—and is proud of her.”

“We’re the ones that make her get up every morning and go to chemo,” Kayla said.

Mauch was not able to make it to the event because she was too sick. She was, though, feeling better in the last months of 2004, and was no longer missing any school. She had surgery over the Christmas break.

“You have to appreciate what our teachers go through,” said Mary Delaney, Kayla’s mother.

When she initially heard that her child’s teacher was sick, Delaney was concerned about how the year might work out, and if the situation would be too difficult on the children emotionally.

But her daughter came home excited about having Mauch as her teacher: “I think she has talked to them much more than our normal curriculum so far this year,” Delaney said.

“I think the big thing even is not to panic when they hear the word that someone has cancer,” Mauch said. "I did my darnedest to be here. I’m here now. I’ve taken my wig off.”

As the year continues, one of the girls said that she would gladly do walk again.

“I would like to do it again,” said Audrey Lee, fifth-grade student. “It made me feel really good.”
Filipino teacher instills love for music in students at St. Susanna School

By Mary Ann Wyand

A former concert pianist in the Philippines, Agnes Magnaye now shares her love for music with students as a teacher at St. Susanna School in Plainfield.

In addition to teaching music classes and conducting the children’s choir, Magnaye also shares her love for God with parishioners and visitors as the liturgical music director at the Indianapolis West Deanery parish.

“The kids are fun to work with,” Magnaye said during a recent telephone interview. “They’re very cooperative and they listen well to what I tell them. I love working here. I love the kids. The parents at St. Susanna are so supportive of all our [choir] activities.

Her musical gifts, dedication to ministry and enthusiastic service to others have made a dramatic difference in parish and school life, said Patricia Whitaker, the principal of St. Susanna School.

“She is wonderfully talented,” Whitaker said during a telephone interview last month, “and she gets wonderful sounds from our children.”

As a liturgical musician, Whitaker said, Magnaye promotes love and reverence for worship through joyful music during Masses.

“She grew up Catholic in the Philippines and her faith is such an important part of her,” Whitaker said. “You understand from her bearing, from her being, that music is her gift back to God. She has garnered the respect and admiration and affection of parishioners.

Her “perpetual energy” has invigorated St. Susanna’s music program, the principal said, and students in kindergarten through seventh-grade enjoy participating in her classes.

When Magnaye was hired five years ago, she started a children’s choir—with about four to six students—to sing during Masses, funerals and parish programs. Now, about 40 students sing in the choir, which sounds so professional that Magnaye and the children were asked to sing for several archdiocesan liturgies and programs.

St. Susanna’s children’s choir sang at the 2004 Celebrating Catholic School Values dinner last November in downtown Indianapolis as well as during a confirmation Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral last year. The choir also sang for the rededication of St. Elizabeth and Coleman Pregnancy and Adoption Services’ renovated facilities on Jan. 15 in Indianapolis.

“When the archbishop came here for St. Susanna’s 50th anniversary [in liturgy in 2003], she melded the children’s choir with the adult choir,” Whitaker said. “It was absolutely phenomenal.

At Christmas, she initiated a [combined] children’s and adult choir concert that also was magnificent.”

Magnaye also began a tone chime choir for the children, the principal said, and has made music education interesting and fun for all of the students.

Her music ministry at St. Susanna Parish resulted from a conversation that she had with Father Kevin Morris, the pastor, about the parish’s need for a liturgical music director and music teacher five years ago.

Trained as a classical pianist at a music conservatory, Magnaye performed concerts and recitals in the Philippines.

She was visiting her brother in Plainfield when the music position was advertised at the parish, and was able to acquire a temporary visa to stay in the United States and work at St. Susanna Parish.

“This is my home now,” Magnaye said. “I’ve decided to stay. We’re working on my permanent visa.”

Magnaye’s parents and a younger sister still live in the Philippines, where her mother is a principal and her father also works in a school. Another sister lives in Los Angeles.

“My mom wanted me to be a concert pianist so I worked hard,” she said. “All I did was practice playing the piano all day. But when I started working with kids [at St. Susanna School], I just loved it and I told my mom, ‘I just want to teach. I want to work with kids.’ I love what I do right now.”

Magnaye said she is happy that the children’s choir has continued to grow and the parishioners enjoy singing during Masses.

“I tell the kids that singing is prayering,” she said, “and when you sing in a choir at church it’s not a performance. It’s a service. We want to lead the congregation in singing. ... We help everybody to worship.”

She also shares Filipino traditions with her students and has taught them a few words in Tagalog, the primary language in the Philippines.

“I try to teach them some Tagalog words, but we haven’t sung any songs in Tagalog yet,” Magnaye said. “I want them to know [about] how life is [and] how faith is practiced in other parts of the world.”

Sixth-grader Katie Copeland said St. Susanna’s music teacher is “fun” and has helped her learn to sing better and to enjoy serving others as a member of the parish choir.

Fifth-grader Anna Marie Legge has been a member of the children’s choir for five years and said she loves music classes.

“She’s really fun,” Anna Marie said of her music teacher, “and she makes things exciting.”

Fourth-grader Anna Emmick also has sung with the children’s choir for five years.

“She’s my favorite teacher,” Anna said, “because she’s nice.”

(Criterion reporters Sean Gallagher and Brandon A. Evans contributed to this story.)
Project EXCEED’s Hispanic Services help Latino students

By Mary Ann Wyand

All Saints School eighth-grader Ismael Mazon of Indianapolis grew up in a Hispanic neighborhood in Chicago and lived in a primarily Spanish-speaking culture. When the Mazon family moved to Indianapolis two years ago, Ismael faced many challenges as he adjusted to life in an English-speaking culture and made new friends at two schools.

Ismael’s grades dropped during his first year in Indianapolis, but last summer his parents enrolled him at All Saints School and now his grades are improving thanks to help from the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education’s Hispanic Services program made possible by Project EXCEED funding.

During a Jan. 20 interview at All Saints School, Ismael said he wants people to understand “some of the challenges, as Mexicans, [and] the challenge that it is to find an American school and the difficulties that are in the way for us to learn.”

In his Chicago neighborhood, he said, “it was all Hispanic. When I came here, it was a lot harder. My grades kind of dropped a little because in Chicago I was in an A student and here I am a C, C-minus and D student. In Chicago, I was studying in a Hispanic classroom so I got more help because I didn’t really know that much English when I was there.”

Social Studies is his hardest class at All Saints School, Ismael said, but math class is easy because his teacher helps him a lot.

John Fair, the eighth-grade mathematics teacher, said last week that Ismael “has been doing really well lately.” Ismael said he misses his old friends in Chicago, but he likes All Saints School and is thinking about attending Cardinal Ritter High School in Indianapolis next year. He enjoys drawing and playing football, and was happy to hear that Cardinal Ritter “has been doing really well lately.”

Ismael said he also is considering attending a military school in Texas next year. Later, he hopes to work as a mechanic like his brother.

His parents’ families are from Mexico, and he visited his grandparents and other relatives in Mexico City for two months last summer.

He shared memories of his trip to Mexico with Margarita Solis, coordinator of Hispanic Services for the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education, who is filming a video to help other Hispanic youth attending Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

“Ismael has agreed to talk about his life,” Solis said, “and what it means to live in two cultures and come to a Catholic school. He is sharing some of his experiences so the students can see the importance of education.”

