The Cause of Canonization of Bishop Bruté is opened

Founder of diocese now may be called ‘Servant of God’

By Brandon A. Evans

Underneath the appearance of paperwork, signatures and seals, a moment of historical significance for the archdiocese occurred this week.

On the morning of Sept. 12, Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, along with other officials and the postulator, Andrea Ambrosi of Rome, opened the Cause of Bishop Simon Bruté, now inaugurates the Cause for the potential canonization of our first bishop.

The presence of the postulator is necessary because it is he who will officially advocate on behalf of the Cause. The next step in the process is for the Archbishop Buechlein said. “It’s a very necessary because it is he who will officially advocate on behalf of the Cause. The next step in the process is for the Archbishop Buechlein said. “It’s a very

The opening session consisted mostly of the taking of oaths on behalf of all those who will be involved in the Cause.

The postulator is to guide offers of help necessary because it is he who will officially advocate on behalf of the Cause. The next step in the process is for the Archbishop Buechlein said. “It’s a very

The presence of the postulator is necessary because it is he who will officially advocate on behalf of the Cause. The next step in the process is for the Archbishop Buechlein said. “It’s a very

The faith community is coming together without regard to creed at this time to focus on the needs of God’s people,” Siler said.

By Brandon A. Evans

A new website launched to guide offers of help

By Brandon A. Evans

More than 1,000 people forced out of their homes in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina have found their way to Indianapolis and Catholic Charities is working to help them piece their lives back together.

“One of the unique services that we may be able to offer is ‘evacuee resettlement’ based on the model of the Refugee Resettlement Program operated by Catholic Charities Indianapolis for more than 20 years,” said David Siler, archdiocesan executive director of Catholic Charities. “This may include identifying viable housing options, job placement, home furnishing, school enrollment, etc.”

Siler said Catholic Charities is coor-

Catholic Charities’ local summit will feature agency’s national president

By Brandon A. Evans

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein will join Father Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), at an upcoming Catholic Charities summit in Indianapolis.

The Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries of the archdiocese is hosting the summit, titled “We are Family,” on Oct. 5 at the Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis.

A prayer service will begin at 10 a.m. at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, followed by comments from Father Snyder across the street at the Catholic Center at 11 a.m.

A lunch will be provided at noon. All are welcome at those events, during which the new Catholic Charities video will be publicly shown for the first time.

An R.S.V.P is required by Sept. 30 and may be called in to Sue Sandefur at 317-236-1500 or e-mailed to her at usandefur@archindy.org.

Following lunch, there will be a special discussion session at 1 p.m. for Catholic Charities staff, volunteers and advisory council members.

Father Snyder will also give a presenta-

Catholic Charities leads archdiocese’s Hurricane Katrina relief efforts

By Brandon A. Evans

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Fr. Larry Snyder will share his vision for Catholic Charities at a session, at 7 p.m. on Oct. 4 at St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis. He will speak on the seven themes of Catholic social teaching: No R.S.V.P. is required.

David Siler, archdiocesan executive director of Catholic Charities, said that during the Oct. 5 summit, Archbishop Joseph A. Josephus will share his vision for Catholic Charities in the archdiocese. Father Snyder will offer a nationwide perspective on the work of Catholic Charities.

“He will share with us trends that he sees developing across the country with regard to services that are growing and shrinking as well as general trends of poverty in the U.S.,” Siler said. “Due to the current crisis created by Hurricane Katrina, I am sure that we will also hear about his firsthand account of the devastation and the national response being undertaken by CCUSA.”

He noted that gathering together a group of those involved with Catholic Charities is difficult because people are spread all over central and southern Indiana.

“We are calling this a summit because for the first time in our local history we are bringing together all of the staff, volunteers and advisory council members to one place,” Siler said. “We have chosen the theme of ‘We Are Family’ to help us focus on how we belong to the family of Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the family of the archdio- cese itself and the family of the larger Church.”

On the afternoon of the summit, the archdiocesan Catholic Charities staff and volunteers will break into small groups to discuss what the archbishop and Father Snyder said and to share their reflections with the larger group.

Also, Siler will introduce “A Plan for Spiritual Renewal,” which grew out of a leadership development program co-sponsored by CCUSA and the University of Notre Dame in late 2004 and early 2005.

“We intend to reconnect to the roots of our mission,” Siler said, “which is essentially rooted in the mission of Jesus Christ.”

All people, though, he added, especially those involved in parish work, are invited to attend the first portion of the summit because “we need the support of the entire Catholic Church.”

Siler said he wants the work that Catholic Charities does to have a strong connection to parish life throughout the archdiocese.

While in Indianapolis, Siler said Father Snyder will also meet with staff from the various Catholic Charities agencies to learn more about our local programs and services.

Pope tells peace meeting violence cannot solve world’s conflicts

LYON, France (CNS)—Violence can- not solve the world’s conflicts, and it harms people and limits the future of humanity, Pope Benedict XVI said in a message to participants of an interreligi- ous peace meeting.

In his written message, the pope urged all people, but especially the young, “to have the courage to more actively dedicate themselves toward peace and dialogue, which are the only things that can allow one to look with hope toward the future of the planet.”

The pope’s appeal was read on Sept. 11 by Cardinal Philippe Barbarin of Lyon during a liturgy marking the start of a three-day international gathering dedicated to peace.

Sponsored by the Rome-based lay Community of Sant’Egidio and hosted by the Archdiocese of Lyon, the 19th Inter- national Meeting for Peace brought reli- gious, cultural and political leaders from all corners of the world together to discuss the theme “The Courage to Forge a Spiritual Humanism of Peace.”

The annual meeting, held in a different city each year, was inspired by Pope John Paul II’s 1986 meeting in Assisi, Italy, with world religious leaders.

In his written message, Pope Benedict said his prayers were with the meeting’s participants who “are called to reflect and pray for peace and friendship among peoples.”

He said violence, in whatever form, “cannot be a way to resolve conflicts. It heavily hinders the future, and it is not respectful of individuals or peoples.”

Meanwhile, Cardinal Barbarin said in his Sept. 11 address that the call for peace among peoples must include reconciliation among Christians.

“While we were created over the course of history that there was no other alternative” left but to forgive, he said, “Forgiveness is the key” to furthering unity, he said.

Sant’Egidio’s founder, Andrea Riccardi, said compassion for those suffer- ing from pain and oppression often has united peoples from all walks of life.

“It happened during the hard life in the gulags and prison camps. It was there that ecumenism and dialogue were born,” he said.

Now at the start of the new millennium, societies are still torn apart by hatred and the violence of terrorism, he said.

Religions can breathe life into “a soci- ety that today can [be] floating in [its] soul” and nation- alism and hatred,” he said.

Religions “speak to the heart of human- ity, encouraging people’s lives with spiritu- ality, not ideologies, he said.

In a separate talk, Cardinal Walter Kasper, head of the Pontifical Commission for Christian Unity, said “terrorists are...
Angels from the Heart help low-income residents

By Mary Ann Wyand

More than 300 volunteers of all ages joined hands on Sept. 10 to help clean up and fix up 20 properties on the near-south side of Indianapolis during Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish’s sixth annual Angels from the Heart Day.

“It’s really heartwarming to see so many people coming together to recog- nize that there is a need and to find ways of responding to that need as Angels from the Heart,” said Franciscan Father Frank Kordek, pastor of the historic Indianapolis South Deenary parish, during a break from helping volunteers last Saturday afternoon.

In so many ways, we realize that we are the hands of God, that we reach out to the poor, to the elderly and to the needy,” he said, “responding to their need, and we do it prayerfully and joyfully.”

