Praying for life
Youths’ presence highlights March for Life

By Katie Berger
Special to The Criterion

Archdiocesan youths felt a renewed confidence and enthusiasm during the March for Life on Jan. 23 after Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore told them the night before that the number of abortions is at its lowest since 1975.

Cardinal Keeler attributed much of the decrease to the gradual change in attitude among young people—a statement he made during his homily to an overflowing crowd of more than 6,000 pilgrims at the Pro-Life Vigil Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on Jan. 22 in Washington, D.C.

The reality of abortion is what annually brings thousands of primarily young pilgrims to the March for Life in Washington, D.C. “The opposition to abortion is strongest among the youth,” the cardinal said.

Nearly 500 archdiocesan youth and chaperones formed the archdiocesan-sponsored pilgrimage, making the trip by the busload. Pilgrims riding four archdiocesan buses joined buses from Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, the Indianapolis North and Batesville deaneries, and St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis to par-ticipate in the 33rd annual March for Life.

Mikey Padilla, a Columbus North High School sophomore from St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus, said he felt reassured by seeing the num-ber of youth gathered, many of whom seemed similar to him.

“It’s pretty cool that the average kid would require 24-hour care for all his life because they would have lost a loved one to cancer,” recalled Roncalli’s pro-life coordinator as a tribute to one of his brothers who has taught him so much about life and choices.

“Timmy, my brother, Timmy, is blind, severely mentally handicapped, and he can’t speak and you have to feed him,” Striby said as he sat in his office at Roncalli. “Timmy has taught me how to love. I’ve learned more about how to love and treat people from Timmy than from any other one else.”

The story of the connection between the two brothers dates back to a decision that their parents made 50 years ago when Timmy was born.

At the time, Joe and Pat Striby were told by doctors that it would be best to place Timmy in an institution because he would require 24-hour care for all his life. Striby considers the annual trip as a reward for the students’ commitment and a way to show them that they are not alone in their efforts. He also views his time as Roncalli’s pro-life coordinator as a tribute to one of his brothers who has taught him so much about life and choices.

Emily Johannigman, 18, a member of Immaculate Conception Parish in Millhousen, Ind., prays the rosary during the National Prayer Vigil for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 22.

Teacher sees annual trip as tribute to his brother’s life

By John Shaughnessy

For Gerard Striby, his best journeys have often taken him to the point where the celebration of life meets the threat of death.

Four years ago, the religion teacher at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis boarded a bus filled with fellow Olympic torchbearers—a group that had been chosen to carry the torch through the city as it made its way across the country to the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City.

“I took the torch from a woman who had lost a loved one to cancer,” recalled Striby, a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. “She started an organiza-tion for cancer awareness. The person I gave the torch to was a man who had overcome some pretty significant physical handicaps. I shared my stories of the ser-vices I had done, the pro-life things, working with the students.”

Then there are the journeys Striby has made the past 10 years while organizing
Love stories, life's lessons and faith elements of coach's book

By John Shaughnessy

In a few minutes, Bruce Scifres will talk about how Indianapolis Colts’ head coach Tony Dungy helped him decide to become a Catholic.

Yet, right now, the man who has led Roncalli High School in Indianapolis to six state championships is sharing two stories that many people wouldn’t expect from a football coach—love stories.

The first story involves a ritual that Scifres follows on Valentine’s Day. Every Feb. 14, he approaches the front door of his home and, with a woman he has loved for decades and secretly leaves a homemade card asking the woman to be his Valentine again.

The woman is his 83-year-old mother, Mary.

The second story concerns the point he once made to his four children about priorities.

After the Roncalli Rebels won the 2004 state championship game, 3A, the level the team received its state championship rings. While Scifres’ son, Luke, admired the ring, he asked his father, “Dad, which of the rings you’ve won means the most to you?”

To make his point, Scifres put on his fingers the nine rings he has won in state championship competition: six for each of the state championships, two for being repeat champions and another ring—for coaching a state runner-up team in the state football championships, two for.

“Something he said has stayed with me,” Scifres said last July, faith is not extraneous to life, but something intrinsic to human nature. That’s how he hopes “God Is Love” will mean the most to him.

Roncalli, he said, has made more of a commitment to do God’s work. “It’s that same faith that helps me rejoice in the good times. Life is a journey,” he said. “It’s that same faith that helps us overcome hatred and gives us the power of love and forgiveness. God is love.”

In doing so, he is pointing out that, as he once told the Indianapolis Star, “The best gift we can give another person is the gift of God’s love. God’s love gives us the power of peace that no one else can give us.”

“We must make people understand that Christianity is a commitment to an idea, not a ritual that involves the nature of love and its relation to freedom, truth and Jesus Christ,” Scifres’ once told his church’s view of Jesus, unless people understand how “God is love,” they will never overcome the age-old tendency to misunderstand or misuse the image of Jesus. In his sermon on the feast of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8, Pope Benedict said that when modern times modern times human beings have suspected that “God is a rival who curtails our freedom and that we will be fully human only when we have cast him aside.”

In short, he said, man often believes God’s love creates a limiting dependency. For the pope, the challenge facing the Church is to make people believe that “love is not dependence but a gift that makes us live” and that God’s will is not a law for the human being imposed from the outside but something intrinsic to human nature.

The pope followed up on this theme in an address to the new British ambassador to the Vatican on Dec. 23, when he spoke about respect for the truth and its implications for civil society.

“Above all, it directs us toward a proper understanding of human freedom which can never be realized independently of God but only in cooperation with his loving plan for humanity,” the pope said.

In his 2006 World Peace Day message sent to leaders around the world, the pope said acknowledging the full truth of God but only in cooperation with his loving plan for humanity, “It is the first, indispensable condition for consolidating the truth of peace.”

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Renton High School football coach Bruce Scifres addresses players, students and fans of the Indianapolis South Deeney inter- parochial high school after the Rebels’ sectional championship against Linn-Benton High School in Indianapolis.

“God is love which saves a loving father who wants to see his children look upon one another as brothers and sisters, working responsibly to place their various talents at the service of the common good of the human family,” he said.

A pope’s first encyclical is often viewed as a thematic touchstone for his pontificate. Pope Benedict has chosen to write on the place of God in human affairs and the nature of love—topics that go far beyond the borders of the Catholic Church.

In doing so, he is pointing out that, as he said last July, faith is not extraneous to life, nor is it “a package of rules that we load onto our shoulders like a heavy backpack.”

Faith is “simple and rich,” he said.

That’s how he hopes “God Is Love” will be received.

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Advocates rally at Statehouse for lower heating costs for poor

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

Hoosiers from northern Indiana traveled to Indianapolis for a Jan. 18 Statehouse rally to support heating assistance legislation for low-income families— an issue the Indiana Catholic Conference also supports based on the biblical teaching of protecting the poor who are the least among us (Matthew 25).

Rep. Win Moses (D-Fort Wayne), author of House Bill 1094, who spoke at the rally, said, “As long as I’ve been in public service, this issue causes more family damage than any other issue. When a family’s home loses its heat, the home is condemned and the family has to leave. It causes homelessness. It is a very serious problem.”

“While this bill is aimed at helping the working poor, high gas prices have caused hardships for many middle-income families, too,” Moses added.

Mary Beth Fisher, public information director for the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC)—the administrative body which makes the rules for Indiana utilities—said the IURC’s latest action was for the worst of the worst customers—those who do not pay their bills. The rule allowed utilities to collect up to four months of the average heating bill as a deposit for reconnecting service outside of moratorium months (November to March).