Solis and Flor Bickel, educational specialist in Hispanic Services, work with Latino students at All Saints School and St. Philip Neri School in Indianapolis as part of Project EXCEED’s outreach ministry.

“These positions were developed as a response to the growing Hispanic needs and population at both schools,” Solis said on Jan. 20. “The majority of our [Hispanic] students come from Mexico, although we also have some students from Honduras, Peru and Puerto Rico. A lot of [Latino] children were born in the United States, but have lived in a Spanish-speaking home for their first five years so that’s why they struggle with the English language. Some of them are bilingual, but academics is still a struggle so we work with them on those needs as well.”

About 32 percent of the students at All Saints School are Hispanic, Solis said, and St. Philip Neri School’s Latino students comprise nearly 50 percent of this year’s enrollment.

Nationally, she said, the dropout rate for Hispanic high school students is very high.

“That’s just Hispanic youth in general,” Solis said. “The gap is even higher for those [Hispanic] students who are coming from another country into the United States when they are already in the fourth- or fifth- or sixth-grade.”

Statistics posted on the National Center for Education website indicate that the high school dropout rate for white students is 7 percent, but it jumps to 13 percent for black students and 28 percent for Hispanic youth.

“With that comes a lot of different needs,” Solis said. “We’re not only talking about cultural understanding—affirming their country and culture—but also language is the key [to improving Hispanic students’ high school retention rates]. Flor [Bickel] and I are really looking at students who are struggling with the English language, but also supporting our Hispanic youth so they realize that education is really important … if they are going to succeed in this country.”

Solis said acclimating Hispanic youth to life in a Catholic school and learning in a primarily English-speaking environment is their primary goal.

“Our job is not only to support them by giving instruction in English,” she said, “but also to support them in being successful in their education. That’s our main goal and, whatever that means, that’s our job description.”

Solis said as Hispanic children become acclimated in an American school, they often are put in the difficult position of translating conversations with their teachers and their Spanish-speaking parents.

“Oftentimes, the majority of our students’ parents do not speak English so they are put on with a lot more responsibilities,” she said. “That becomes a little bit awkward, and probably is not the most appropriate thing to do for the students. If the student is doing poorly, I’m not quite sure that translation is always getting to the parents for many different reasons.

That’s a tough thing for children to say to their parents that they’re not doing well in school.”

Within the past five years, she said, the Hispanic student population has grown tremendously in archdiocesan Catholic schools.

Benedicte Sister Pamela Doyle, principal at All Saints School, said Solis and Bickel help her prepare weekly school newsletters written in English and Spanish.

The school’s mission statement reads, “All Saints Catholic School supports and challenges our diverse student body to be academically prepared, curious about the parents for many different reasons.

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The school’s mission statement reads, “All Saints Catholic School supports and challenges our diverse student body to be academically prepared, curious about learning, faithful in their spirituality and respectful of all God’s creation.”

To accomplish that goal, Sister Pamela said, school staff members must be able to serve the unique needs of every student.

“Margarita [Solis] and Flor [Bickel] have been a very powerful, very positive presence in our school,” Sister Pamela said. “It’s helped tremendously to have their presence here at All Saints, and in the archdiocese, to recognize the Hispanic families that we have in this community and how we can help meet the needs of all our students. They’ve been a godsend, … heightening the awareness of our school to the Hispanic population and resources in the community.”

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Project Exceed continues to bring new technology to schools

By Brandon A. Evans

Several schools in the archdiocese are now benefiting technologically from Project Exceed (Excellence in Catholic Expectations for Education). The schools—which include Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis, Holy Name School in Beech Grove and St. Mark the Evangelist, St. Lawrence, Holy Spirit, St. Thomas Aquinas and Christ the King schools, all in Indianapolis—have received, or soon will receive, thousands of dollars in new technology.

They follow an initial wave of 14 schools that benefited from the same program.

The program is funded, along with the rest of Exceed’s programs, by a $10 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. and a $6 million in donations. The goal is to help Catholic schools be able to integrate technology into their curriculum.

Kim Shurig, technology coordinator for Project Exceed, said that the program started in the center-city, and has moved out according to need. Currently, the program is only active within Marion County, per the requirements of the Lilly grant.

Each school typically receives three computers for each grade two to five classroom, new software, two computers for each teacher and color printers for each classroom.

Additionally, all teachers in each school receive training.

“I think [the program’s] been overwhelmingly successful,” Shurig said. “Everybody’s been very thrilled with the quality of the hardware and software, the quality of the service and the quality of the training.”

She said that this will help Catholic school students to be more prepared with how to use computer technology when they enter other schools.

“Certainly, all the kids in the public schools are prepared when they enter high school,” Shurig said.

Robert Rash, principal of Our Lady of Lourdes School, is seeing the good things that the new technology can do for the students.

The technology is a tool for them, he said, to communicate and obtain information.

“Instead of writing a report like the good old days, the kids now do PowerPoint presentations,” Rash said.

The students also are doing a lot more online research—and the Internet is “unparalleled” for obtaining information speedily, he said.

Still, he added, it isn’t wise just to let young people have access to all of these things without explaining how to use them.

“It takes a teacher [and] it still takes a school to say, ‘How do you take that information? Just because it’s on the Internet, does that make it valid?’” Rash said.

“No tool is going to help children discern better than, I think, a teacher,” he said.

Rita Parsons, principal of Holy Spirit School, said that her school was completely rewired to be able to use the Internet, but that most of the hardware and software will be coming to the school in March.

Internet research, she said, helps students keep up with the changing news.

“You can never keep a Social Studies book up-to-date,” Parsons said. “Social Studies happens every day.”

Some families, she said, probably have more technology at home than in the schools, so it’s good to try to keep up.

“This is a technology age and this is what is natural to these students,” she said, “and if we don’t move at the same rate that they’re getting those kinds of materials in their homes, we can’t keep up.”

The new computers in the classrooms of the lower grades will give also the teachers increased flexibility, she said.

“Small groups of students can be at the computers while other students are in reading groups or [at] math stations,” Parsons said. “It’s just another compliment to the instruction that’s going on in the classroom.”

Chris Battocletti, technology coordinator at St. Lawrence School, said that the new technology is being used in many parts of the curriculum.

Children in first- and second-grade learn how to use word processing software, and by third-grade they are already using PowerPoint. By middle school, the students are using publishing software.

“What we do is build projects from year to year so that they build on their prior knowledge,” Battocletti said.

Eighth-grade students participate in a year-long project—which culminates in a trip to Washington, D.C.—that makes use of their broad range of acquired computer skills.

They use the Internet to research the monuments of the nation’s capital then build scale models and create a PowerPoint presentation. They also make their own publicity for the presentation.

“It’s just been wonderful,” Battocletti said. “It would be great to see every Catholic school in the city be able to take advantage of this.”

Rash and Parsons both agreed that the program should continue.

“It is well worth it and a lot of students are going to benefit from it,” Parsons said.

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Catholic educator program gets students ready to teach in Catholic schools

By Brandon A. Evans

The Catholic School Educator Program at Marian College is now in its second year for training Catholic school teachers who want to nourish a student’s soul as well as his or her mind.

The program, made possible by funds from the “Rebuild My Church” program, a project funded by Lilly Endowment Inc., is offered as a special track for students who are getting education degrees, but intend to teach in a Catholic school.

Susan Blackwell, chair of the education department at Marian, said that freshmen in the program begin with a few exploratory activities and get together occasionally—but the sophomore year is when things really get rolling.