Father Frank, who has served as Sacred Heart’s pastor since July 8, 2004, said the community service project bene- fits low-income homeowners who reside in the Concurrent Neighborhood within the parish boundaries.

“We’re painting home interiors, clean- ing gutters, putting in hand railings for the elderly access to homes, painting porches, cleaning up the neighborhood, planting flowers and hauling garbage for people who are not able to care of it themselves,” he explained. “It’s a hands-on way to help people who are very much in need. There’s been an excellent response, and it’s a credit to those parish- ioners who spent a year working on putting this day together.”

In collaboration with Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, he said, members of the 400-household parish and other volunteers from area schools, churches, hospitals and corporations took the teachings of Jesus to the streets by helping the needy.

Angels from the Heart Day started with prayer in the omate Gothic church that was restored by the archdiocese and parish after an electrical fire gutted the interior on April 27, 2001.

“The prayer service was a time to rec- ognize that we make the Lord alive and present and visible to others [as volun- teers] know it’s going to be a great help to someone, and that in the midst of it all God is here with us.”

Sacred Heart parishioners Linda Rowland and Joseph Williams of Indianapolis were among committee members who started planning the project last January.

“Most of the people that we help are elderly, disabled or low-income and they can’t afford to do the work themselves,” Rowland said. “They work in partnership with us to prep the homes that are in need of painting and repairs, and they provide paint and brushes.

This year, volunteers ranged in age from grade-school children to senior citi- zens, she said, who do whatever they can to help with the neighborhood improve- ment project.

“We have Benedictine sisters from Our Lady of Grace Monastery who pray for us every year,” Rowland said. “We call them the God Squad. They pray for good weather, and for six years running we have had sunshine.”

Volunteers also prayed the rosary in the church, she said. “We offered our prayers for all those in the military, all those who had loved ones who lost their lives on Sept. 11 ... and for the victims and survivors of Hurricane Katrina.”

The project symbolizes “people help- ing people by doing God’s work,” Williams said. “There’s also prayer going on as we do the work, and the work itself is a prayer. There are lots of smiles all day because when you’re giving to others you always have a smile.”

It was a hot day to work outdoors, but also was a fun time for Roncalli High School students who painted a Victorian cottage near the church and painted each other in the process.

“I like helping people,” said Roncalli sophomore Julie Carroll, who is a mem- ber of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood. “This is a good service project. You get to spend a day helping people with your best friends.”

Roncalli junior Matt Ragnozino of Nature of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis said he feels good about helping paint Rose Bonwell’s house.

“It’s a great feeling to help people and do good in the community,” Matt said, “and make it look better so people get a sense of unity out of it.”

As Bonwell watched the students fin- ish painting the trim on her front porch, she said she has been a member of Sacred Heart Parish for nearly 40 years and has lived in her home for 10 years.

“With old houses, there’s always some- thing to do,” she said. “If the kids weren’t painting my house, it probably wouldn’t get done, plain and simple. I can’t afford to hire a professional painter.”

Roncalli senior Stacy Cary, a member of Our Lady Parish in Indianapolis, said it’s “one thing to donate money to help others because you know it’s going to help a good cause, if you don’t know who it helps. We’re painting this house for Rose Bonwell.”

St. Barnabas School sixth- grader Eric Hanley of Indianapolis volunteered at Sacred Heart Church by polishing the pews, confessional, columns and ornate curl- rail restored four years ago.

“It takes a long time to dust the church,” Eric said, “but it feels pretty good to help out.”

Participating partners included the Arthur and Anna Field family, Catholic Youth Organization, Christian Theological Seminary, Sacred Heart Parish, Friends of Sacred Heart Parish, Good Shepherd Parish, Heidebrech Nursery, Holy Angels Parish, Holy Cross Parish, medical stu- dents from Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Immanuel United Church of Christ, Indianapolis Ambassadors, Indianapolis Firefighters Emerald Society and Keep Indianapolis Beautiful.

Participants were the Indianapolis Foundation, Knights of Columbus Councils #8660 and 4374, Monogram Magnets and the Franciscan Sisters of Grace Monastery. Roncalli High School, Sagamore Health Network, SRC Telephone Pioneers, Spectral Graphics, SS. Francis and Clare Parish, St. Francis Hospital, St. Jude Parish and St. Roch Parish.

Celebrate Life dinner to honor Little Sisters of the Poor, Jack and Melanie Esselman

By Mary Ann Wyand

Right to Life of Indianapolis will honor the Little Sisters of the Poor and Immac- ulate Heart of Mary parishioners Jack and Melanie Esselman of Indianapolis for dis- tinguished service to the cause of life dur- ing the 23rd annual Celebrate Life dinner on Sept. 27 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

The event begins with a social hour at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m. then the awards presentations and keynote address.

The Little Sisters will receive the Charles E. Stimming Award and the Esselmans will receive the Respect Life Award from the pro-life organization.

Suzanne Schindler Vitadamo—the sister of the late Terri Schindler Schiavo, who died by court-ordered dehydration and starvation on March 31—is the keynote speaker and will discuss her fam- ily’s personal experience with euthanasia.

Through the Terri Schindler Schiavo Foundation established by the Schindler family in 2000, Vitadamo and her family continue to wage a battle to save other people with disabilities so that Schiavo’s court-ordered death will not happen to other persons with disabilities.

Life of Love of Indianapolis is proud to have this courageous woman share her time with us,” said St. Luke parishioner Joan Bynum of Indianapolis, president of Right to Life of Indi- anapolis, “and we are truly grateful for her untiring efforts on behalf of the preser- vation of life.”

Catholic recording artist Sarah Bauer, who is also the youth ministry coordinator for Holy Spirit Parish in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, will entertain the crowd with songs from her two CDs—“Delighting in Dreams, released in 2004, and Lead Me Home, released this year— during the fundraising dinner.

A Cathedral High School graduate, Bauer also was a featured performer dur- ing World Youth Day in August in Cologne, Germany.

Former said the Little Sisters of the Poor will receive the Stimming Award for lovingly caring for the elderly poor in the Indianapolis area for the past 133 years.

She said Immaculate Heart parish- ioners Melanie and Jack Esselman have been dedicated volunteers for Right to Life of Indianapolis for many years, including serving as chairpersons for the organization’s Indiana State Fair exhibit every year.

Sister Geraldine Hravice, superior of the Little Sisters at the St. Augustine Home for the Aged, said the sisters have cared for more than 5,000 elderly persons with minimal financial resources in central Indiana, regardless of their religion or ethnic origin.

She said 10 Little Sisters work with more than 100 volunteers and 500 dedi- cated volunteers of providing a lovely home for 90 elderly residents in indepen- dent living apartments, assisted living units or in nursing care.

Sister Geraldine said the Little Sisters have no fixed source of income and must depend daily on the generosity of others for the funds necessary to manage the home.

She said each sister, volunteer, employee and donor contributes time, talent and treasure out of genuine respect and concern for the elderly.

“In our vocation of Little Sisters of the Poor,” Sister Geraldine said, “when we hold in our hands that of an elderly per- son who is dying, we try by our presence to show him or her the tenderness of the Father and, in prayer, to transmit to him or her this unshakable confidence in [God].”