During the moratorium months, the utility can charge up to two months’ deposit for the financially qualified customers. What the new rule did was to make it easier on customers while giving utilities the right to recoup some of their losses,” Fisher said.

“The IURC has been studying this issue for two years,” she continued. “What happens is those who qualify for heating assistance use the moratorium and the heating assistance money, yet still have a balance due when the moratorium ends. They owe hundreds of dollars and are disconnected. Then they come back in November and have their heat reconnected.”

Sen. Tim Lanane (D–Anderson), appetized to expand up to $20 million from tax amnesty revenues to expand the availability of Indiana’s heating assistance program to low-income Hoosiers coping with increased home heating costs.

“For many families, this is the period when they need help the most,” Lanane said. “With this legislation, we can take leftover tax amnesty dollars that currently are just sitting in the state’s bank account and use them to help families struggling to pay their heating bills.”

Sen. John Broden (D-South Bend), author of Senate Bill 216, said at the rally his bill would reduce the deposit fee from a four-month estimated bill to a one-month estimated bill.

“In terms of dollars, this would reduce a deposit of $700 to about $150. The problem has really been with gas utilities,” said Broden, a member of Holy Cross Parish in South Bend, Ind. “People are going without heat because they can’t afford the deposit fee. They’re using space heaters. This is no way to live.”

“In the winter of 2003-04, social services and churches in St. Joseph County alone documented they had paid $3 million for gas bills and deposit fees,” Broden continued. “This measure is really a compromise measure. It just reduces the deposit fees utilities can collect.”

Rep. Sheila Klinker (D–LaFayette), co-author of House Bill 1081, said her bill is designed “to help folks that are disabled and vulnerable in our state.”

Sen. John Broden (D-South Bend) talks with South Bend residents at the Statehouse rally to support heating assistance legislation in Indianapolis on Jan. 18. Sen. Broden, a member of Holy Cross Parish in South Bend, is author of Senate Bill 216 which addresses gas utility connection charges and deposits.

ICC supports several heating bills

Following is a list of heating legislation being considered this year that are supported by the Indiana Catholic Conference:

• House Bill 1081 Home energy sales tax exemption—Bill authors include Reps. David Yount (R–Columbus), Shelia Klinker (D–LaFayette), a member of St. Mary’s Cathedral Parish in Lafayette, John Day (D–Indianapolis) a member of Holy Cross Parish in Indianapolis, and Mike Murphy (D–Indianapolis), a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis.

The bill provides a sales tax exemption for the sales of home energy to a person who acquires the energy through a home energy assistance program administered by the division of family resources.

• House Bill 1094 Reconnection charges—Bill author is Rep. Winfield Moses (D–Fort Wayne).

The bill provides that the amount charged by a utility, other than a telecommunications provider to reconnect service, may not exceed actual reconnection costs. It permits a utility to require a deposit before reconnecting service. It also requires a utility to reconnect service within one calendar day after being requested to reconnect service.

• House Bill 1345 Income tax credit for sales tax paid for heating—Bill author is Rep. Bill Davis.

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Let’s stop blaming the bishops

The sex abuse crisis of the early 2000s had many adverse consequences. These include an embarrassing scandal that weakened the Church’s moral authority, the reopening of deep wounds for thousands of victims and their families, an assault on the image and self-confidence of the vast majority of priests who are not guilty of abuse, enormous financial settlements (even bankruptcy) in dioceses across the country and much more.

And yet the remarkable resiliency of the Catholic people has, in the main, allowed us to survive the scandal and to remain a vibrant and holy Church. Yes, there are many problems facing the Catholic Church—here in the U.S. and all over the world. But the gates of Hell have not prevailed. The Church is alive and we have every reason to be confident that the grace of Christ will sustain the Church as it continues its pilgrimage journey into the new millennium.

One unfortunate result of the sex abuse scandal is the loss of credibility that many American bishops have suffered. Ordinary Catholics wonder why the bishops didn’t do a better job of protecting children and disciplining offenders. Critics on the right and on the left seem to agree (for once) that the bishops are to blame—for the sex abuse crisis and whatever else ails the Church. Liberal commentators accuse the American bishops of paying too much attention to the Vatican. Did the sex abuse scandal really uncover a crisis in the American episcopacy?

We think not. The American bishops are a diverse group of men who carry out their enormous challenging responsibilities with remarkable fidelity (even courage) in light of everything they have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. Yes, they are human beings with weaknesses and with limitations. Episcopal ordination does not guarantee success in the ministry of teaching, sanctifying or pastoral governance. A bishop has to grow in holiness and in his ability to serve as a good steward of his diocese. Sometimes, he makes mistakes. If he is faithful to his calling, the bishop learns from his mistakes and carries on.

Our Archdiocese of Indianapolis has been faithfully served by a diverse group of bishops since our founding as a missionary diocese in Vincennes in 1834. Our archdiocese has been served by bishops who were pioneers, builders, exteriors, introverts, leaders, preservers, teachers, administrators, pastors, saints and sinners. All loved the Church. All worked to shepherd their flock in fidelity to the Catholic Church in light of the challenges and opportunities of the era in which they served.

The bishops who have served our archdiocese over the years have been very much like the bishops who served in other dioceses nationwide during comparable eras. They have been faithful oversuers (from the Greek word episcopoi) of their local Churches. They have been consistent (if not always1 ident2 closely) with traditions: they have been advocates (and often exemplars) of holiness; and they have governed the Church reasonably well over the years from the pioneer days, through decades of active anti-Catholicism, to the building years of the 20th century, to the breathtaking Vatican II experience and the transitions that followed, through the amazing, long pontificate of Paul VI, until now—the fifth year of the new millennium.

We think that, in general, the Church in the United States has been well-served by its bishops. Without question, the American bishops have not always been as smart and as clear as they could have been, and there is no room in the priesthood (or anywhere else for that matter) for anyone who would harm a young person. And it showed the American bishops (and the rest of us) that the old ways of dealing with these things were woefully inadequate and must never to be repeated. We believe that the audits conducted under the auspices of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops show that the vast majority of bishops have learned their lesson (the hard way). We sincerely hope that, as a result, no young person will ever again be harmed by anyone (clergy, religious, lay or lay) who is affiliated with the Catholic Church.

We think it’s time to stop blaming the bishops for everything that ails us as a Church. All of us—are clergy, religious and laity—have roles to play in the life of the Church. We’re in this together as disciples of Jesus Christ and as members of the one family of God. Yes, we need to hold the bishops accountable (and they must do the same for us). But as family (as Church) we need to hold one another—in good times and in bad.

Daniel Conway

(Daniel Conway is a member of the editorial committee of the board of directors of Criterion Press Inc.)

Letters to the Editor

Computer professionals deserve thanks for handling of ‘Y2K’ fears

In her “Perspectives” column (“Predicting the future, heeding advice,” Jan. issue of The Criterion), Shirley Vogler Meister expressed it absolutely clearly that there is no room in the priesthood (or anywhere else for that matter) for anyone who would harm a young person. And it showed the American bishops (and the rest of us) that the old ways of dealing with these things were woefully inadequate and must never to be repeated. We believe that the audits conducted under the auspices of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops show that the vast majority of bishops have learned their lesson (the hard way). We sincerely hope that, as a result, no young person will ever again be harmed by anyone (clergy, religious, lay or lay) who is affiliated with the Catholic Church.