Each student is paired with a coach at one of five local participating schools: St. Susanna School in Plainfield, St. Malachy School in Brownstown, and St. Lawrence, St. Christopher and Holy Cross Central schools, all in Indianapolis.

The students are mentored by their coach, and work with them—or another teacher—in the classroom.

On top of that, the students in the Catholic School Educator Program also take a series of theology courses. Part of that training is to show them how to infuse religion into their teaching, Blackwell said.

There are currently 12 freshmen in the program this year, and four sophomores (who were the first to be in the program).

Andrea Beyke, a sophomore in the program, is paired with Lisa Hannon, a first-grade teacher at St. Malachy School, as her coach.

Beyke is spending her time once a week observing and teaching math classes to students at the school.

“If you have chemistry, it is hard to do this, because they have such an open mind,” she said.

Hannon said that her responsibility as a coach requires her to coordinate visits, field experiences and student teaching, along with helping Blackwell to develop a brochure and program guide.

All the coaches also meet on a monthly basis during the school year and once in the summer, she said.

“There’s a lot of ownership on the part of the participating schools for the program because they helped develop it,” Blackwell said.

“I think the biggest challenge of the program has been the fact that, to some extent, we are developing it as we go along,” Hannon said. “We set goals in place, make plans for school visitations and field experiences, and if something doesn’t work, we change it.

“We all work very well together. Since I like a challenge, I think this has also been my favorite thing.”

Hannon has been impressed with the young people in the program, and said that “the students have met so far demonstrated the importance of their faith through their work.

“These young, fresh faces, I see a lot of excitement and enthusiasm,” she said. “I enjoy the opportunity to share my love of teaching and children with another soon-to-be-professional.

“This program has helped me to be a better teacher by reminding me how scary it was to be a teacher-in-training, and making me more aware of the importance of having good role models in my profession.”

Catechetical leader in New Albany Deanery makes collaborative efforts

By Karen Oddi

Special To The Criterion

Christina Flum moved from the dioce se of Erie, Pa., last summer to assume the position of director of Catechetical Ministry at the Aquinas Center in Clarksville.

Flum knew that she would be building upon a rich and well-established catechetical ministry in the New Albany Deanery, one that had earned the respect of educ ational and pastoral leaders throughout the archdiocese.

Being very much a “people person,” she quickly came to know and work with the parish administrators of religious education in the 19 parishes that make up the deanery.

The annual August conference for educational administrators provided not only the opportunity to see what a collaborative group the New Albany catechetical leaders are, but also to meet administrators from other deaneries.

Since the Aquinas Center is part of the complex of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville, Flum could envision many possibilities for linking the work of the center with the high school.

Over the years, the center itself has been a fine resource for adult education and catechetical formation, providing the entire deanery with the latest in faith formation materials and opportunities for spiritual growth and enrichment.

Through some reorganization of materials with the help of an administrator assistant, Connie Sandlin, the theology teachers at the high school are now looking at the resources of the center.

Flum is working with Joan Hurley, Providence High School president, and Ray Lucas, deanery director of Youth Ministry, to set up evenings for youth with guest speakers on a variety of topics.

She also does a “walking around” ministry with the high school students, dropping by at lunch and inviting them to take advantage of what the Aquinas Center has to offer. In addition, the center is sponsoring “Faith Rocks,” a bi-monthly program for youth at St. Michael Parish in Bradford in Harrison County, the western part of the deanery.

Recently, Flum was the guest speaker, on the topic of teenage pregnancy, for an eighth-grade social studies class at Holy Family School in New Albany.

She is also working with several school principals to plan a program for teachers on student discipline. In addition, she is working toward correlating the resources of the deanery center with the elementary and high school standards-based religion curricula.

“I want to make it easy for teachers and catechists to find good audio-visual and other materials that will enhance their lesson planning experience,” Flum said.

As part of the plan to make it easier to access resources, Flum and Sandlin have reorganized all the materials topically around the basic teachings of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

As part of the plan to enhance the community’s awareness of the center, Flum held an open house in the fall.

She has many more plans for the future, including working to add a track for youth at the annual New Albany Deanery Parish Ministry Conference next September and being a member of the adult team for a deanery-sponsored senior retreat next month.

She is also facilitating the Protecting God’s Children sexual abuse awareness program that was recently mandated by the archdiocese for all employees and volunteers who have regular contact with children and youth.

With all that is going on in the deanery, Flum still makes time to enjoy the company of family and friends in both Cincinnati and back in Pennsylvania. She is also active in several professional organizations and is often called upon as a speaker at the archdiocese.

For more information about the Aquinas Center, log on to www.aquinascenter.org.

(Karen Oddi is evangelization coordinator and associate director of faith formation for the archdiocese.)
By Mary Ann Wyand

“Faith in Every Student,” the motto for Catholic Schools Week this year, could also be the motto for Nativity School in Indianapolis, where special-education students receive expert tutoring from Rose Haltom, who was named Teacher of the Year on Dec. 3 by the Learning Disabilities Association of Indiana.

Haltom said about 40 Nativity students participate in special-education classes on a daily basis and other students receive inclusion assistance to support various curriculum needs or Title I remediation after school to strengthen reading skills.

Peg Dispensieri, Nativity’s principal, said she is pleased that the Indianapolis South Deanery school is able to provide a Catholic education for special-needs students.

“I think it’s incredibly important that we’re able to offer parents of children who may have learning disabilities the opportunity to come to this school,” Dispensieri said, “and to offer them a good-quality Catholic education, especially knowing that Rose [Haltom] is so qualified and has so much experience. She is a huge asset to this school.”

Dispensieri said there are children attending Nativity School now whose parents were also taught by Haltom.

“The parents know what great work she does,” the principal said. “I’m so proud of Rose. She started this program years ago with a handful of students as a part-time science teacher and part-time resource teacher. She’s been a full-time resource teacher here for several years. We’ve grown from serving a group of students [with learning disabilities] to helping 40 students on a daily basis. Our goal is to keep growing that program so we can reach an even wider range of students.”

This year, the principal said, 330 students are enrolled at Nativity School and she expects enrollment to continue to grow steadily in coming years.

“Franklin Township continues to grow,” Dispensieri said. “Nativity School continues to grow, and we’re looking forward to keeping that program going as we can reach a larger number of students.”

Haltom said she works hard to reach students with different learning styles by teaching hands-on science lessons without “hearing tests.”

“Students with auditory processing problems can read, but can’t tell you what they’ve read or understand [spoken] instructions. They can spell words and can read, but they don’t have a clue what you’ve said. They learn visually. It’s like being in a foreign airport.”

Haltom said teaching special-education students is an enjoyable and rewarding educational ministry.

“Two of my fourth-grade girls got on the honor roll and were thrilled,” she said. “They just shine now.”

She was especially pleased to receive a thank you card decorated with a rainbow from a third-grade boy who can’t read or spell yet so she reads his tests to him.

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Resource classes give special-needs students hope for the future and confidence in their newfound abilities, Haltom said. “The parents are so relieved because I’m in their language arts class, their reading class and I help them learn spelling words. So we have a connectedness. They know their strengths now. We’ve bonded together and have become kind of a family.”

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She works with parents and teachers to ensure that each child makes progress.

“If you make them feel great that you can help them,” she said. “They already know what they can’t do so my job is to teach them what they can do, to show them how to do it well and to compensate for what they don’t know how to do.”