(Live information about ticket availability for the Celebrate Life dinner, call Right to Life of Indianapolis at 317-582-1526 or contact hungert@rtlindy.org)
Eucharist and mortal sin

Ever since last year’s election campaigns, there have been debates over whether or not it is wise to forbid certain people from receiving Holy Communion. At that time, it was about those who supported abortion rights. Later, the issue concerned members of the Rainbow Sash, people who wear such a sash to indicate their disagreement with the Church’s teaching about the immorality of homosexual acts. The issue is not going to go away. It will be discussed at the Synod of Bishops on Oct. 2-23 when the theme will be the Eucharist. The working document for the synod notes the need for better catechesis on who may—and who may not—receive Communion. Sadly, with nearly everyone now receiving Communion routinely at Mass, many Catholics have gotten the idea that anyone may receive. This is hardly new teaching. From the time of St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, the Church has taught that people may not receive Communion “unworthily,” which it has defined as being in the state of mortal sin. It’s a scripture to do so. The late Pope John Paul II reminded Catholics of that teaching last March 12 when he released a message that said, “Only one who has a sincere awareness of not having committed a mortal sin can receive the Body of Christ.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly teaches, “Anyone who desires to receive Christ in Eucharist Communion must be in the state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive Communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of penance” (#1415). This is hardly new teaching. Perhaps Catholics are no longer aware of what mortal sin is. The catechism again: “For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent” (#1857). Again, the same thing the Church has always taught.

Presumably, there’s no debate about this. The debate is over whether or not active and public protest against the Church’s teachings is grave matter and, if so, whether or not the person doing it is aware that it is grave matter and therefore in the state of mortal sin. (There seems to be no question that they are doing it deliberately.)

But does anyone have a right to, in effect, accuse someone else of being in the state of mortal sin by denying that person the Eucharist? Apparently, the U.S. bishops are divided on that question. At least they were divided last year over the issue of denying Communion to those who actively support abortion rights.

Unfortunately, many Catholics seem to have rejected the whole concept of what comprises grave matter and therefore is mortal sin. The Church still teaches that all sexual activity (not just homosexual acts) outside of marriage is grave matter and therefore is mortal sin. However, we question whether any one has a right to refuse them Communion. Whether or not someone is in the state of grace should be decided only by that individual. On the other hand, it seems logical to deny someone Communion when he or she is purposely using the Eucharist as a demonstration against a Catholic doctrine.

What we require is a better effort to teach Catholics what the Church teaches about the Eucharist and why it teaches it. We’re confident that that will be the view of the coming synod, too.

— John F. Fink
La 'dictadura del relativismo' separa a Dios de la vida humana

Dirigida por el Arzobispo Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.

La 'dictadura del relativismo' separa a Dios de la vida humana

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en septiembre

Maestros/Directores de Educación Religiosa: que ellos puedan contar con la fuerza y la dirección del Espíritu Santo cuando pasen la fe Católica a los jóvenes y les den ánimo a ellos a considerar las vocaciones al sacerdocio y la vida religiosa!
New Albany deanery to hold Sept. 24 conference on Eucharist

The New Albany Catechetical and Youth Ministry Office of the Archdiocese will host a regional conference titled “Called, Gifted and Nourished by the Eucharist” on Sept. 24 at St. Mark Parish, 5377 Acorn Valley, Tell City.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. and the day will conclude with a closing prayer at 4:30 p.m.

The conference will feature music, prayer, two keynote addresses, a choice of break-out sessions, a performance from the New Albany Deanery Choir and lunch (at an additional cost). The cost is $15 per adult; additional resources are available. For more information, see 812-945-0354 or 888-245-1600.

Tony and Mary [Kadel] Henn, members of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 3 with a Mass at their parish followed by a private gathering. The couple was married on Aug. 27, 1955, at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Indianapolis. They have four children: Julianne VanWyk, Andy, Dan and David Henn. The couple also has seven grandchildren.

John and Mary [Moye] Rutledge, members of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 18 with a Mass at their parish followed by a private gathering. The couple was married on Sept. 17, 1955, at the former Assumption Church in Indianapolis. They have two children: Kathleen Creecy and Stephen Rutledge. They also have two grandchildren.

By Mary Ann Wyand

“Would what God told your children next?”

That’s a question many parents of children and teenagers probably ask themselves.

Parents can learn helpful information during an educational, faith-based program on that topic from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. Sept. 9 at SS. Francis and Clare Parish, 5901 Olive Branch Road, Greenwood. Father Jonathan Meyer, associate pastor of St. Mary-of-the-Wood Parish, will speak.

The parents conference is designed for eight different audiences—from teenagers or youth ministers to liturgical ministers and catechists teaching various grade levels.

The topics dealt with will vary as widely as American society and its cultural landscape. Amy Welborn will speak about how to answer tough questions about the faith; Monica Graf will speak about hospitality; Lillian Lux will speak about how children understand the Eucharist, and Michael Dubriel will speak about how to get most out of the Eucharist.

The conference will also feature a ven- doring area from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. where you will be able to purchase books and religious articles in the basement of the church.

VIPS

Tony and Mary [Kadel] Henn, members of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 3 with a Mass at their parish followed by a private gathering. The couple was married on Aug. 27, 1955, at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Indianapolis. They have four children: Julianne VanWyk, Andy, Dan and David Henn. The couple also has seven grandchildren.
For 25 years, Mary Margaret Lynch has been a good steward in the Church, serving many years as a volunteer catechetical leader and for the past five years as the coordinator of religious education at St. Michael Parish in Brookville.

In a recent gift she made to the Catholic Community Foundation (CCF), Lynch hopes to support several ministries in the archdiocese for years to come.

She donated 45 acres of farmland in Ripley County that she and her husband, John, who died in 2000, purchased in 1970 for what Lynch described as a “dirt cheap” price. Years later, its value increased greatly when State Road 129 was built through the middle of it.

The proceeds from the sale of the land given to the CCF totaled more than $170,000.

Lynch also donated another tract of land to the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg.

The CCF, working to fulfill Lynch’s wishes for the use of the gift, has used part of the proceeds to establish several endowments that will build up retreat, educational, catechetical and other lay ministries throughout the archdiocese.

While she is glad that her donation will continue to support the Church in central and southern Indiana for years to come, Lynch wanted to give it now so that she could see its effects.

Lynch hopes to support several ministries through the Catholic Community Foundation (CCF), working to fulfill Lynch’s donation will be invested and during her lifetime she will receive regular payments that are equal to a small percentage of the overall gift.

Lynch, who was unaware of such an annuity before Wathen explained it to her, agreed to it, explaining later that it increased her confidence about her decision to donate the land.

Wathen said that a charitable gift annuity can be a way for many Catholics to support the Church on a long-term basis and in a financially secure way.

“Many of our Catholic donors [are] not in a position to give up their assets because they are relying on it for support,” he said. “But the way in which Lynch made her gift to the CCF will not only provide security for her, but also to the ministries which will benefit from it.

Rick Wagner, director of Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, said that Lynch’s gift to the retreat center comes at a good time, right when it is starting a capital campaign which will fund the installation of an elevator, the replacement of heating and cooling systems, and the renovation of some guest rooms.

“The fact that we’re getting this amount of money right now will allow us to perhaps get started on some of that work earlier than we might have been able to before,” Wagner said.

Ultimately, Lynch recognized a deep connection between her many years of catechetical ministry and the gift that she recently made. In both, she sees herself participating in the mission of the Church.

By Sean Gallagher
written by the historic bishop, and vouch for their authenticity. The theological commission will then work to examine the theological nature of what is found in these writings.

Archbishop Buechlein chose for the theological commission Father Daniel Mahan, pastor of St. Louis Parish in Batesville; William Bruns, executive director of the Secretariat for Communications for the archdiocese; and Father Stephen Giannini, pastor of St. Luke Parish in Indianapolis.