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E n nuestra reunión de la primavera de 2005, los obispos de Estados Unidos estimamos oportunos emitir un comunica- do alentando a los católicos a ser dueños de nuestro compromiso con las escuelas católicas tales y secundarias en el Tercer milenio.

Estamos comprometidos a prolongar una extensa tradición. Los Católicos de Estados Unidos heredaron de nuestros ancestros inmigrantes la rica tradición de construir y mantener escuelas. En un entorno poco favorable a la Iglesia Católica y a su fe, en la alborada de la nación, nuestros antepasados tenían que cultivar y proteger la fe para sus descendientes. Una de sus iniciativas fue la fundación de la escuela parroquial, una institución que se convertiría en un monumento de la educación de la Iglesia Católica.

La Iglesia Católica tiene un papel vital en el desarrollo de la vida y la historia. Es un reflejo de la identidad cultural y espiritual de nuestra sociedad. Las escuelas Católicas juegan un papel vital en el desarrollo de la cultura moral y espiritual en nuestro país, y en la formación de nuestros futuros líderes.

En una reflexión de “La Iglesia que Juan Pablo II dejó” el autor George Weigel expresa que la Iglesia Católica se debe considerar como el lugar donde se inicia la educación de los futuros líderes. La Iglesia Católica debe ser el lugar donde se enseña la verdad del cristianismo.

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Events Calendar

January 27
Marion College, St. Francis Hall Chapel, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Presentation. Information: 7-917-7766.

February 4

February 13
Lake Parish, 7537 Holliday Dr. East, Indianapolis. Natural Family Planning (NFP) class. 9-11 a.m. Information: 7-485-0126.

February 15
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Church, 315 W. 146th St. Carmel, Ind., (Diocese of Lafayette). One-day retreat for separated and divorced Catholics, "The Power of Forgiveness." 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. Information: 7-276-1506 or 8-382-9836, ext. 1596, e-mail mhess@archindy.com.

February 21
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. "Right to Life of Indiana," 8:30 a.m. Information: 8-317-3574 or 8-382-9836, ext. 1596.

February 22

February 23
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. "Pray for the Pope." Information: 8-317-236-1593 or e-mail rivan@saintmeinrad.edu.

March 2
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. "Morning for Mom!" 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Information: 8-317-545-7681 or e-mail awin@archindy.com.

March 5
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. "Pray for the Pope!" Information: 8-317-545-7681 or e-mail awin@archindy.com.

March 4
St. Bernardine Retreat Center, 841 E. 14th St., Ferdinand, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). "Lenten Retreat," 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Information: 7-832-8817 or e-mail rtmicha@mtsaintfrancis.org.

March 5
Mount St. Francis Retreat Center, 101 St. Anthony Drive, Mount St. Francis, Ferdinand, Ind., (Diocese of Evansville). "A Journey with Jesus in the Season of Lent," 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Information: 7-923-8817 or e-mail retreates@mtsaintfrancis.org.

March 10
Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Dr., Saint Meinrad, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). "A Minister’s Parish Council," 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Information: 7-923-8817 or e-mail retreates@mtsaintfrancis.org.

March 12
Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Dr., Saint Meinrad, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). "One-day retreat for the director of the archdiocesan Office of Purchasing," The Silver Beaver Award, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Information: 7-923-8817 or e-mail retreates@mtsaintfrancis.org.

Events Calendar submissions should include a date, location, name of the event, time, admission fee, and phone number for more information. All information must be received by 5 p.m. on Thursday one week in advance of our Friday publication. Submissions will not be taken over the phone.

To submit an event, mail to: The Criterion, Events Calendar, P.O. Box 1716, Terre Haute, IN 47801. You may hand-deliver the notice to the Archdiocese O’Meara Catholic Center, 1401 S. Sixth St., Terre Haute. Events may be faxed to 7-236-1593 or e-mail to mail@archindy.com.

For more information about upcoming events, check our Events Calendar policy, log on to www.CriterionOnline.com, click on the "Events" link, then on the look to our events policy.
needs. The couple from St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis told the doctors they would take their son home and care for him with the same love they gave their other children.

“My father is still taking care of him 50 years later,” said Striby, whose mother died in 1999. “My father is 87 and Timmy is still at home. My sister, Lisa, and I try to come by once or twice a week so Dad can come to Mass or get out to do errands.”

Striby realizes there are some people who would question the value of his brother’s life.

“When a lot of people would look at what they and their family had to give up instead of looking at the blessings we got. Some people see it as a burden, but it’s an opportunity. We just don’t know what kinds of lives that a child can touch down the road.”

Striby knows that Timmy has touched his work in his pro-life efforts. By extension, his brother has had an impact on his students.

“She’s the ablest person I’ve ever met in my life,” he said. “She talks about how her sisters’ parents could have had them aborted,” he recalled. “She felt compelled to tell the group how much she loved her sisters, and how the march brought home to her the importance of protecting life.”

During every March for Life journey, Striby tells the students, “You don’t know the impact you have, but there are people noticing and recognizing what you stand for.

Striby makes his own stand, for himself, for his brother, Timmy.

“Well, I have an impact on what I do,” Striby said. “I feel very strongly not only about abortion, but the ‘respect life’ efforts in general. I’m against racism, sexism, people on death row. That’s what I stand for.”

Including the aged, the people who can’t get out because they are either mentally or physically disabled.

“There are single parents with babies that need to have heat to keep their families warm,” said Klinker, a member of St. Mary Cathedral Parish in Lafayette.

“I’m really happy the Catholic Conference is working on this issue and it’s getting attention. It’s a big problem and it needs to be addressed.”

In 2005, the Coalition to Keep Indiana Warm (CKIW) used an independent source to study the home heating issue which resulted in a 31-page report detailing the efforts that affordability of home energy has on low-income Indiana residents.

Vickie Allen-Beeson, co-chair of the coalition, who also spoke at the rally, said, “Between the months of April and June last year, 10,000 low-income customers were disconnected in Indiana.

“Last year, 80 percent of low-income families in Indiana came out of the winter months behind on their heating bills. While the state increased the number of households which could qualify for heating assistance—over 500,000 households qualify—the state does not have the money to fund the program.”

“The reality is many who qualify don’t know about it and many older Hoosiers are too proud to receive assistance and would rather go without prescriptions or food than have their heat turned off.”

To view the Coalition to Keep Indiana Warm’s heat study titled, “Indiana Billing and Collection Reporting—Natural Gas and Electric Utilities,” go to the Indiana Community Action Association’s Web page at www.ica.org. Click on Coalition to Keep Indiana Warm, then click on the report by Roger Colton.

BILLS

(established from page 9)

(R-Portland).

The bill provides a state tax liability credit for a taxpayer: (1) who receives heating energy from a heating energy supplier; and (2) whose household federal adjusted gross income does not exceed 200 percent of the federal income poverty level. It also provides that the amount of the credit equals the lesser of: (1) the amount of sales tax paid by the taxpayer during the taxable year; or (2) $58.

• Senate Bill 352 Energy assistance funding from tax amnesty—Bill author is Sen. Tim Lanane (D-Anderson). It uses money received under the tax amnesty program to provide assistance to households that are eligible for assistance under the home energy assistance program administered by the division of family resources. It directs the state auditor to transfer to a special account in the state general fund, from unrestricted revenues in the state general fund, an amount equal to the following: (1) The surplus state tax amnesty revenues, as certified by the budget agency. (2) The difference between the amount of funding needed and the amount of funding available to make home energy assistance available to all eligible households. (3) $20 million. It appropriates money in the general fund, an amount equal to the lesser of: (1) the amount of funding needed and the amount of funding available to make home energy assistance available to all eligible households. (2) 200 percent of the federal income poverty level. It also provides that the amount of the credit may not exceed a customer’s estimated average monthly bill.