Eighth-grader Stephanie Pfeiffer has taken resource classes for help with reading and spelling for four years.

“We’re all very proud of her,” Stephanie said about her teacher’s state award for excellence in education.

“She accomplished a lot with many of us,” Stephanie said. “[Resource class] is a lot of fun. We have a lot of laughs.”

Eighth-grader Kevin Banich has participated in resource classes for a year and a half to improve his reading comprehension.

“It made me a lot smarter,” Kevin said. “I came from a second-grade reading level up to just about an eighth-grade reading level in a matter of a couple of months. I got better and better [at reading], and started liking it more. [I learned] to work hard. Things might seem tough in the beginning, but with help and support you can get through anything.”

Nativity School special education teacher Rose Haltom helps resource students Lindi Shockey, from left, Kennedy Black and Henry Hampton with spelling words on Jan. 19 at the Indianapolis South Deanery school. Haltom earned a state award for excellence in education from the Learning Disabilities Association of Indiana.
Facts about Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Archdiocesan administration

The Secretariat for Catholic Education and Faith Formation of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis includes the Office of Catholic Education (OCE), the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) and St. Mary’s Child Center.

The Office of Catholic Education oversees and assists the Catholic schools, parish faith formation, evangelization and youth ministry programs for 150 parishes and missions in 11 deaneries throughout a 39-county area of central and southern Indiana, comprising some 13,757 square miles and serving more than 233,000 Catholics.

Special programs operating under the auspices of OCE are A Promise to Keep, a peer-monitoring sexual abstinence program sponsored by the St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis, and SPRED, the Special Religious Education program serving parishioners with developmental disabilities.

The Office of Catholic Education was founded in 1974 when the former school office and office of religious education were formed into one of the first offices of “Total Catholic Education” in the nation.

Under Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein in consultation with the Archdiocesan Education Commission, OCE utilizes a team management approach in support of the teaching mission of the Church—“learning, teaching approach in support of the teaching mission.”

OCE received a historic $10 million challenge grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. for school improvement from 2002-06. The challenge was met with $5 million in matching gifts from generous corporate and individual donors and grants.

Project EXCEED focuses on a new set of the three “R’s” in our Catholic schools:

• Recruit, retain, reward and develop the best school teachers and administrators.
• Raise the level of students’ performance and report their progress.
• Reach out to special populations with advanced capabilities or special needs.

Major constituencies of the Office of Catholic Education include pastors, principals, parish administrators of religious education, youth ministers and members of school and faith formation commissions and high school boards.

Constituents are involved collaboratively in projects to design and develop curriculum, provide inservice training, produce manuals and guidelines, and foster professional development.

Office of Catholic Education

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Catholic Schools Week themes have changed over the past three decades

Catholic Schools Week themes:

1974–Catholic Schools, Different Where It Counts—Message, Community and Service
1975–Making the Difference Count
1976–A Declaration of Interdependence
1977–Catholic Schools: A Plus for America
1978–Catholic Schools: Everyone Grows
1979–Next to the Family, The Catholic School
1980–The Catholic School: One of the Family
1981–Choosing a Tradition—Catholic Schools
1982–The Good News in Education
1983–In God We Trust and Teach
1984–Catholic Schools: Beacon of Hope
1985–Catholic Schools: Sharing Vision, Teaching Values
1986–A Rainbow of Excellence
1987–Catholic Schools Touch the Future
1988–Share the Spirit
1989–Communities with Memories
1990–Catholic Schools: A Parent’s Choice
1991–Catholic Schools: A Kaleidoscope of People

National Marketing Campaign and CSW Week themes:

1992–Discover Catholic Schools
1993–Choose Catholic Schools: The Good News in Education
1994–Support Catholic Schools: Your Choice for Education
1995–Catholic Schools: Schools You Can Believe In
1996–Catholic Schools: Schools You Can Believe In
1997–Catholic Schools: Schools You Can Believe In
1998–Catholic Schools: Restoring Faith in Education
1999–Catholic Schools: Faith for a Brighter Future
2000–Catholic Schools: Lighting the Way to a New Century
2001–Celebrate Catholic Schools
2002–Catholic Schools: Where Faith and Knowledge Meet
2003–Catholic Schools: Making a World of Difference
2004–Catholic Schools: A Faith-Filled Future
2005–Catholic Schools: Faith in Every Student†

Catholic School education offers forgivable loans

By Brandon A. Evans

The Total Catholic Education (TCE) Fund, started more than a decade ago, has been helping people continue the life-long process of learning.

It has been doing this through the awarding of forgivable loans—these are loans that are given to a person, in this case for further education (usually meaning an advanced degree).

“It was put in place to enhance leadership and provide for continuing education for educational leaders—teachers, principals, [directors of religious education]—and now youth ministers are involved,” said G. Joseph Peters, associate executive director of Catholic education for the archdiocese.

In the last year, 48 loans were awarded.

“When they complete their program, they have a five year obligation, and one-fifth of that loan is forgiven each year by a combination of the TCE fund … and the parish or the sponsoring entity,” Peters said.

“Most of them, because they continue to work for us, never pay a penny back,” he said.

The loan recipients are chosen through an application process that is reviewed by the Archdiocesan Education Commission.

Cynthia Greer, principal of St. Mark the Evangelist School in Indianapolis, said that she received a loan about eight years ago.

“I used to get my master’s degree from Butler [University], which would have been my administration license,” she said.

At the time, Greer was teaching at Our Lady of the Greenwood School in Greenwood.

“Pursuing a graduate-level degree was something she had wanted to do,” he said.

Greer was a world geography and U.S. history teacher at Roncalli High School.

He wanted to obtain his administrator’s license—which was a master’s level degree—but couldn’t afford it.

He was able to receive a forgivable loan from the TCE from 1988-2000 to get his degree.

“It wasn’t for this program,” Stewart said, “I probably … would have had to move on to public schools” to make a living.

“The loans allow those of us that really want to make a lifelong commitment to Catholic education to do so,” he said.

“In my mind, it’s the archdiocese, the Office of Catholic Education, making a commitment to us,” he said.

Teachers, in turn, he said, are able to make that commitment back.

Greer said that for both educators and the larger archdiocese, the program is “great—it’s a win-win for everybody.

"I think it helps the archdiocese because we better our educational lifetimes," she said.

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Catholic school students celebrate week with various activities

By Brandon A. Evans

Most Catholic schools in the archdiocese are in some way celebrating Catholic Schools Week, which runs from Jan. 30 to Feb. 5.

Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Jeffersonville is celebrating the week in many different ways, but the culmination will be a volleyball game of eighth-graders vs. the faculty and staff on Friday.

The event always brings out the best of the school’s spirit, and the pastor of the parish, Father Thomas Clegg, added to the fun by wearing a festive wig to the game last year.

St. Matthew School in Indianapolis put on an art show for the parish on Jan. 21 by having all the students paint self-portraits.

The students also had a “graffiti” wall, made arm bands and played a game where they had to guess which self-portrait fit which teacher.

The goal was to teach the students about self-expression through art.

St. Mary School in North Vernon has a host of activities lined up, beginning with a 5 p.m. Mass on Jan. 29.

Children at the school will read letters from their parents explaining why they were sent to Catholic school, and will also enjoy a pizza lunch, a silly sock day (to remind them that we walk in our faith together) and a chance to hear from school alumni.

Pope John XXIII School in Madison has had several successful events in past years.