All hold degrees in theology.

Those chosen for the historical commission are Father Clyde Crews, a priest of the Archdiocese of Louisville who teaches history at Bellarmine University and who wrote An American holy land: A history of the Archdiocese of Louisville; Father Albert Ledoux, a priest of the Diocese of Altoona, Pa.; Father John Schupp, pastor of the Old Cathedral in Vincennes, Ind.; in the Diocese of Evansville; Janet Newland, archdiocesan archivist; and Joseph White, of Indianapolis, a noted historian.

Father Ledoux recently defended his doctoral dissertation in Church history at the Catholic University of America. His research focused on Bishop Bruté, first bishop of Vincennes, speaks with Msgr. Frederick Easton and Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein during the opening session of the Cause on Sept. 12 at the Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis.

The Catholic University of America historian was “The Life and Thought of Simon Bruté—Seminary Professor and Frontier Bishop.”

(For more information about this Cause, or the Cause of Blessed Mother Theodore Guérin, log on to www.CriterionOnline.com.)

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Catechesis helps us find life in Christ

By Harry Dudley
Archdiocesan Director for Faith Formation

How can three simple words change your entire life? Ask the young man who hears for the first time the words, "I love you," from the woman he loves. Those three words, given and received, can bring two people together for a lifetime commitment, celebrated with the exchange of marriage vows.

On this Catechetical Sunday, Catholics across the country are asked to consider three words that reflect an even deeper, more encompassing love: Life is Christ. These words point to the reality of the good news of Christ's abundance, extended to us by God the Father. These, too, are life-changing words.

When St. Paul reminds us that "life is Christ" (Phil 1:21), he is helping us to recognize that the Lord Jesus is both the foundation and the guide for our lives. St. Paul's words remind us not only how we are to live, but also what we are to teach others.

St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians is rich with encouragement and advice. We are encouraged to "conduct ourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Phil 1:27) to "do nothing out of selfishness or of vainglory, (Phil 2:3) to "rejoice in the Lord always," (Phil 4:4) and to "keep on doing what we have learned and received" (Phil 4:9). When we live this way, we are living in Christ and teaching others to do the same.

Talking about being a disciple of Christ is one thing; actually living as a disciple is another. Following the example of St. Paul—one of the Church's most dedicated catechists—we can approach the challenge of living as a disciple by seeking ways to be mindful of Christ's life within us.

The new National Directory for Catechesis (NDC) in the United States, released this past May, tells us why catechesis is so important in helping us to conduct ourselves in a way worthy of the Gospel of Christ. In paragraph #20 on the tasks of catechesis, the NDC says that catechesis:

- Promotes knowledge of the faith—Therefore, focus your need on growing in knowledge of the faith. The more we learn about our faith and the better we understand it, the better we will be able to share it with others. Participate in parish adult faith formation programs.
- Promotes knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments—Therefore, participate actively in the liturgy and sacraments. All of us should reflect on the meaning of the sacraments for our lives. What do they strengthen us for and what do they call us to be and to do? These questions are not only for those who receive sacraments for the first time, but for all of us.
- Promotes moral formation in Jesus Christ—Therefore, strive to live what you believe. Think how different our family life, work life and society would be if we gave witness to both our private lives and to the public arena—to Christ's teaching in everyday life.
- Teaches the Christian how to pray with Christ—Therefore, make a commitment to grow in faith. How much time do we spend in personal prayer each day? Try to increase it by the end of the year. Spend more time with Christ in the Eucharist. Make an effort to receive the Eucharist several times during the week. Take time to pray in the presence of the Eucharist at the end of Mass, even only for a few minutes.
- Prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church—Therefore, they should be better stewards of our time, talent and treasure. Ask your parish leadership how you can help in the mission of the Church—at the parish, diocesan and universal Church levels.
- Prepares a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society. Therefore:
- Celebrate—where possible, the good of society—Jesus tells us that when we take care of the needs of others, we do it for him, so be attentive to other people. Every day we are presented with opportunities to reach out to others and offer acts of mercy.

By Sean Gallagher

Benedictine Sister Mary Emma Jochum, director of religious education at St. Paul Parish in Tell City speaks with children of the parish participating in its vacation Bible school on June 23 while they take a snack break. Sister Mary Emma has limited use of her right arm and leg due to an automobile accident that she was involved in 35 years ago. She was a principal at the time of the accident, but decided to enter into catechetical ministry as a result of her injuries.

Benedictine Sister finds vocation in religious education after tragic accident

By Sean Gallagher

TELL CITY—Benedictine Sister Mary Emma Jochum, the director of religious education (DRE) at St. Paul Parish in Tell City, has been a nationally recognized leader in catechesis for more than 30 years.

During that time, she has planted seeds of faith in countless children, welcomed adults into the Church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and served as a mentor to several of her colleagues in parish catechetical ministry.

But this legacy of service might not have happened if a turning point in her life had not occurred on Oct. 8, 1970.

On the evening of that day, Sister Mary Emma, who at the time was the young principal of Holy Cross School in Haubstadt, Ind., in the Diocese of Evansville, was delivering some standardized tests to a principal of a nearby school. It was raining at the time when she approached a one-lane bridge.

Sister Mary Emma misjudged the speed of an approaching car, braked quickly and lost control of her small car. It tumbled down a 27-foot embankment into a ditch and landed on its roof.

Three vertebrae in her neck were buckled and in the process several nerves in her spinal chord were severed.

At a hospital in Evansville, doctors told Sister Mary Emma’s parents and her priestess that she would either not survive surgery or would be bound to a wheelchair for the remainder of her life.

Sister Mary Emma remained in the hospital for more than four months. During much of that time, she was immobilized on a bed so narrow that panels on the side were attached for her to rest her arms. Her head was held in place by tongs that were attached to screws that were drilled into her skull and re-tightened daily.

The bed was constructed so that it could be rotated upside down. This happened every two hours for the first two months of Sister Mary Emma’s hospital stay.

Being totally secured on this bed for so long, Sister Mary Emma sought meaning in the one part of her that could continue to move—her heart, formed by her faith, filled family and years of religious life.

“Many a time when I was lying there, I thought that this is the cross of Christ,” she said. “And then the tongs that tugged, I just related that to the crown of thorns. It didn’t take me long to experience that myself. With every resurrection, there is a cross and a death.”

Sister Mary Emma experienced something of a death on that October evening in 1970. But the beginnings of a new life emerged a month later when she felt a movement in her left foot.

When I felt that movement, I asked the nurse, when she came in, whether or not that really was my imagina-

tion or I was really moving it,” she said. “And she was ecstatic. She was so surprised because I was supposed to be paralyzed from the neck down.”

By Christmas, Sister Mary Emma was able to sit up. She then entered into months of strenuous physical therapy. She was released from the hospital in mid-February, but lived in a nearby convent to facilitate her out-patient therapy.

Moving with the aid of a walker, Sister Mary Emma returned to Holy Cross School and finished the academic year she had begun before her accident.

A year later, she concluded that the physical demands of being a principal were too much for her. She had regained the use of her left arm and leg, but her right leg was effectively immobile and the use of her right hand was limited.

It was at that point, in the spring of 1973, that Sister Mary Emma discerned a call to catechetical ministry. She soon became the director of religious education of St. Clement Parish in Booneville, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, and served in that position for nine years.

In the ensuing years, she earned a master’s degree in religious studies and was a diocesan catechetical leader in the Evansville Diocese.