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HEATING

(continued from page 9)

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Bridget Curtis Aver is a correspondent for The Criterion.

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Archdiocesan seminarian Martin Rodriguez, a resident of the Bishop Bruté House of Formation at Marian College in Indianapolis, takes part in Archdiocesan seminarian Martin Rodriguez, a resident of the Bishop Bruté House of Formation at Marian College in Indianapolis, takes part in
I think that it’s a sign that our younger people recognize that life truly is a gift from God,” said Father Bill Williams, chaplain at Father Thomas Seccia Memorial High School and associate pastor at St. Simon the Apostle Parish, both in Indianapolis.

“I believe that with the persistence that we have, people will come to see the truth that abortion is evil,” said Jeff Read, a sophomore at Marian College and resident of the Bishop Bruté House of Formation in Indianapolis, who is a seminarian for the Evansville Diocese.

Changing laws regarding abortion will help but it won’t end abortion, according to Father Jonathan Meyer, associate director of youth and young adult ministry and associate pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.

“If we change laws to make abortions illegal, they will still happen,” Father Meyer said. “We need to change hearts.”

That change of heart comes when youth understand the value of chastity, Father Williams said.

“When chastity is important,” he said, “then obviously the gift of life is important.”

Emily Wethington, a junior at Seccia from St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, participated in the national pro-life march for the first time.

Emily said the pilgrimage was “kind of breathtaking because I didn’t know that many [young people] felt the same way. I feel that it’s just wrong to take [the lives of] innocent human beings who don’t get a chance to live.

Through their determination and pro-life service, Emily and thousands of other young people who participated in the march are a part of the generation that can make a positive shift toward what Cardinal Keeler called “the triumph of life.”

(Katie Berger is the youth ministry coordinator at St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis.)

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The different starting point for this year’s annual March for Life did not go unnoticed by some of the speakers at the annual rally who compared the closer location to the U.S. Capitol to the progress made by the pro-life movement.

“We’re seven blocks closer” and “getting closer to the end” of legalized abortion, said a speaker giving the opening prayer at the hour-and-a-half rally on Jan. 23 on the grounds of the National Mall.

Many of the young people in the crowd of tens of thousands in rain ponchos while holding aloft placards saying “Defend Life” or “Justice for All” were chanted “We are the future, the movement’s future.”

The rally started under gray skies and cool temperatures and included periods of light, cold rain. Speakers thanked the crowd for braving the unfavorable weather conditions and for their continued fight to promote the sanctity of life.

As in recent years, many speakers directed their comments directly to the young people in the crowd of tens of thousands.

This year, many of them were huddled in rain ponchos while holding aloft placards saying “Defend Life” or “Justice for All Born and Preborn.”

Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., co-chairman of the House Pro-Life Caucus, urged the young people to understand the value of life service, Emily and thousands of other young people who attended to the “new generation of enlightened public policymakers — faith-filled young lawmakers and legislative aides, fiercely dedicated to truth, justice and fundamental human rights.”

“Young people, the country needs you. We need your ideas and goodness and courage and deep faith in God to enact durable, sustainable policies to protect innocent human life from those who slaughter and inflict pain,” he said.

Nellie Gray, the rally’s organizer, also linked pro-life issues with the ballot, telling the crowd that “pro-life trumps politics. We’ll support only those candidates who are pro-life.”

Midway through the rally, a telephone message from President George W. Bush was broadcast to the crowd. The president, calling from Manhattan, Kan., where he was delivering a speech on the war, told the rally participants that positive steps have occurred in the pro-life movement, but added that “there’s more work to be done.”

“We’re vigorously promoting parental notification laws, adoption, teen abstinence, crisis pregnancy programs and the vital work of our faith-based groups,” he said.

The president, in his four-minute address, noted that the House has passed a bill to ensure that “state parental involvement laws are not circumvented by those who take minors across state lines to have abortions.”
I am especially pleased with the theme for Catholic Schools Week 2006—"Values: Catholic Schools: Character, Compassion, Values"—since it so clearly exemplifies the key elements of the enterprise of Catholic education in the United States.

This week, more than 7,800 Catholic schools throughout the U.S. will examine the ways that character, compassion and values are instilled in every student, teacher and administrator. Jesus, the Great Teacher, reminds us that we are about more than reading, writing and arithmetic. We are also, more importantly, about the "R" of religion—that which is taught in the classroom and the faith formation that flows from living the Gospel message and infusing character, compassion and values into the entire school community.

Character is defined as "a set of qualities that make a person distinctive, interesting or attractive." Since Jesus Christ is the reason for Catholic education, it is the character of Jesus that we are called to emulate and model to the best of our ability.

Character can lead us to lives of compassion, showing sympathy for others and reaching out, as Jesus did, to help those in need.

We work for Jesus and, as he told us, what we do for the least among people we do for him. Catholic values guide our mission and all our activities. We value prayer, spiritual growth, community life and social justice within a setting of academic excellence but, most of all, we value the fact that all people are made in the image and likeness of God.

Our Catholic schools will continue to make a difference as they strive to foster the attributes of character, compassion and values that Jesus both taught and modeled.

Loving God, please continue to bless the schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

(Annette "Mickey" Lentz is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Education and Faith Formation.)

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech is a powerful reminder of the importance of working for peace, justice and equality as well as respecting the dignity of every person and seeking nonviolent solutions to problems.

Holy Angels School students in Indianapolis try to live out King’s dream by honoring his life and legacy of promoting civil rights during an annual march and Mass commemorating his Jan. 15 birthday.

Rain forced St. Joseph of Carondelet Sister Gerry O’Laughlin, the principal, to cancel the school’s annual memorial march along Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street on Jan. 13, but the students and their guests from Holy Cross Central School in Indianapolis participated in a program and Mass at Holy Angels Church to remember King’s dream.

At the conclusion of the Mass, Holy Angels fifth-grade student Deon Holder sang “Amazing Grace” then classmate Orlonzo Scott read King’s speech.

Holy Angels School sixth-grader Marcus Salaone of Indianapolis leads students in reciting the “Student Pledge of Nonviolence” during a Jan. 13 Mass and program at Holy Angels Church that honored the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Students from Holy Cross Central School in Indianapolis also participated in the Liturgy.

Holy Angels students honor life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
St. Malachy School celebrates 50 years of ‘learning with Christ’

By Mary Ann Wyand

BROWNSBURG—St. Malachy School is “Celebrating 50 Years of Learning, Loving and Living with Christ” in Hendricks County this year.

The school’s 50th anniversary slogan is displayed on a billboard in Brownsburg with the school’s Web site address (www.saintmalachyschool.org) to invite parents to consider Catholic education for their children.

It’s this kind of welcome that has helped St. Malachy School experience a significant growth in enrollment during the past five decades.

Irish immigrants founded St. Malachy Parish in a rural area of central Indiana in 1869. The parish membership has continued to grow steadily every year as more and more Catholic families move to one of the many new housing developments in Hendricks County.

In recent years, the 2,233-household parish has outgrown the church and school at 326 Green St. in Brownsburg so plans are under way to build a new worship space and later a school on 40 acres at the southwest corner of 750 North and 1000 East near Brownsburg after breaking ground for the church in 2007.