One such event had students writing about why they like their school, while at others, students collected “care buckets” filled with various items for those in community service (i.e., firemen) and wrote letters to shut-ins and those in nursing homes.

The principal also delivered a “State of the School” address to Prince of Peace Parish during the weekend Masses.

Community service is a common way that many Catholic schools honor their religious heritage.

Last fall, Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis held a food drive that raised more than 23,000 cans of food for the Holy Cross Food Pantry.

The different classes had a competition to see how much food they could collect.

St. Mark the Evangelist School in Indianapolis “adopted” a squad of Army soldiers stationed in Iraq.

The students have donated items that the soldiers needed, and also wrote letters to them.

Students at the same school, in the fourth grade class, have also spent the last few years making quilts for babies served by the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry’s Birthline ministry—something that teaches them motor skills, following directions, service and even Indiana history.

Above, eighth-grade students from Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Jeffersonville stop for a photo last January during Catholic Schools Week. The students participated in a special volleyball game that pitted them against the faculty and staff.

Right, Erika Meckauskas, a first-grade student at St. Matthew School in Indianapolis, poses with a self-portrait that she made for art class. Each grade in the school made self-portraits, and all of them—along with other artistic creations from students—were put on display for members of the parish during an art show on Jan. 21.

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- St. Francis of Assisi

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Above, All Saints School sixth-graders Taiya Brasher, from left, Stephanie Turner and Liliana Espinosa of Indianapolis sing during a prayer service on Jan. 20 in the school chapel.

Above, right, St. Thomas Aquinas School fourth-grader Charlie Gates of Indianapolis contemplates his next move in a chess game during recess last year at the Indianapolis North Deanery school.

Right, St. Monica School fifth-grader Chelsea Carter of Indianapolis, right, shows her Gravitron roller coaster to younger students on Jan. 14 at the Indianapolis West Deanery school. Fifth-grade students designed roller coasters using tubes and ball bearings for a science project.
The new archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education website offers a variety of resources for different users. It contains links to its various programs, along with a calendar of events, a list of staff members, detailed curriculum information, lists of schools and parishes, Catholic education news and an online newsletter. The Office of Catholic Education (OCE) provides leadership and resources for Catholic education and lifelong faith formation in the archdiocese with the counsel of the Archdiocesan Education Commission. The OCE guides and supports the work of the Catholic schools, faith formation programs, evangelization, commissions/boards, youth and young adult ministries and St. Mary’s Child Center.

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Archdiocese had six Blue Ribbons this year; 19 total since 1982

Six Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis were recognized as national No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence for 2004.

The schools are:
- St. Mary School in North Vernon
- St. Mary School in New Albany
- St. Barnabas School in Indianapolis
- St. Christopher School in Indianapolis
- St. Luke School in Indianapolis
- Cathedral High School in Indianapolis (earned another Blue Ribbon in past years as well)

Those schools were among seven private schools and seven public schools recognized in Indiana. There were 50 non-public schools and 306 public schools chosen nationwide.

The schools received their awards during ceremonies in November in Washington, D.C.

Since 1982, a total of 15 Catholic schools within the archdiocese—some more than once—have been honored as Blue Ribbon Schools. Nineteen ribbons have been awarded.

The schools that won in previous years are:
- Holy Family School in New Albany
- St. Charles School in Bloomington
- Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville
- St. Paul School in Sellersburg
- St. Louis School in Batesville
- St. Jude School in Indianapolis (earned a Blue Ribbon twice)
- Roncalli High School in Indianapolis (earned a Blue Ribbon three times)
- St. Lawrence School in Indianapolis
- St. Mark the Evangelist School in Indianapolis

Schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis received more awards during each of the last two years (10 awards) than any other diocese, and it is believed that no other diocese in the nation has more schools that have been honored in the national Blue Ribbon Schools program.

According to U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, the No Child Left Behind program recognizes schools that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap or whose students achieve at very high levels.

A complete list of all 2004 Blue Ribbon Schools is available at www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/awards.html and a complete list of private schools honored can be found at www.capenet.org/b2c.html.

Principals and teachers from five archdiocesan elementary schools are shown receiving their Blue Ribbon plaques at the awards luncheon in Washington, D.C. on Nov. 5. They are Pam Curley, a teacher at St. Barnabas School in Indianapolis, from left, and Debbie Perkins, principal; Steve Weber, principal of St. Luke School in Indianapolis, and Susanne Sullivan, teacher; Kim Hartlage, principal of St. Mary School in New Albany, Andrea Kraft, teacher; Karen King, teacher at St. Christopher School in Indianapolis, and Barb Leek, principal, both in front; and Sandi Kirchner, teacher at St. Mary School in North Vernon, and Franciscan Sister Josenta Koors, principal, both in back row.

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Mary Kay E. Tracy, a sister of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, of the National Catholic Education Association’s Department of Secondary Schools, from left, is shown with Annette ‘Mickey’ Lentz, executive director of Catholic education and faith formation, from left, David Worland, principal of Cathedral High School in Indianapolis; Lisa Ford, teacher, and Steve Helmich, president, at the NCEA headquarters while in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 5 to receive the school’s second Blue Ribbon award.
Holy Cross students and teachers have fun exercising with pedometers

By Mary Ann Wyand

Holy Cross Central School students and teachers in Indianapolis are having fun "walking" to Hawaii as part of a "Walk Across America" fitness project during the school year. Physical education instructor Josh Welch organized the exercise program at the inner-city school in the Indianapolis East Deanery as a fun way to promote his course motto, "G-Y-M," which stands for "Get Yourself Moving." "That's my motto," Welch said, "and that's basically what the 'Walk Across America' is all about."

When he started teaching at Holy Cross School three years ago, Welch posted a "Get Yourself Moving" sign in the parish's Kelley Gymnasium, where he teaches the students about physical fitness and teamwork as well as shows them how to play individual and team sports.

He always begins physical education classes with basic exercises intended to help the students learn how to stretch their muscles and do warm-up activities safely before playing sports. "We do a lot of fitness activities in class," Welch said. "We stretch then we do jumps [jumping jacks] and either sprints of a timed run."

Holy Cross students love to play basketball and other sports, he said, but they didn't appreciate the health benefits of exercise until he started the fitness contest with the teachers after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Welch also has arranged for the students to participate in "Jump Rope for Heart," a fundraiser which teaches them about cardiovascular health and benefits the American Heart Association, during the week of Jan. 31 through Feb. 4. "I remind them that they are jumping rope in honor of a relative," he said. "That helps keep them motivated."

Students in the pre-kindergarten class and the first- through eighth-graders enjoy physical education classes. Welch said, and have learned how much fun it is to exercise regularly.

"Many of the kids just want to play video games after school," he said. "My goal is to get them moving with some type of exercise. I've had a few students tell me I've motivated them to work a little bit harder. A lot of the students are starting to enjoy [physical education] class now, when before they didn't care about it. I tell them to try to make yourself better every time you come to class, and you'll keep getting a little bit better."

Pre-kindergarten through second-grade students have gym class three times a week for 35 minutes each day, he said. Third- through eighth-graders have two 55-minute physical education classes every week. The students call their physical education teacher "Mr. Welch," but last year the kindergartners talked about how they love "Jim's class" and he realized that they thought his first name was Jim. "When they would see me, they would say 'Hey, Jim,' " he recalled. "They would ask their teacher, 'Are we going to Jim's class today?'