By the time she began her ministry in the archdiocese in 1993, Sister Mary Emma had 20 years of catechetical ministry under her belt. According to Harry Dudley, associate executive director for faith formation in the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education, she has benefited DREs across the archdiocese.

“She’s seen as sort of a senior member of the cadre of DREs,” he said. “They look to her for ideas and input and suggestions. When she’s giving her input, I’m amazed at how well she understands the differing deaneries.”

The recognition that Sister Mary Emma has earned from her archdiocesan colleagues has been echoed on the national level. In 1998, she was the recipient of the National Conference of Catechetical Leadership’s Distinguished Service Award.

But soon after this, Sister Mary Emma had to call upon the wisdom gained through her years of experience and the determination she showed during the recovery from her accident when her catechetical ministry at St. Paul Parish was faced with a major challenge.

In 2000, St. Paul School was being closed. For decades, it had been operated as a public school with…

See JOCHUM, page 10
persuaded many of them to minister parishioners and her concern for them has from the smallest, tiniest babies to the.

"She had in it her mind that we were going to continue that religious education program and that our kids were not going to lose anything by not having the benefit of that release time," Chinn said. The parish’s RCTA has also grown under Sister Mary Emma’s leadership. Starting out with only three participants, she had as many as 22 in later years. Through this ministry to adults coming into the Church, she has touched many lives and inspired new catechists. One of them is St. Paul parishioner Patti Marcrum. She became Catholic at the 2003 Easter Vigil and has served as the parish’s vacation Bible school coordinator ever since. She and her husband, who had been Lutheran, were drawn to the Church by Sister Mary Emma’s welcoming approach to them when their children were students at St. Paul School, and they enrolled them in the religious education release time.

Since then, Marcrum has constantly been inspired by Sister Mary Emma. “I don’t know how she does what she does,” Marcrum said. “She works like people and never stops smiling and always has this amazing energy. She knows personal things about everyone in that parish. She knows everyone’s names from the smallest, tiniest babies to the oldest person there.”

Sister Mary Emma’s knowledge of the parishioners and her concerns for them has persuaded many of them to minister alongside her.

“I tell her all the time that she should be in sales,” Chinn said, “because she has the knack to find the skills of the parishioners that we have, and she takes the people that we have, and she molds them into what we need.—Sister Mary Emma has been so effective in passing on the faith and in inspiring others to join her in this ministry that her disability often becomes an afterthought.

“I think, quite honestly, when most people look and see what she’s contributed, and see her work and then meet her, they’re absolutely amazed because she can because she is convinced that it is a calling.”

Still, Sister Mary Emma knows she will not be able to keep up the rigorous physical exercise she does daily to maintain her mobility. But she is determined to stay in catechetical ministry as long as she can because she is convinced that it is a calling.

“I think that there’s something deep within my inmost being that calls me, that drives me to minister to all of God’s people,” she said. “And I see my DRE ministry as not a job, not a career, but it has become for me a commitment that holds me instead of me holding onto it.”

This past year, our parishes reported that:

- 352 catechists helped provide many different opportunities for study, reflection and faith enrichment to 2,690 adult Catholics in our archdiocese.
- 2,616 catechists served in our archdioceses 150 Catholic parishes and missions. Those catechists helped the 17,418 youth enrolled in parish religious education and youth ministry programs to grow in their understanding of the faith and traditions of the Church.
By Sean Gallagher

For the next two years, four young theology graduate students from the University of Notre Dame will be serving as apprentices to four of the most experienced parish administrators of religious education in the archdiocese.

During this period, they will continue to take classes at Notre Dame during the summer as well as online courses during the fall and spring semesters. At the same time, they will learn how to apply their theoretical knowledge in real-life parish settings.

All of this will help the apprentices gain the skills and knowledge to become effective parish catechetical leaders and to discern whether or not God is calling them to this ministry.

These four young men and women are participants in Echo, a two-year service program in faith formation leadership administered by Notre Dame’s Center for Catechetical Initiative. Because Echo is only in its second year, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis is one of the first dioceses in the nation accepting Echo apprentices to participate in it.

The name “Echo” was chosen because it is the literal English translation of the ancient Greek word “catechesis,” which early Christians used to describe the task of teaching the faith.

The four parishes in which the apprentices are serving are Christ the King, Our Lady of the Rosary, and St. Mark, in Indianapolis; and St. Malachi, in Brownsburg.

The primary reason that four parishes in the Indianapolis area were chosen is because the program requires the apprentices to live together in one place within 25 miles of the parishes where they serve.

The apprentices will reside over the next two years in the rectory of Holy Trinity Parish in Indianapolis.

Kyle Bertoli will be serving at Christ the King Parish, the office of director of religious education, Cindy Flaten. A Knoxville, Tenn., native, Bertoli recently earned a bachelor’s degree at Notre Dame, having majored in philosophy and minor in theology. While he has participated and helped lead catechetical programs at Notre Dame, Bertoli is looking forward to learning how religious education is carried out in a parish setting.

“I kind of want to see how that works, what works, how to take on the knowledge that I’ve learned at Notre Dame and studies, and cater it to different groups of people with different maturities or different backgrounds,” he said. “It really helps me bridge what I’ve done for the last four years with what goes on in the Church.”

Having been the only paid religious education staff member at Christ the King for many years, Flaten said she is looking forward to the help that Bertoli will offer her and the parish as a whole.

“After meeting Kyle and getting to know him, I have no reservations about giving him a project,” she said. “I know it’s going to be taken care of. I feel fully confident in that.”

Although his education at Notre Dame has given him many gifts that he will bring to Christ the King, Bertoli looks to his prayer life as being a key to his ministry as an apprentice.

“Prayer is very important for me,” he said. “Our tradition is so rich in so many different types of prayer. And that is something that has become so important to me that I’m hoping to help people to develop that part of their faith.”

The two-year program is funded through a partnership among Notre Dame, the archdiocese as a whole and the parishes where the apprentices will serve.

Harry Dudley, associate executive director for faith formation of the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education, helped to bring Echo to the archdiocese. He appreciates how the participants’ schooling introduces them to the Church’s teaching documents on catechesis and is looking forward to the positive impact that their experience here will have on them.

“Our hope is that we will have young adults as passionate and as trained as the people we now have, who are older, and who will be committed to grow into this ministry,” Dudley said. “Already, I have seen, as they have been exposed to the documents and understand what the Church expects, they really are excited about being part of this, especially since they are coming here during the year the new National Directory for Catechesis comes out.”

Both Dudley and the catechetical leaders who will serve as the apprentices’ mentors are especially excited about Echo because of what they see as a growing need for young, educated catechetical leaders.

“When we go to meetings, it’s a lot of older people that are there,” said Diane Burns, director of faith formation at St. Malachi Parish in Brownsburg. “There aren’t a whole lot of … educated young people who have a background in catechesis.”

Rose Marie Beauclair, a native of Fargo, N.D., and a recent graduate of Notre Dame in its Program of Liberal Studies, will be serving under Burns. Like Bertoli, she has little experience in parish-based religious education.

Nevertheless, she looks to the strong foundation in faith that her family laid for her and her studies at Notre Dame as a good basis for her ministry at St. Malachi.

“Being the oldest of the six kids in my family, I’ve had experience in helping younger children learn and, as my family has grown up, in helping older children learn as well,” Beauclair said. “I also think that with my experience in the Program for Liberal Studies, I have learned how to listen as well as to talk in class and how to take turns in a dialogue or a discussion. And I think that’s helpful especially with adult ministries, because those ones aren’t especially talking at or explaining to, it’s discussing with.”