Mary Sullivan, St. Malachy’s new principal, taught fourth-grade classes for 16 years before being named assistant principal three years ago. She was promoted again when longtime principal Mary Margaret McClain retired last spring and moved to Illinois.

“When I first started teaching, we had 200 or 220 students so I have seen the enrollment double,” Sullivan said. “We have 430 students in kindergarten through the eighth-grade with two classes per grade. But even though we have grown large in numbers, we have still maintained a family atmosphere as a parish and school family.

In recent years, she said, “we have added a full-time Spanish program for kindergarten through the eighth-grade, a computer lab staffed by a computer aide, a music teacher and a physical education teacher. We want to educate the whole child so we present them with all kinds of opportunities to share their gifts and to grow in all kinds of areas—emotionally, socially, artistically and spiritually.”

Sullivan said the faculty and staff have “used every corner, every closet, every space available in the school building, and we look forward to being able to serve even more of our parishioners with the expansion.”

St. Malachy parishioners are proud of their Irish heritage, she said, and the school’s Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) teams are called the Shamrocks. Green and white 50th anniversary T-shirts promote the school motto of “May God hold you in the palm of his hand,” an old Irish blessing.

“The public school system is very good in Brownsburg,” Sullivan said, “but the students who attend public schools cannot live their Catholic values every day, cannot pray together and staff members cannot use those values in the discipline system. We pray together, work together, learn together and have fun together.”

She said St. Malachy’s student creed states that, “We have been blessed by God and it is our job to develop those gifts and talents to the best of our ability.”

Sullivan said students come from Lebanon, Pittsboro, North Salem and Avon as well as Brownsburg.

“We have dedicated parents who literally go that extra mile to get their children to school here,” she said. “They support us in their children’s upbringing and the development of their work ethic.”

Because of that, Sullivan said, “we have very little turnover of teachers and staff members.”

Middle school mathematics teacher Larry Hart of Brownsburg has taught at St. Malachy School for 36 years and has seen the enrollment more than double in recent years.

“I’ve seen many physical changes and changes in technology at the school, but the one thing that has remained constant is the support of the parish for the school and parishioners’ involvement with the school and extracurricular activities,” Hart said. “We always have somebody willing to volunteer at the school.”

Hart said he teaches all at the parish schools in central and southern Indiana are dedicated to seeing their students do well in school and in life.

“He is very proud of the fact that two of my former students are studying to be priests—Sean Dunda and Eric Hodde—and one student—Heather Dunda—is studying to be a sister.”

Kathleen Givan, a teacher aide for first-grade students for eight years, said her parents helped found St. Malachy School in 1955.

“It was very important for both of my parents—Patrick and Mary Wynne—to make sure that their five children received a Catholic education,” Givan said. “At the time, the closest Catholic schools were at St. Michael the Archangel Parish and St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis.”

Ground was broken for St. Malachy School on April 3, 1955, and the new school opened that September.

“The legacy lives on and on,” Givan said, “because of the love and care and concern of early parishioners who looked ahead [and planned] so their children could be educated in a Catholic environment.”

Third-gradeDonnie Hott said he likes attending St. Malachy School because “the teachers are really nice” and he gets to play on the parish’s CYO third-grade football team.

Seventh-grader Emily Metallic—who’s mother, Donna, is the president of the Parent Teacher Organization—said she is happy attending St. Malachy School because she has “a lot of friends and the teachers help you if you have problems.”

When St. Malachy School was founded 50 years ago, the students learned about Haiti and other Third World countries in geography or special studies classes.

Now, St. Malachy students raise funds to help children receive a Catholic education in Haiti.

“Each class sponsors a school child in Haiti and sends money there regularly,” Sullivan said. “We have pictures of the students in the classrooms, and occasionally we’ll send letters to Haiti. The classes raise money for the Haitian students with school fundraisers and free-will donations.”

She said St. Malachy Parish has “a very active medical mission that goes to Haiti twice a year to help the people.”

That’s how an 8-year-old girl named Fredeline Datineau from St. Marguerite Parish in Port Margo, Haiti, was able to attend St. Malachy School temporarily while recuperating from surgery on her arm two years ago.

“It was a very good learning experience,” Sullivan said. “She stayed with the Zielinski family. It was a good experience for Fredeline as well as for us. I think the students realized how much more we have in the U.S., and they enjoyed seeing Fredeline experience that. The kids loved her. She was quite charming. They took her in and she was one of them.”

St. Malachy School kindergartners, from left, Evan Pierce, Tyler Sylvia, Cam Houston, Ashton Hickman, McKenzie Schwartz, Drew Cart, Sydney Penny and Rachel Barnes perform the song “Baby Jesus, We Love You” during the annual Christmas program for kindergartners through third-graders on Dec. 9 at the school’s Noll Hall. The concert and program related the story of the Nativity.

St. Malachy School third-grade teacher Beth Lewis helps Fredeline Datineau from St. Marguerite Parish in Port Margo, Haiti, with a picture book while third-grader Adrienne Damler, left, listens as she reads it in March of 2004. Fredeline lived with Paul and Sheila Zielinski’s family in Pittsboro and briefly attended St. Malachy School while recuperating from surgery on her arm. She celebrated her eighth birthday in Indiana.
Nativity School celebrates 50 years with new chapel

By Mary Ann Wyand

Nativity School in Indianapolis is 50 years old this year, and the parish has established a chapel in the school to commemorate a half century of Catholic education.

Peg Dispenzieri, Nativity’s principal for the past four years, said Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ parishioners are very supportive of the school ministry, which was started in a converted barn on the parish property at 7225 Southeastern Ave.

“We’re the only Catholic church and the only Catholic school in Franklin Township,” she said. “We’re a big part of the community. We hold our Catholic faith very much in the forefront of what we do here at the school.”

Dispenzieri said Nativity School has maintained “a tradition of academic excellence with extremely dedicated teachers” during three building programs in the past decade that were necessitated by the continued population growth in what was formerly farmland southeast of Indianapolis.

“Now there are so many people moving into the area that we’ve needed three expansions in 10 years,” she said, “but the thing that amazes me is that Nativity parishioners have been so supportive of the building programs that they have committed their time and resources to complete them. The parishioners really believe in the school, and they support it 100 percent. We have pretty much paid off the expansions as we’ve done them.”

Nativity School serves preschool-age children through the eighth-grade, she said. There are two classes per grade, 24 teachers and 345 students this school year.

“The primary grades, the kindergarten and the preschool—which was started two years ago—are located in the second new addition that was built about five years ago,” Dispenzieri said. “The middle school—the sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grades—has pretty much taken over the last new addition that was added a couple of years ago.”

This year, she said, “we’re very proud of the new chapel in what used to be our old computer lab. We have morning prayer there for teachers, and students use it for prayer services or for music and liturgy practice before school Masses on Fridays in the church.”

Parishioner Bob Gries of Indianapolis built the altar and is currently finishing the ambo, she said, and students from every grade helped make colorful banners depicting the fruits of the Holy Spirit that decorate the chapel walls.

“She said Father Patrick Doyle, Nativity’s pastor, will dedicate the chapel after Gries installs the new ambo. “We’re celebrating our anniversary with events throughout the school year,” Dispenzieri said. “We had a huge parish Multisport at the beginning of the school year and tied it into our parish festival. We also sponsored a family fun run in October at our nearby Southeastway Park, and lots of people participated in the 5K race.”

Sixth-grader Emily Dehner said she has enjoyed the anniversary celebrations this year and likes attending Nativity School because “the people are really nice and you learn a lot here.”