Last week, students learned how to bowl during physical education class. Fifth-grade student Caleb Kesler had two strikes and won the informal fifth-grade class contest. "I like to run and play ball," Caleb said after physical education class on Jan. 19. "I like basketball. Mr. Welch helps us work harder and get more exercise."
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What do we actually know about the Father God?

By Keith J. Egan

The Old Testament consists of 46 very diverse books that range from historical narratives to law codes to oracles to love poems. But they all have one thing in common: they are part of the story of Israel’s relationship to God. More precisely, they are a story of how God came to Israel in order to be known and to establish a lasting relationship.

We call this whole process “revelation,” and it really has several levels. Taken altogether, it at first may seem like a wildly diverse lot of traditions. But Israel understood that all these books differed from other writings in ancient times. These books were inspired by the Spirit of God to be the official and reliable record of their faith.

Israel believed, and the Church believes, that the Old Testament accurately reflects the core of their experience of God and reveals a true picture, limited as it may be, of the real nature of God’s relationship to humanity.

So what are some of the most important insights into the nature of God that are revealed to us in the Bible?

We can list six insights about the nature of God:

1. There is only one God.

2. God does not belong to our world.

3. God created and controls all of creation.

4. Our term “person” can be applied to God.

5. God is always active in human affairs.

6. God wishes to be in a permanent relationship of love with us.

The covenant with God is a bond of love and loyalty between two parties that is not to be broken by either side.

Unlike the universal belief of ancient peoples that there were many and diverse gods who each fulfilled different roles in keeping the universe running, Israel proclaimed that only Yahweh was God.

Well-known religious texts of the Sumerians, Babylonians and Egyptians, and even the Homeric epics, conceived a divine role in terms of a family or royal court, with a high council or father and mother god who generated and delegated roles in the government of the world to their offspring.

In contrast, Israel was relentlessly monotheistic. The most solemn statement is in Deuteronomy (Dt 6:4-5): “The Lord is our God—the Lord alone!”

2. God does not belong to our world.

With their polytheistic outlook, ancient peoples tended to think of the gods as much like us, with material bodies but with special powers. Statues could be clothed and fed, led in processions and made to sit in circles around a god who was king. Worship could include such rites as having sexual acts before the gods in order to receive a blessing in childbirth because of imitating divine fertility.

In contrast, Israel forbade all attempts to picture God or see him as material.

3. God created and controls all of creation.

Not only is God not part of our material world, but all of the world came from his will, by the power of his word alone, and is obedient to his plan that governs the entire universe. This is seen instantly in the first lines of the Bible in the Book of Genesis when God finds nothing but emptiness and chaos, and speaks all of creation into existence (Gn 1:1-3).

4. Our term “person” can be applied to God.

Ancient peoples believed deeply in the nature of gods as real persons with very distinctive personalities. But the Bible went beyond pagan ideas.

For the polytheist, the gods primarily formed a close-knit family. These gods looked to their own interests. Humans were understood as servants (perhaps even slaves) meant to serve the desires, wants and selfish interests of the gods and goddesses.

In contrast, Israel wrote the astounding sentence in Genesis (Gn 1:26) that God said, “Let us make humans in our own image and likeness.”

Not only are we to understand that because we are his image our term “person” can be applied to him, but that he reflects the best of what personhood is really all about: loyal, reliable, loving, forgiving, patient, etc.

5. God is always active in human affairs.

Everywhere in the Bible, the texts affirm the conviction that God goes wherever Israel goes, that God is always near at hand and always hears our prayer (see Ex 40:34-38, Dt 4:6-8, Ps 3:5; Ps 4:4; etc.). All the prophets, but especially Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, confirm this belief repeatedly.

6. God wishes to be in a permanent relationship of love with us.

The covenant with God is a bond of love and loyalty between two parties that is not to be broken by either side. This dominates Old Testament thinking, from God’s plans to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, to Abraham’s call in Genesis 12, to the covenant ceremony on Mount Sinai in Exodus 19-24, to the marriage analogies of Hosea 2 and Jeremiah 2, to almost every Psalm.

Unlike the pagan gods, whose behavior was fickle, Yahweh forever is loving, faithful and, even more remarkably, always forgives his wayward partners!

(Paulist Father Lawrence Boadt is the publisher of Paulist Press in Mahwah, N.J.)
Jesus in the Gospels: Satan tempts Jesus

After Jesus’ baptism, the Holy Spirit led him into the desert for a retreat, during which Satan tempted him. Jesus was probably no stranger to the notion that he had to fast for 40 days, which may or may not have seemed appropriate to his Father. Forty was a standard number in Scripture, with many references throughout the Bible to the 40 days

40 days, as modern people might wish to deny the
remind us of the
40 days that Moses fasted before receiving the Ten Commandments the second time, the 40 days that Elijah fasted on his journey to Mount Horeb, and the 40 years the Israels wandered in the desert.

Then the devil tempted Jesus. As much as modern people might wish to deny the existence of the devil, he does exist. We will encounter him frequently in the Gospels and Jesus even called him “the ruler of this world” (Jn 12:31). Whether called Satan or Beelzebub, he is one of the angels who refused to follow God and became his enemy. He is a pure spirit with an intellect that troubles over truths, as if the church was his battleground. Jesus was undoubtedly curious about Jesus. He had heard Jesus called the Son of God. He would have known that that meant God himself. He had never seen God; that was the reward for the faithful anger. He knew that the good had called Israel “my son” (Ex 4:22), and in the Book of Job three references to “the sons of God” mention that God had listened, but he looked on Jesus as a worthy adversary.

How did Satan appear—as a man or the way he tempts us? Probably the latter, as he didn’t physically take Jesus to the top of a mountain or the pinnacle of the Temple. He made three proposals, each resembling the way the Israelites were tempted in the desert and later in Canaan. Each time Jesus responded with a quotation from the Book of Deuteronomy (Dt 8:3, 6:13, 6:16).

First, Satan tempted Jesus to perform a miracle, probably to see if he could do something that was not humanly possible. There is no evidence that Jesus had performed a miracle up to this time. When Jesus was just a boy of 12 and in the Temple, his parents were amazed (cf Lk 2:48), but He quickly learned otherwise, though, after about the next test that Satan would dare call on the angels to protect him, Jesus replied, “You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.”

By this time, Jesus had enough of this treatment. Uttering the only words in this entire episode not previously in Scripture, he said, “Get away, Satan!” Satan did “—for a time.” Luke’s phrase is ominous. Satan would be left doing his worst.

†

Jesus was tempted by the devil.

Jesus in the Gospels: Satan tempts Jesus

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

It seems that a natural disaster like the recent tsunami in Asia either bolsters people’s religious faith or destroys it. We’ve all heard about those who despair of God’s love and power because they’ve lost loved ones in an unaccountable event. On the other hand, there are those who see the disaster as proof that a loving, merciful and just God would not have allowed it to happen. Some with scientific bent will say that there is indeed a God, but a God whose plan includes periodic natural perils in order to maintain a sustainable world population. Others will claim such events are merely another proof of the chaos and randomness of our universe. It’s easy to see why some faithful people have doubts, when their lives are shattered by things completely beyond their control. They can’t understand why a loving, merciful, and just God would allow such disasters to happen. It’s the dilemma of “Why do bad things happen to good people?”