Reflecting on the start of her two-year ministry at St. Malachi, Beauclair is confident that her time as an apprentice in the parish will benefit her even if she does not become a professional parish administrator of religious education.

“I know that having the education and the training and the experience as a catechetical apprentice here at St. Malachi will be helpful for me even if what I do as an adult is on a volunteer basis,” she said. “I’ll be better able to educate the children or the adults that I would deal with in classes, and my own children and my own friends and myself, too.”

Symposium to introduce new National Directory for Catechesis

By Sean Gallagher

Later this month, a symposium will be held in Indianapolis for all pastors, parish life coordinators, parish administrators of religious education, school principals and other pastoral leaders to learn about the National Directory for Catechesis (NDC).

The NDC is a document produced over the past several years by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Catechesis, headed by Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein. It was approved by the Bishops in January.

It explains the main principles which underlie Catholic religious education, explores how these principles are to be applied in the particular American cultural context and discusses various catechetical methodologies that flow from the principles.

At the Sept. 26 symposium at the Primo South banquet facility in Indianapolis, Msgr. Daniel Kuty, deputy secretary for catechesis for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, will be the keynote speaker.

In a recent telephone interview, Msgr. Kuty, a priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, noted that the document is primarily directed to priests and lay catechetical leaders. Still, he said that it has a relevant message for all Catholics: that everyone in the Church is to be involved in teaching the faith.

“This has a catechetical responsibility,” he said. “Everybody does. It’s not just the responsibility of the priest or the administrator of the school or the religious education program or the catechists. It’s the whole parish, the whole people of God that has a catechetical responsibility.”

See NDC, page 2

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Religious education, school and youth ministry work together

By Brandon A. Evans

The goals of religious education, youth ministry and a Catholic school are similar enough that it makes sense to say they work best when they work together.

St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus operates on the principle that more collaboration will improve ministry. For that reason, the entire parish staff meets once a week for a good portion of the day.

“It’s something that, some days, can be difficult to make time for,” said Kathy Schubel, principal of St. Bartholomew School. But, she added, “it’s worth the effort. “We kind of feed off of one another,” Schubel said. “It just sets a tone for the effort.

For twenty years, Sagamore has been a health network owned by Midwestern Catholic health organizations providing hundreds of thousands of members with more choices in health care. Plus we've introduced innovative ideas to members and employers alike, including budget-minded plans, web-based health information and maternity programs. While many things have changed, one thing remains the same: our mission to treat our members with respect, dignity, honesty and compassion. You see, after 20 years, we’re still a health network that wants to make everyone we serve... feel good.
Religious freedom was promoted by Pope John Paul II in all parts of the world. As a result of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the late pontiff—and the Church itself—embraced the idea of religious freedom.

This embrace is a milestone in Catholic thinking. It has profound implications.

One implication for me is that I now serve as a Catholic member on the board of trustees of the InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington. I represent the Archdiocese of Washington at the monthly meetings. Ten religious traditions participate in the IFC.

At each meeting, I learn a little more about the religious traditions represented. Part of living in freedom with others is trying to come to understand them and their beliefs. This can involve reading articles about other traditions, but it also involves learning about another tradition from practicing believers. This is something we try to accomplish at our meetings.

Building relationships takes trust, and trust can come one step at a time. We often are most comfortable with people who are like us. We may find different customs and understandings fascinating and threatening at the same time. Our insecurities may come to the fore in encounters with people from the “other” culture.

Thus, early upbringing, historical incidents or current preoccupations can keep any of us from hearing what someone else is saying. Religious freedom can make a conversation possible, but cannot make us take the time to listen to one another.

Some healing may be necessary before mutual trust and listening can become real. Individuals and whole communities may need to get beyond the past to live in the present moment.

The past, of course, may be one of strife and conflict. Pope John Paul II tried to promote reconciliation and healing with his famous “apologies” for wrongs done by members of the Catholic Church in centuries past.

It is noteworthy that mutual understanding in the present can enable us to look more objectively at the past. Rather than present distorted images of the past, we might—together—find out what really happened. Honesty provides a firm foundation for peace.

As healing begins, it can lead to deeper exchanges, greater insight and the root-ing-out of intolerance as we seek a society where respect for the person is the norm.

In practice, we must examine our human tendency to generalize about others. Just because we see car bombings by Muslims every day on television, we should not conclude that such acts by a few persons represent the world’s 1 billion Muslims. It is fairly easy to slip, almost unconsciously, into a prejudiced mode of thinking and acting. The same tendency to over-generalize often has characterized race relations.

A further implication of religious freedom is that it provides opportunities to work together for the good of the community. The IFC had a major hand in founding the local food bank that collects surplus food and sends it to soup kitchens and other community organizations. Thus, together we can serve countless neighbors who are in need.

Religious freedom’s “big picture” pertains to peace in the world. If we learn to understand one another and work together locally, we might build bridges that can serve to prevent or reduce conflicts.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, reflecting the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, expresses some foundational principles that are relevant to this discussion, including the following:  
• Our bond with others “is in the first place the common origin and end of the human race” (#842).  
• As Catholics, we are called to spread the message of Jesus Christ to all and we see all goodness and truth as prepa ration for this message (#843).  
• All “those who seek God with a sincere heart, and . . . try in their actions to do his will . . . may achieve eternal salva tion” (#847).  
• We must support religious freedom for all out of respect for the dignity of the human person (#2106).  
• We must treat all people justly (#1807). These principles must express themselves concretely.

In my ministry as executive director of the Washington Theological Consortium, a decades-old collaboration of Catholic and Protestant theological schools and other related religious institutions, I am involved with fostering understanding between Catholics and Protestants.

Recently, we decided to take in a Muslim school as an affiliate member. This was a carefully considered concrete action to build mutual understanding among our faculties and students. We hope that this rather modest action will enhance religious freedom and make for peace.

Finally, as always, we root all our concrete actions in prayer. Conversation, action and service with others from varied religious traditions flow from the Holy Spirit’s guidance.

We seek to follow the divine will. This will is leading us toward the deepest respect for other believers in our neighbor- hood and on our planet.

(Okhlate Father John W. Crossin is the executive director of the Washington Theological Consortium in Washington, D.C.)

Faith Alive!

Respect for people is necessary for religious freedom

By David Gibson

Religious freedom is one of the great issues of our times—what it means and who should have it—because the globe is shrinking, and people of every religion and no religion live alongside each other. The importance of religious freedom for others may seem to loom less large when my religious group is dominant in a culture. But the importance of religious freedom gets rapidly clarified wherever my group represents just a small minority.

This is something we try to accomplish at our meetings.

Building relationships takes trust, and trust can come one step at a time. We often are most comfortable with people who are like us. We may find different customs and understandings fascinating and threatening at the same time. Our insecurities may come to the fore in encounters with people from the “other” culture.

Thus, early upbringing, historical incidents or current preoccupations can keep any of us from hearing what someone else is saying. Religious freedom can make a conversation possible, but cannot make us take the time to listen to one another.

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(Okhlate Father John W. Crossin is the executive director of the Washington Theological Consortium in Washington, D.C.)
Celebrate the major and minor moments

Last month, my husband and I were among guests at a party at the Courtyard by Marriott in Bloomington. The couple hosting the event—Rose and Stan Thompson—clearly this was a gath-
ering to celebrate not only their 60th wedding anniversary but each guest’s birthday, as well as the blessings of family and friendship and special intentions.

Music and other sharings by family members, guests and professionals added enjoyment and even inspired singing. After the Thompsons and the guests went directly from that celebration to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist at St. Charles Borromeo Church.