Second-grader Evan Fehringer likes the celebrations too, and thinks its “pretty cool” that Nativity’s modern school building started out as a converted barn.

Bob Gries’ wife, Kathy, started the kindergarten program and now teaches a first-grade class. She has worked at Nativity School for two decades. “I think one of our big pluses is that although we’ve grown as far as having extra classes, we’ve also kept a little bit of the small school atmosphere,” Kathy Gries said. “People know each other, we have really good financial support from our families, and the teachers have a wonderful rapport with parents. We have good ISTEP scores, and I think we do a good job with academics.”

Best of all, she said, is the fact that “we can bring God into all our different classes, and have the opportunity to attend liturgy, prayer services and other special things together in Lent and Advent that are a real advantage for us.”

Nativity’s other first-grade teacher, Ann Skirvin, is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis and also has taught at Nativity School for more than 20 years.

Skirvin remembers teaching kindergarten when that classroom was located in the church building.

“In 1977, my first year of teaching, I had 35 students,” she said. “That was a lot of kids. With all the building that is under-way in Franklin Township in recent years, the parish is really making an effort to offer a Catholic education to more families.”

“As a teacher, I feel very welcome here,” Skirvin said. “I spent my whole career here, and never wanted to work anywhere else. I really enjoy the families here, and there is a lot of parish support for the school. Adding on to a school three times in the fairly recent past is very expensive, but parish support for the capital campaign made it possible. It’s a good feeling as a teacher to know that the whole parish family is supportive of the Church’s mission of Catholic education.”

Skirvin said she also appreciates the addition of a chapel for the students, faculty and staff. “It’s nice to have a sacred space in the school,” she said. “I told the children that it’s nice to be able to focus on prayer there because we can’t necessarily hear God with our ears, but sometimes we can hear him in our heart when we’re in a nice, quiet place.”

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School, Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High
$42,000 had been funneled through
led fundraising efforts in Indianapolis for
the president of Roncalli High School and
Hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi
before." said Hollowell, who teaches there through
was hard for him to fathom.
Hollowell's father, Joseph Hollowell, is
principal. "These people had
fallen on some tough times, and it was a
great opportunity for our kids to minister
and show how much they care.
Tony Hollowell said he was astonished
by the magnitude of the response by arch-
diocesan schools.
"You're overwhelmed by the storm," he said, "but it's even more
overwhelming to see that response, that generosity, that
people gave to our school so openly."
Katrina was a heavy burden for Tony
Hollowell and the Resurrection students and teachers to bear at the start of the
school year last August.
But he said the response to the storm
strengthened his "conviction of the value of Catholic schools and their responsibil-
ity to form people who will change the
world, not only by what they believe but also by what they do."
Many other archdiocesan schools orga-
nized relief efforts to aid those schools and
students affected by Katrina.
Students at Father Michael Shawe
Memorial Jr./Sr. High School in Madison
collected more than $1,300 for hurricane relief.
Eighty shoeboxes filled with Christmas
gifts were sent to students at St. Stephen
School in New Orleans by St. Christopher
School students in Indianapolis.
Students at Father Thomas Seccina
Memorial High School in Indianapolis were
among the volunteers who traveled to
Louisiana to help repair St. Anthony
of Padua School in New Orleans.
The service trip was sponsored by Our
Lady of the Greenwood Parish in
Greenwood shortly after Christmas. The
students helped clean up the school and
prepare the classrooms for its reopening.
Archdiocesan schools also helped
those affected by Katrina by opening their
doors to students whose families moved to
Indiana because of the storm.
At least 10 schools across the archdi-
cese collectively took in more than
20 students.
Haley Lafferre, a fifth-grader at
St. Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg,
said the welcome she received there,
from St. Lawrence students soon
calmed her fears.
"Everybody's nice. On my first day, [stu-
dents] came up and asked me if I wanted
to sit with them at lunch and go outside
and play with them."
"It's been really great," she said.
"My first day, I was nervous about
becoming a student in a new school in a
place that she had only visited briefly at
Christmas, but the warm welcome she received from St. Lawrence students soon
made her feel more comfortable.
Christian Curry, a 13-year-old student
at Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr.
High School in Madison, went to St.
Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg,
where she was housed by the students.
Christian said she is especially looking
forward to taking part in the science fair
and "the experience of being a junior and senior in high school, those special moments."
Office of Catholic Education’s Web site is helpful resource

By Brandon A. Evans

About two years ago, the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education (OCE) received an opportunity to radically improve its Web site. With Project Exceed funds—that’s more than $300,000 from Lilly Endowment Inc. and other generous corporate and individual donors—we developed a Web site that was “very functional,” said G. Joseph Peters, associate executive director of Catholic education.

While the rest of the archdiocesan Web site is out of date—and receiving a major renovation later this year—OCE took advantage of the right moment to create a powerful site (www.archindy.org/oce) with the help of ServerSide Inc., which hosts the main archdiocesan site.

Though it is still “a work in progress,” Peters said, it has already shown tremendous success. In a single month last year, OCE garnered half of the hits that all the rest of the archdiocesan site received and more than 7,500 visitors registered more than 80,000 “page views.”

Those who use the site include the general public, pastors, principals, directors of religious education and youth ministers. Each week, an OCE-notes e-mail newsletter goes out with links to the site is sent to the principals. Besides the public face of the site, school administrators can access a members’ section that contains a variety of information, including archives of newsletters, the chance to apply for jobs or the opportunity to sign up for workshops.

Visitors can browse through the OCE staff listing, look up individual schools, see the archdiocesan curriculum or check out an organized calendar of events.

Local news and announcements are posted on the homepage, and those interested in something more specific can delve further into the site. Peters said that includes troubleshooting and the development of new features.

“We can easily update most sections of our Web site through our administrative assistants,” Peters said. Anyone who knows how to use a word processing program can learn how to update the site, and they can do it from the office or from home if necessary.

One of the effects of the Web site, he said, has been to make the archdiocese “smaller”—to pull together many aspects of Catholic education in central and southern Indiana in one place.

The future will see continued development of the OCE site, and the redesign of the archdiocesan site will take into account the effectiveness of OCE’s site.

Archdiocesan Schools Consortium serves center city

By John Shaughnessy

A framed poster in Connie Zittnan’s office asks the simple question that guides her efforts as the director of the Archdiocesan Schools Consortium: “How can we turn away from the faces of the children?”

Zittnan gave her own answer as she lightly hit a table with her fist—a gesture that stresses the point that she will never turn away from a child because she has seen those who seemed beyond hope achieve tremendous success.

Like the girl in a difficult family background who came to an Indianapolis center-city Catholic school and went on to become a lawyer.

Or the boy filled with anger and hurt who seemed destined to end up in a gang yet found a home and a new focus on life in one of the six Catholic schools that form the consortium.

The Archdiocesan Schools Consortium serves St. Andrew School, Holy Cross Central School, Central Catholic School, St. Andrew & St. Rita Catholic Academy, St. Philip Neri School and St. Rita School, all in Indianapolis.

We want them fully prepared to be leaders in their high school settings,” Zittnan said. “We want them to be leaders in the community and role models for those who come behind them.

“There is data to support that when students move through our six consortium schools, the rate of graduation from high school is going to be high,” she said.

“Students who start in our consortium schools and move through our Catholic high schools will attend post-secondary education four to seven times that of their counterparts who do not attend our Catholic schools.”

The consortium began in September 2003, driven by Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein’s desire to continue to offer a quality Catholic education to center-city students.