Other responses to such events, like glib supernatural pronouncements, can be misunderstood, if not ignored. Those who read Revelations literally may see evidence of the End Times appearing in the tsunamis and earthquakes and other disasters. These elitists, who want to believe they surely aren’t the ones who’ll be “left behind,” strongly espouse positions that require sacrifices for salvation with each new disaster.

There’s also a guilt factor for some folks following natural mayhem, just as there is in war or in the aftermath of a crime. Survivors feel bad because they were spared when others, equally innocent or maybe even more innocent, were not. This leads to even more confusion about the existence of God and God’s responsibility in such events.

Laying blame for things like a tsunami is indeed a difficult thing to deal with. Humans love to lay blame and when they can’t blame it on God, guess who’s left. What’s worse, when they can’t blame it on human error causing some ecological failure or other, they’re left with scary uncertainty.

My favorite story from this terrible event is about the little British girl who was a volunteer on a Thai island with her family when the tsunami came. As they played on the beach, the child noticed that the water receded suddenly and bubbles started to appear on the sand. She realized that something she’d learned in a geography textbook about tidal waves was actually happening.

The little girl screamed for her “Mummy.” The gathering—in torrential rain—I nearly froze. As I turned around, I could see the crowd of people in panic. Then I noticed that all the people on the beach and everyone in the hotel behind them were evacuated in the 10 minutes she knew existed between the signs she’d seen and the onrush of water. This story leads me to several ideas.

First, like the little girl, it’s my job to be aware of my place in this system and alert to my responsibilities in it. And, third, I must pray for direction in the knowledge that God’s will would never encompass anything but what is good.

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

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Keeping faith when tested

“As I get older, I find it more and more difficult to keep my faith. All my children, brothers and sisters are being...”

The Human Side/
Fr Eugene Hemrick

The Criterion   Friday, January 28, 2005

Perspectives

Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

The Bible’s timeless lessons and inspiration

Early this month, my sister, Beverley, e-mailed me that she and her husband, John, started reading Today’s Light Bible: New International Edition every day. The daughter, JoAnne, it gave them a chance to put it on the Zion Lutheran Church in our (Belleville, Ill.)

We are doing this in memory of our paternal grandmother, Emma Vogler. During her funerals, various members of the family when the tsunami came. As they


Beth Kuczewski, who with Cathy Papeh are co-hosts of three Village Dove videos, has observed that Greenwood, recently suggested someone should publish separate, smaller guides that use parts of the Bible with the

Although my reading slowed down, considerably in private study, I still referred to the Bible often. During the last decade as a volunteer distribution group, her husband, Jim, have made a Bible study the Bible in various ways.

Therefore, I also studied the “Bible as Literature” as well as “Women in the Old Testament” through IUPUS (Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis).

Now, I not only read Today’s Light Bible, which includes helpful notes and comments, but I parallel that reading with the same text in my late mother’s Bible, the one I gave to her for Christmas in 1973: The New-American Bible sponsored by the U.S. Bishops’ Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.


While browsing, readers can find information about Bible Study Fellowship for men, women or children at www.bsfbiblereading.com or by calling (toll free) 877-232-3228.

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

“Throughout a lifetime, almost everything we deeply believe in will get tested by disappointments and disillusionments. These are the things that follow us to realize the critical role love plays in faith.”

It has always been counted on, but I still love him [her]. The weaknesses that come with the strengths for reasons based in love.

Throughout a lifetime, almost everything we deeply believe in will get tested by disappointments and disillusionments. These hurts and the anger that follows...”

keep faith when tested

The Human Side/ Fr Eugene Hemrick

Keeping faith when tested

As I get older, I find it more and more difficult to keep my faith. All my children, brothers and sisters are being "shattered." Those comments are of concern to us because the matter occurs more frequently by lifelong acquaintances of mine. They feel that people and institutions they are not living up to their possibilities.

Much has happened recently to shake our faith. Sex abuse scandals and documented cover-ups have led some to leave the Church. Again, the reason for going to war with Iraq was based on reports by intelligence departments that certain nation had weapons of mass destruction; to date, this has not been proven true. There are the questions being raised about the outstanding accomplishments of some athletes, whether these are true accomplishments at all. And, of course, many once-esteemed CEOs have turned out to be frauds who brought harm to great many dealings.

To make matters worse, we have seen a proliferation of books and documents questioning the veracity of Scripture. How do we keep our faith in the midst of all this?

A first rule to bear in mind is that faith doesn’t remain static. It experiences ups and downs, spiritual storms. For example, marriage, in which couples pledge fidelity under each other. As they...”

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Throughout a lifetime, almost everything we deeply believe in will get tested by disappointments and disillusionments. These hurts and the anger that follows them force us to realize the critical role love plays in faith.

Which brings me to another rule of faith that...”

One final rule of faith needs to be men-

Please let life begin anew, and start by working...”

(Shirley Vogler Meister is a columnist for The Catholic News Service.)
The Beatitudes appear twice in the New Testament. St. Luke’s Gospel also has a version, which is similar to Matthew’s but is not the well-known version. It is possible to draw from the Beatitudes an exhortation about how to live. From the literary standpoint, however, and from the perspective of Matthew, they are something of prophecy. They reveal what life could be if the kingdom of God truly prevailed. The riches of the spirit by far would outrank material riches. Even the persecuted will have reason to celebrate if they bear their persecution without ever diminishing their fidelity to God.

Reflection

The Church introduced us to Jesus in its liturgies of Christmas, the Epiphany and the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. It is interesting to think how this introduction might have been presented. Given the fact of human sin, and the destructiveness of human sin, the introduction might have been filled with warnings and accusations. Repent or you shall die! Instead, in these three feasts, the Church reassured us and comforted us. The liturgies were occasions of rejoicing and relief. Jesus, the son of Mary, the eternal Son of God, the Redeemer, is in our midst. He loves us with an everlasting love.

Now the Church begins to call us to respond to Jesus. As these weeks progress, the Church will call us to face the fact of our sin very directly, and of course the Church will call us away from sin. This will be the purpose of Lent, which will begin in less than two weeks. But for now, the Church still is introducing us to the Lord. The readings joyfully tell us of the happiness of living in the Lord. Nothing else can produce this happiness, as Paul told the Corinthians. Earthly achievement can never fully satisfy us. In any case, earthly life will end and the Lord will be our home.

In life, the Lord, faithful to God, is filled with the hope and peace of which Zephaniah wrote. It is the life characterized by the Beatitudes, in which all is well, and where no death occurs. ☩

Bishops’ conference decides posture for Communion

Several weeks ago, you wrote that the proper posture for receiving Communion in the United States is standing. You cited the General Instruction of the Roman Missal as your authority. However, you failed to quote the more recent (2004) instruction from the prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Redempshionis Sacramentum, which clearly states (90-92) that kneeling or standing is permitted. You also quoted the General Instruction of the Roman Missal as your authority.

A moral letter of Pope Benedict, “Communion in appropriate posture” (#160). This pastoral response is generally advisable whenever a person approaches Communion in an inappropriate manner. Except for certain extreme circumstances, the priest or other minister of the Eucharist cannot make a scene by rejecting or admonishing the individual at that moment, but is urged to discuss the matter privately later.

I am responding to this letter because many other readers wrote to me along the same vein, erroneously interpreting this 2004 document from the Vatican congregation which addresses matters of worship and the sacraments. If you read Redemptionis Sacramentum carefully, you will see that immediately following the words permitting Communion kneeling or standing it says, “as the conference of bishops will have determined, with its acts having received the approval (‘acquiesce’) of the Apostolic See.”