There the pastor, Father Charles S. Chesebroth, edified the congregation with his homily and peremptory ad-
libbed comments. He also invited the congregation to an upcoming Mass to honor the associate pastor, Precious Blood Father Donald Davison, who would be celebrating his 25th anniver-
sary as a priest, followed by a family celebration.

"Today certainly emphasizes special events that should be celebrated," Father Mass said. "In fact, I recall one time (prob-
able three decades ago) during a parish Bible study when I shared how often I asked myself, "Is this coincidence or the hand of God?" A gentleman suggested I write a book on this theme. I did not. Perhaps my solution is to just do so.

"I believe it is no coincidence that certain people or events come into our lives. For instance, I met the Thomases at the retirement party of Rose’s brother, and it was a gala party! To enjoy more comfortable, aesthetic and intellectual activities. And, we gain spiritual fulfillment in direct proportion to how happy we are in love. Our life has graced us with his love, and we can do no less in our human relationships. So others see American life as cor-
rupt, greedy and blasphemous, how can we change their perceptions? Are these true representations of our culture or merely glimpses of its dark side?

We have a responsibility here, as Americans and as Christians, to pre-
sent what we really stand for. If tolerance is the primary virtue of our society, as it seems to be, perhaps we should take a closer look at what we tolerate.

We need to examine the television shows we watch, the Internet sites we access, and the values we admire, such as making a lot of money or living in a trendy neighborhood. We need to think about what causes broken families, spousal and child abuse, infertility and venereal disease.

Life-giving relationships and activities are what make a life worth loving. And, despite the One World's dietary demands, which indeed wants us to love life, not death.

(Christina Dewes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greenacres, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.)
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Sept. 18, 2005

• Isaiah 53:6-9, 10-11
• Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a
• Matthew 20:1-16a

The last section of the Book of Isaiah provides this weekend’s first reading. Although all things considered, few if any of the prophets wrote about times prevailed for God’s people. In fact, the history of God’s people is overwhelm with bad times. Only the reigns of King David and King Solomon might be construed to have been good times econo mically or politically. The rest of the his tory of God’s people saw invasion, con quest, subjugation and want. The author of the third section of Isaiah, from which this reading comes, wrote in a time of want. Surely, some aspects of life had improved. For four generations, the Hebrew people were kept in Babylon, the capital of the powerful Babylonian Empire. For them, it was a time of languishment and tears.

That particular time had gone when Third Isaiah was written. The Exiles had returned to their homeland, but times were bad. Surely, there were temptations press ing strongly against the people to despair, to forsake God, and to wander into sin and paganism.

In this reading, Third Isaiah warns the people not to put their trust in scoundrels. Instead, the prophet tells the people to call upon God. In God alone is true strength.

For them, it was a time of languishment and tears. For them, it was a time of invas ion, conquest, subjugation and want. Now God promises a new time, a time of hope and salvation. The prophet tells the people to call upon God. In God alone is true strength.

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In this reading, Third Isaiah warns the people not to put their trust in scoundrels. Instead, the prophet tells the people to call upon God. In God alone is true strength. God alone deserves trust.

For this weekend’s second reading, the Church offers us a passage from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians.

Historically attributed to the Apostle Paul, the epistle is a great testimony to the divinity of Christ, the Savior. In this week end’s reading, the epistle, through the words of Paul, clearly explains the intense bond between the Lord and true disciples.

Whatever happens of an earthly nature, the disciple will never leave the disciple who is unremitt ing in faith and love. Thus, disci plers need to keep the union with God always in sight. Nothing else—literally nothing else—is more important.

For the last reading, the Church chooses a selection from the Gospel of Matthew. It is a parable about the economic and social realities that existed in Palestine at the time of Jesus. Life was hard. Many did not know where to find their next meal. Employment was at a premium. Men looking for work and income came to village centers each morning, making themselves available for jobs. Persons with projects came to these places and hired the men. It was a buyer’s market. Jobs were few. No labor statutes or requirements for any minimum wage encumbered employ ers in their pursuit of profit. For Jews, cer tain expectations of fairness prevailed.

Jesus used the term “vineyard.” It immediately brought to mind Old Testament references to Israel as God’s vineyard. So, the story from the beginning had a theological and ethnic quality. God owned and cared for the vineyard. He set the rules.

A dvarinu was a typical day’s wage. Two lessons emerge. The first is that God is enormously generous. The second is that God’s ways are not necessarily our ways.

Reflection

For some weeks, the Church, through these weekend readings, has been calling us to follow Christ. Wisely, in this process, the Church recognizes that some of us hes itate not because we do not want to be with the Lord, but because we bear the burden of guilt or doubt. We think our self-created distance from God is too great to bridge.

Emphatically, in this reading, the Church reassures us of the unlimited mercy of God. Whatever our sin, if we repent, even at a late hour, God’s lavish and loving forgiveness awaits us.

None of this means that people who are always loyal to God will be denied their reward. The message is that no reluctance, based on our recognized sins of the past, should stand between God and us. God’s love for any and all people is unlimited.

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

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

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

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.

Question Corner/ Fr. John Dietzen

Q Your column is so helpful. We hope you can explain whether we can ask the souls in purgatory to pray for us.

A We don’t know a lot about the process of spiritual cleansing (purification) that might take place at the time of death, the event we call eternity.

According to Catholic teaching, however, those who are “in purgatory” are saved. They are in God’s love and are certain of heaven.

As such, they are part of the commun ion of saints. At least according to the beliefs of our faith, nothing prevents their being able, or our asking them, to intercede with God for us who are still on life’s journey.

All of our six children, spouses and grandchildren were present for the recent baptism of our great-granddaughter. Perhaps the main reason that the Churching of a newborn is so important is that many of its prayers and blessings are already in use by the time a child is born. A woman was unclean after childbirth, for example, when 7 days of the child was a boy and for 40 days if the child was a girl. (See Leviticus, Chapter 12.)

This uncleanness was formally removed 40 days after birth by the ritual of purification. We commemorate this event in the case of the Blessed Virgin Mary after the birth of Jesus on the feast of the Presentation on Feb. 2. (This feast is also observed, incidentally, by other Christians, including members of the Anglican Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.)

In its later Christian form, especially since the Middle Ages, the ceremony was a way of thanking God for a safe birth and a petition for God’s blessings on the mother and child and family.

The Churching of a newborn is a way of thanking God for a safe birth and a petition for God’s blessings on the mother and child and family.

A Child’s Faith

Ominous sky approaching storm
a mother’s cry
calls us from harm

She gathers us
in with stern command
a motley crew
a frightened band

Safe inside the candles lit
with rosary beads
on the stairs we sit

“Take in the name of the Father
and of the Son...”

Our rosary said
the storm is gone.

By Margaret Jacobi

(Margaret Jacobi is a member of St. Michael Parish in Bradford.)

My Journey to God

CNS photo by Karin von Voigtlander, Catholic Courier

Daily Readings

Monday, Sept. 19

Januarius, bishop and martyr
Ezra 1:1-6
Psalm 126:1-6
Luke 8:16-18

Tuesday, Sept. 20

Andrew Kim Tae-gon, priest and martyr
Paul Chong Ha-sang, martyr
and their companions, martyrs
Ezra 6:7-12, 14-30
Psalm 122:1-5
Luke 8:19-21

Wednesday, Sept. 21

Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist
Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13
Psalm 19:2-5
Matthew 9:9-13

Thursday, Sept. 22

Haggai 1:8
Psalm 149:1-6, 9
Luke 9:7-9

Friday, Sept. 23

Pio of Pietrelcina, priest
Haggai 2:1-3
Psalm 43:1-4

Saturday, Sept. 24

Zechariah 2:5-9, 14-15a
(Response) Jeremiah 31:10-13
Luke 9:43-45

Sunday, Sept. 25

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Ezra 18:25-28
Psalm 23:4-9
Philippians 2:1-11
Common of the Saints
Matthew 21:28-32

Those in purgatory are part of the communion of saints

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Perhaps the main reason that the Churching of a newborn is no longer customary among Catholics and other Christians is that many of its prayers and blessings are now already implied or included in the rite of baptism itself as it developed and expanded after Vatican Council II.