The consortium approach complements that desire by helping the six schools operate more efficiently by consolidating and coordinating such areas as finances, maintenance and marketing, according to Tony Watt, the consortium’s chairman of the board.

He said financial support for the consortium schools has come from the archdiocese through generous contributions from corporations, foundations and individuals.

“It’s not just [a sharing of] financial resources but human resources,” Watt said. “One of the challenges of the consortium is to extract the principal from non-academic tasks. We’re trying to get more bang for our buck.”

For Zittnan, the program’s greatest return will come as it continues to produce the kind of student success stories that she witnessed for about 10 years as the principal of the school which is now called the St. Andrew & St. Rita Catholic Academy.

The two schools were merged before the 2002-03 school year.

“There are many cases where children came in at the pre-school or middle school [grades], and they’ve graduated from post-secondary education and they’re now in their careers,” she said. “Have you ever looked at every individual child. If the attention wasn’t given to that child, he or she wouldn’t have moved on.”

Zittnan said she often gets questions from people who wonder why the archdiocese has made such a big commitment to the consortium schools when about 75 percent of the students are non-Catholic.

“A lot of times we’ll hear, ‘Why are we in the urban setting when most of the children are not Catholic?’ ” she said. “I say, ‘That’s why we are there. We’re Catholic. That’s our mission—serving others. Our reason for being is why we are here.’

Watt nodded in his head and added, “Jesus didn’t separate people. He evangelized to everyone. One of our responsibilities is to help those in need. Many of the children who go to our schools are in need. If we get a child at a young age, we can take them to the road of success in education.”

Both Watt and Zittnan credit the principals, teachers, staff and volunteers at the consortium schools for making a difference in the lives of the students.

They also stress the need for help from volunteers and parishies who aren’t a part of the consortium schools.

When they say it takes a village to raise a child, we need six villages and the villages beyond—which are the parishes beyond the consortium—to make this happen,” Zittnan said. “We need to get it done.”

(For more information about ways to help the Archdiocesan Schools Consortium serve students, call 317-236-7324 or 800-382-9863, ext. 7324.)
Indianapolis has earned more Blue Ribbons during 2004 and 2005 than any other diocese in the country. Gerald Ernstberger, principal of Holy Family School in New Albany, said the school’s 362 students were excited to celebrate the distinction of receiving the national education award for the second time since 2001 during a Mass and open house on Nov. 20 at the New Albany Deanery parish.

“It’s nice to have earned the Blue Ribbon award under both programs—the original U.S. Department of Education Award and then the No Child Left Behind Act award,” he said. “The criteria are different, and it’s nice to be able to get that recognition under both sets of criteria,” Ernstberger said he and eighth-grade teacher Kathy Weber enjoyed hearing Margaret Spellings, secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, speak during a Nov. 11 luncheon in Washington, and they appreciated the workshops with administrators of other schools that earned Blue Ribbon awards.

“We were learning from administrators of schools that have done really great things,” he said. “It was very helpful.”

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**U.S. Department of Education honors five schools**

By Mary Ann Wyand

Five Catholic schools in central and southern Indiana received national recognition for excellence in education last year. During a U.S. Department of Education ceremony on Nov. 11 in Washington, D.C., representatives of the archdiocese’s newest No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence accepted the awards on behalf of the students, faculty, staff, parents and volunteers who helped make this recognition possible.

The newest archdiocesan schools to receive the national honor are St. Simon the Apostle School in Indianapolis, Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Indianapolis, St. Michael School in Greenfield, St. Thomas Aquinas School in Indianapolis and Holy Family School in New Albany.

During their visit to the nation’s capital, representatives of these schools also attended a special reception on Nov. 10 that was hosted by the National Catholic Education Association.

“The Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis have been extraordinarily well-represented in the Blue Ribbon Schools program since its inception,” said G. Joseph Peters, associate executive director of Catholic Education for the archdiocese.

Six archdiocesan schools were awarded Blue Ribbons during 2004 and 2005 and four schools earned this national recognition during 2003. Peters said, for a total of 15 awards in the past three years.

Since the first Blue Ribbon award was presented in 1985, he said, 24 national Blue Ribbon awards have been earned by 19 Catholic schools in the archdiocese. Peters said the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has earned more Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence awards from the U.S. Department of Education than any other diocese in the country.

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**Grants help A Promise to Keep promote chastity**

By Mary Ann Wyand

Lights ... camera ... action! It’s time to update seven educational videos for the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education’s A Promise to Keep: God’s Gift of Human Sexuality chastity program.

Thanks to a $45,000 grant from Our Sunday Visitor Inc. in Huntington, Ind., awarded on Nov. 21, Margaret Hendricks, the program director of A Promise to Keep, will be able to update printed materials and videos used by teenage peer mentors who present the abstinence education programs to adolescents at Catholic middle schools and parish religious education classes.

Since 2001, Our Sunday Visitor Inc. has supported A Promise to Keep with grants,” Hendricks said. “We’re very grateful for their continued support.”

St. Vincent Health officials in Indianapolis also have helped fund OVC’s chastity program since A Promise to Keep was created in 1994, she said, by providing an annual grant to help with operating expenses.

“We would not be where we are today if it wasn’t for the help we receive from Our Sunday Visitor and St. Vincent Health,” Hendricks said. “We appreciate their ongoing corporate support of our operating expenses. Originally, St. Vincent Health officials made a three-year commitment to the project and agreed to underwrite some of the expenses for A Promise to Keep. However, due to the program’s success, as early as 1995 St. Vincent Health officials reconsidered their commitment and encouraged the Office of Catholic Education to apply annually for a St. Vincent Health Charity Care grant.”

Hendricks said there also has been financial support from other benefactors, who requested that they remain anonymous.

In May, Hendricks will start writing the scripts for the new videos, which will be produced by an Indianapolis production company and are expected to be ready for use in the classroom setting during the 2007-08 school year.

The pilot program was created by Eve Jackson, the former A Promise to Keep coordinator, in the archdiocese 12 years ago. About 100 teenage peer mentors from the six Catholic high schools in Indianapolis were trained as chastity peer mentors to present abstinence education programs for middle school students at 30 Indianapolis-area grade schools in 1994.

This year, about 425 high school peer mentors are reaching about 5,000 junior- and senior-high-age adolescents enrolled in parish grade schools and religious education programs in seven deaneries in the archdiocese.

Evidence of the success of A Promise to Keep is also seen through the growth of The PEERS Project and the expansion of the Peers Educating Peers about Positive Values (PEP) curriculum. Jackson, the current executive director of The PEERS Project, said the PEP curriculum is a non-sectarian version of A Promise to Keep and is presented in approximately 50 public school corporations and youth-serving organizations in 34 counties throughout the state.

Hendricks said Jackson produced the first chastity education videos in 1995 and 1996. “We have had to use the videos for both A Promise to Keep and the federally funded Peers Educating Peers project,” she said. “Now we will be able to add more Catholic theology to the updated videos for A Promise to Keep.”

The high school peer mentors who acted in the first videos are college graduates now, she said. “They are moms and dads and firemen and teachers. They’re all grown up, and it’s past time for the videos to be updated!”

During the past 10 years, Hendricks said, “we have seen a reduction in the number of sexually active teenagers, but the spread of sexually transmitted diseases has continued to increase exponentially. From a faith perspective, we have an obligation to introduce God’s instructions for our life by applying the deeper meanings of the [Ten] Commandments and Catholic teachings on the theology of the body. We couldn’t do that before because we also had to use the videos for secular venues.”