This is common. The Code of Canon Law and other regulations for the universal Church frequently leave to conferences of bishops or to diocesan bishops themselves the determination of specifically how those laws will be implemented in their nation or region. If a conference of bishops is presumed to have better knowledge of their own particular culture, and the circumstances and spiritual needs of their own dioceses.

In 2003, therefore, the bishops of the United States determined that the Common Act of Standing and Bowing before Communion should be followed in this country.

Cardinal Francis Arinze, prefect of the worship congregation, then wrote approving this action. (The text of his 2004 letter is included in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal for the United States.)

Thus, both conditions required by Redemptionis Sacramentum have been fulfilled and, as I explained, Catholics in this country are asked to stand and bow as they approach receiving the Eucharist.

No bishops, or anyone else to my knowledge, suggest that communicants who kneel should be denied Communion. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal says, “Communicants should not be denied holy Communion because they kneel. Rather, such instances should be addressed pastorally by providing the faithful with proper catechesis on the reasons for kneeling.”

This pastoral response is generally advisable whenever a person approaches Communion in an inappropriate manner. Except for certain extreme circumstances, the priest or other minister of the Eucharist cannot make a scene by rejecting or admonishing the individual at that moment, but is urged to discuss the matter privately later.

I am surprised to learn that some schools manufacture wooden caskets that may be purchased by Catholic people for their own burial. Do you have a list of those that you might contact about purchasing caskets? (Florida)

A don’t have such a list, but there is a resource where you can find the information. A California man has a Web site directory listing convents and monasteries that sell candy, rosaries, other religious items, stationery, breads, caskets, ink cartridges and all sorts of other commodities. The bishops are presumed to have better knowledge of their own particular culture, and the circumstances and spiritual needs of their own dioceses. No bishops, or anyone else to my knowledge, suggest that communicants who kneel should be denied Communion. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal says, “Communicants should not be denied holy Communion because they kneel. Rather, such instances should be addressed pastorally by providing the faithful with proper catechesis on the reasons for kneeling.”

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MEULABOH, Indonesia (CNS)—In the rubble of his seaside village along Aceh province’s West Coast, Sofyan Umar cleared off the identity card of a female neighbor. It was his first time back since a series of giant waves swept through Meulaboh, crushing everything in their path. The identity card was the only tangible reminder Umar could find that this once bustling village of fishermen and merchants once contained life.

The neighbor was killed by the Dec. 26 tsunamis, said Umar, 47. He said he would return the identity card to the woman’s surviving family members once he finds them. An escalating Indonesian death toll reached 160,000 by Jan. 22, officials said, but Church workers said they believe the number will exceed 200,000 as the sea slowly surrenders its dead. Additionally, many more bodies previously unaccounted for are expected to be recovered after the arrival of the heavy equipment needed to excavate buildings destroyed by the magnitude 9 earthquake. Less than half of Meulaboh’s population survived the disaster and the coastline was completely destroyed.

“We need to rebuild our homes,” he said. “We need to start working again. I have no fear of returning. History has shown us that the tsunami comes once in 100 years. Let us return to our homes.”

Several nongovernmental organizations—including Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. bishops’ international relief and development agency—have started cash-for-work programs and are trying to quickly implement microcredit programs, said Anna Schowengerdt, business development manager for CRS.

“These people need to start making a living again,” she said. “They need to start contributing to their families. They need to feel like they are contributing to society.” Schowengerdt said CRS will be providing seeds to farmers and providing loans so that fishermen can replace their boats and fishing nets.

In Meulaboh, Saribanon, 30, who like many Indonesians uses one name, lost 10 family members, including her husband, parents and children. She stood calmly at the water’s edge, where she comes nearly every day because she feels like she is with her family there.

“I do not want to eat,” she said. “I do not want to sleep. When I sleep, all I have is my nightmares.”

Archdiocesan Catholics support tsunami relief

By Mary Ann Wyand

In response to the Dec. 26 tsunami disaster in Asia, Catholics in central and southern Indiana have donated $335,210.31 to the archdiocesan Mission Office for Catholic Relief Services humanitarian aid to help survivors in Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, India and several other Asian countries.

By Jan. 25, archdiocesan parishes had forwarded $310,453.31 in donations to the Mission Office and individuals had contributed $24,757.

Earlier this month, Congress approved legislation stating that contributions to tsunami relief efforts can be deducted from federal income taxes for the 2004 tax year if the donations are postmarked by Jan. 31.

To support Catholic Relief Services assistance for tsunami survivors, send checks addressed to the Mission Office in care of the Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206. All donations will be forwarded to Catholic Relief Services.

In 2003, Bob Fisher of Brownsburg had his own show. The plot: transplant.

The setting: St. Vincent. And thanks to our experience in treating a lot of hearts—and treating them individually—Bob now stars in a better role: life. To learn more about our heart care, call 338-CARE or visit stvincent.org.
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D & A ROOFING Roofing services and repairs, all types of roofs, new and re-roofs. A small Catholic volunteer community located in the Eucharist and that Church leaders must do more to convince Spanish Catholics of the importance of regular Mass attendance.†

Christians for Middle East Muslim countries for terrorism grows and the threat of attacks directed at the United States increases,” said the let-

ter, which appeared as a full-page ad in the Jan. 21 New York Times. The ad was sponsored by Christians for Middle East Peace. Among the 57 signers was Auxiliary Bishop Gabino Zavala of Los Angeles, president of Pax Christi USA. “We believe that the promise of peace in Jerusalem in the near future is an urgent and important goal,” the letter said. It asked Bush to work with world leaders to “guarantee two viable states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side and sharing Jerusalem as their capital.” Both states would recognize the right of the other to exist and would cooperate for security and economic well-

selling, the letter said.

Catholic school leadership program flourishes at Virginia college

ARLINGTON, Va. (CNS)—Several years ago, Michael Gargiulo, an unhappy communications job as a sales manager for a fire alarm system, so he began working as a substitute public school teacher. He enjoyed teaching, and in 1998 he began teaching science and computer courses to fifth-graders at a Catholic school in Fredericksburg. A few years later, when he was considering taking on a leadership role in Catholic schools, he entered the Catholic School Leadership Program at Marymount University in Arlington to earn his master’s degree in education administration. “Usually the principal’s role is mainly managerial, but [Marymount’s program] dealt with the spiritual aspect of leadership,” said Gnat, who is currently principal of Holy Family School in Dale City, Va. One course learned from the program was that God’s presence in education is “not just in religion class. He is the education. Marymount really brought that home for me,” he told the Arlington Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Arlington Diocese. The university, which is run by the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, began the leadership program four years ago with about a dozen students. It is a two-year program of 36 credits.

Chicago students learn compassion, service at homeless shelter

CHICAGO (CNS)—Angela Rizzo, who grew up in Chicago, is used to seeing homeless people. But the 21-

year-old, a junior at St. Mary’s College in South Bend, Indiana, never saw the homeless in such numbers until she joined the Urban Plunge in Chicago organized by the University of Notre Dame, which is also in South Bend. She spent three days downtown and volunteering to serve the homeless in the Chicago suburb of Waukegan. “I never realized there were so many kids,” said Rizzo, taking a break from washing dishes. “I never realized there were so many kids,” said Rizzo, taking a break from washing dishes, and serving it to them. "I can help!"

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