The 1899 Catholic Book of Blessings includes a blessing ceremony for mothers who could not be present for their child’s baptism so that they might “beneﬁt from the blessing that the rite of baptism prompts the mother and all present to thank God for the gift of the newborn child” (2528).

I’m not aware that the custom of the Churching of a newborn is still observed anywhere in our country.

A new book called Catholic Q & A: Answers to the Most Common Questions About Catholicism, a 530-page collection of columns by Father John Dietzen, is published by Crossroad Publishing Company, New York. It is available through bookstores for $17.95. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at P.O. Box 5515, Peoria, IL 61612, or by e-mail in care of jjdietzen@opt.com. †
HURRICANE

continued from page 1

Way of Central Indiana.

United Way is working hard to become the clearing-house for local offers of support for the evacuees and requests for assistance,” Siler said. “We are trying hard not to duplicate services and make the process of getting help as seamless as possible.”

At least 50 social service agencies in the area are getting involved. The hardest thing so far, he said, is managing the large number of offers for help that Catholic Charities has received—but Siler is glad for it.

“We are working overtime to keep people informed and to respond to their offers,” he said. “We ask that people be patient with us.”

One means that Catholic Charities has offered to help people who want to aid the hurricane victims is a brand new website—a project done for free by Innovative Edi that coincidentally was ready for launch just when the disaster struck.

On Sept. 9, the website at (www.CatholicCharitiesIndy.org) went online. The information on how to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina can be reached through that Web page or by a link from the archdiocesan home page at archindy.org.

“We intend to utilize the site to keep the community updated on our relief efforts related to Hurricane Katrina,” Siler said. “The Web is a wonderful way to inform large amounts of people.

“Our hope is that the new website will be a resource for the community to learn about our many services in order to refer people in need and for others to become involved in our ministry with their gifts of time, talent and treasure.

All around the archdiocese, stories are spreading of how people, parishes and institutions are helping the victims.

• As of Sept. 12, the Mission Office had received more than $185,000 for its Hurricane Katrina relief fund. However, most of these funds are from individuals as the office has received second collections at Masses from only a few parishes.

• St. Monica Parish, in a recent second collection, brought in approximately $28,000 and in a separate effort collected approximately 20,000 pounds of clothing.

• St. Meinrad School of Theology in St. Meinrad will host, for the remainder of the academic year, eight seminars of the Diocese of Biloxi who had been studying at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans.

• Roncalli High School in Indianapolis held a prayer service on Sept. 15 to pray for those who continue to suffer in the wake of the disaster and also to continue to discern ways to support relief efforts.

• Schools all around the archdiocese are holding fundraisers for the hurricane victims, including St. Barnabas and St. Roch schools in Indianapolis.

• St. Barnabas’ combined total from school donations and second collections at Masses totaled approximately $32,000.

• The archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education has asked all Catholic schools to accommodate evacuees in any way possible.

• The archdiocesan Birthline ministry has already served at least one mother and her toddler, and is preparing packages of clothing and formula to deliver to others in need.

• Parishes at St. Michael Parish in Greenfield have delivered at least five truckloads of supplies to Louisiana. Parishes have also been sending individual packages of supplies, and three nurses from the parish spent a week providing care at the Plaquemine Care Center Plaquemine, La.

• Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis is taking in two children affected by the hurricane and the St. Vincent de Paul Society is arranging for their clothing, toiletries and other material needs.

• St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg collected scores of items for the victims—so much that the pastor called it an overwhelming sight. The parish is also offering 25 percent of its festival proceeds this weekend to the Red Cross.

• Sister Demetria Smith, mission education archdiocesan Office for the archdiocese and a member of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, has traveled to Alabama to offer her service as a nurse.

On the national scale, Catholic Charities USA has provided $760,000 in initial emergency funding to assist with the recovery efforts.

Siler sees the work of God in the outpouring of support.

“I always find it very easy to see the work of the Holy Spirit during times of crisis,” he said. “Of course, we grieve the loss of life, and the life that the survivors have had to leave behind, but we at Catholic Charities cling to the faith and hope that Christ promised to walk beside us in the midst of the storm.

“It has been very inspiring for all of us to see the community pull together like never before.”†
The local and state systems were totally overwhelmed by the devastation and the needs in southern Mississippi. As the Catholic Charities relief caravan made its way through the devastated streets of Biloxi on Sept. 10, people with flood-damaged homes were handed bags of food and supplies, and asked if there were certain items they needed.

On the edge of the yards of each home were huge piles of household belongings: sofas, rugs, chairs, insulation, toys, television sets, mattresses, clothes and furniture, all mud-covered and soggy from being covered with the rising floodwaters that accompanied the hurricane.

At almost every stop, residents were quick to tell how high the water rose in their house, and hesitant to say what they were going to do next because most simply did not know.

In a suburban neighborhood in D’Iberville, on the outskirts of Biloxi, the homes and yards were a little bigger, but the stench from mud and water and the piles of household furniture and belongings were about the same.

Some families were outside hanging clothes out to dry on bushes, in the front yard or on driveways. Others were clearing branches or fixing roofs.

Sharon Vance, who was wearing a mask over her nose and mouth to keep out some of the mold and mildew smells, was in the front yard of her daughter’s home washing toys with a bleach and water mixture.

“We’re just trying to salvage stuff,” she told CNS.

Down the street, Suzanne Ledet, a member of St. John Parish in Biloxi, was also starting an overwhelming cleanup project. Her mother and brother were both staying temporarily with her because her home was in better shape than theirs.

“There’s nothing here we can’t clean up and fix,” she said. “It’s just stuff.”

Back at the base of operations, Father Dominick Fullam, pastor of St. Mary’s and the newly appointed coordinator of disaster relief for the Biloxi Diocese, was overseeing the distribution center at his parish while supervising the roof repair on his church, checking in on his parents who were living with him because their Biloxi home was destroyed, and celebrating daily and weekend Masses.

In the course of a few days, the priest was meeting with his bishop, working with fire and police officers to coordinate deliveries and pickups at his parish, and also operating a forklift to haul bags of ice.

Joyce James, one of his parishioners who has been helping Catholic Charities deliver house to house, said she was thrilled to be part of the recovery effort and noted that she has received more than her share of thanks from the people they have served, many of whom hugged her simply for handing out food or supplies.

She said the places the disaster relief team visited made “you want to get on your knees and thank God for what you have.”

And amid the work, she keeps in mind the image she saw in her yard on the day after the hurricane when she prayed for a sign that the area would be able to rebuild and found one red rose amid dead, broken trees.

“I took that as a sign that God is here with us and will help us,” she said.
In your mind, you’re the same person you’ve always been. Ready to play, exercise, compete and move like you always have. It’s just your hip or knee that won’t cooperate. That’s when you need to visit the specialists at the Center for Joint Replacement Surgery at St. Francis.

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The Center has received 5 stars from HealthGrades for its work in hips, knees and overall joint replacement surgery in 2005.

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