Hendricks said the Our Sunday Visitor grant will also enable OVC to introduce social justice issues and other Catholic topics in the new videos.

“It is evident that there is an urgent need for our program and its curriculum to update the factual information referred to in the videos,” she said. “It will strengthen our faith-based program to add Catholic theology to the videos so they will reflect the wisdom and beauty of our Church’s teaching on chastity and sexuality, … and adoption as a loving option for unplanned pregnancy.”

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Sr. James Michael Kesterson, SP (St. Jude School) 317-784-6828

Mrs. Cindy Greer (St. Mark School) 317-785-4013

Mr. Joe Hansen (St. Roch School) 317-784-9144

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**By Mary Ann Wyand**

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Shawe Memorial senior's book to be published this year

By Mary Ann Wyand

Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School was founded 50 years ago in Madison, and its history was a story waiting to be told until a Shawe senior decided to write a book about it in 2005.

Now a freshman and communications major at Berry College in Rome, Ga., Prince of Peace parishioner Jacob Laskowski of Madison is currently putting the finishing touches on his book, Looking Back: The Story of the Hilltopper, and raising funds to pay for printing costs.

"What started as a school project my senior year quickly turned into a much larger undertaking than I ever imagined," he said. "With only one year of a journalism class, I hadn't the slightest idea [how to begin], making an entire book by myself. I figured it would be easy when I started, but I soon realized it wasn't close to what I had dreamt it would be. However, I was too excited about finishing it to ever think about giving up."

His book focuses on "the things that make Shawe Memorial different from other schools."

He decided to start his book with a chapter about "the rich history of Catholic education in Madison" and the events that led to the school's founding in 1955.

"Then came the part I never thought I'd finish—the pictures," Laskowski said. "I went through tons of photos from old newspapers to all 49 yearbooks. I borrowed photos from alumni, parents and anyone willing to help."

But when Laskowski finally thought he was finished with the book last year, he decided that he didn't like the way he had designed it so he started over.

"When I did finally finish, I began writing to several Madison-area community organizations soliciting funds to print the book," he said. "I still can't believe I actually finished. It has been an immense joy researching [facts] for this project. . . . It's been something that I will never forget doing, and will always help me remember my days at 201 W. State St."

He has collected about half of the money he needs to cover printing costs, and plans to return home to attend Shawe Memorial's homecoming celebration on Jan. 28 to promote advance sales of the book. He has received $7,000 in major donations, but still needs to raise $8,000 to print copies of the 130-page, hard-cover book, which has 250 color or black and white photographs.

"It was a lot of fun," he said. "I learned so much, and I'd do it again."

Laskowski hopes Shawe alumni will buy the book, and that it will help them remember the days when they were Hilltoppers.

He also hopes Madison-area residents and other people interested in the history of this scenic southeastern Indiana community will purchase the historical book about five decades of Catholic education—many years of academics, extracurricular activities and sports.


Father Hilary Meny of Haubstadt, Ind., a retired diocesan priest who celebrated his 91st birthday on Jan. 21, wrote the foreword for the book.

Laskowski explains that "Father Meny is credited with the vision of a Catholic high school and grade school on the hilltop in Madison. With the help of a group of supporters, Father Meny created Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School and then, 10 years later, Pope John XXIII Elementary School. He worked hard to raise the money needed to build these two schools."

In the foreword, Father Meny recalls a "routine meeting of the priests" with Archbishop Paul C. Schulte in the early 1950s at the St. Mary Parish rectory in North Vernon.

"The archbishop stated that he would like to meet with the priests from the Madison area . . . ," Father Meny writes. "All of us were moved with wonder as to what the archbishop was going to say to us. Then the archbishop relayed to us that he had received a letter from the Mother Superior of the Ursuline Sisters in Louisville. In her letter, the Mother Superior offered that, if the two parish grade schools in Madison, St. Mary's and St. Michael's schools, were combined as one in one building, she would be willing to staff a Catholic high school at Madison."

Archbishop Schulte told the priests that this offer was "too good to be turned down" and asked the priests to sign a document endorsing the proposal.

Father Meny and other Madison area priests—Father George Sebastian, pastor of St. Mary Parish; Father Charles Walsh, pastor of St. Michael Parish; Father Albert Diezeman, assistant pastor of St. Mary Parish; and Father Henry Gardener, pastor of St. Anthony Parish in China—signed the document.

Laskowski dedicates the book to the Hilltoppers alumni and explains that it is because of the graduates that Shawe Memorial High School is "what it was years ago, what it is today and what it will be in the future."

Readers will learn that Madison was settled by hunters in the early 1800s and mapped as a town in 1809. The first Catholic Mass was celebrated there in 1814, but Catholicism "was not respected highly" and "many Catholics in the town were driven away from their faith."

Servant of God Bishop Simon Bruté, the first bishop of the Vincennes Diocese in Indiana, was determined to establish a Catholic parish in Madison and began sending missionary priests there. He appointed Father Michael Shawe as the first resident priest in Madison.

Construction of the Madison-Indianapolis Railroad by Irish immigrants increased the number of Catholics in the primarily Protestant area, and many of the workers decided to live in the Ohio River community. A Presbyterian man donated the land for the construction of St. Michael the Archangel Parish, which was founded in 1837.

In 1993, St. Michael, St. Mary and St. Patrick parishes in Madison and St. Anthony Parish in China were consolidated and renamed Prince of Peace Parish by Archbishop Daniel M. Bechlemir. The former St. Mary Church is now Prince of Peace Church.

When Laskowski writes about the founding of the Catholic grade schools and his alma mater, it is evident that he has been a student of history, including academics, extracurricular activities and sports.

Shawe Memorial High School graduate Jacob Laskowski of Madison wrote a historical book about his school during his senior year. It will be published this year. History teacher Jennifer Nigg of Madison and others helped him complete the book.

Laskowski explains that "Father Meny was close to what I had dreamt it would be. However, I was too excited about finishing it to ever think about giving up."

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Multisensory techniques help resource students

By Mary Ann Wyand

Windows of learning open easily for some students, but may not open at all for children who struggle with learning disabilities.

Parents share their children’s frustrations because they don’t know how to help them understand school assignments. Resource programs and specially trained teachers at Catholic schools are an answer to prayers for many parents who want their children to attend a “mainstream” school.

St. Thomas Aquinas parishioner Patrice Payne of Carmel, Ind., has served as the resource teacher at St. Thomas Aquinas School in Indianapolis for 18 years and enjoys helping students discover their own unique ways to understand mathematics or learn how to read better using multisensory techniques.

Payne works with Peggy Linard of Indianapolis, who also is a resource teacher at the Indianapolis North Deanery grade school, to help students accomplish tasks they never dreamed they could do because of their learning disabilities.

Some students receive resource services once or twice a day, Payne said, while others only need extra help a couple of times a week for study skill support or an occasional consultation to check on their progress.

Each student’s learning needs are unique, she said, and every student is special. Some students learn best with the “pull-out” model in the resource classroom, and others can be helped with the “inclusion” model in the classroom.

“Recently, I read a report that said 4.4 million children have been diagnosed with attention deficit disorder in the U.S.,” Payne said. “That covers all age levels up to age 18. Researchers are also finding that more adults have attention deficit disorder than previously suspected.” Learning disabilities can cause students to suffer from depression or struggle with self-esteem, she said. “It affects how students perform in the classroom and how their peers perceive them.”

At St. Thomas Aquinas School, there is no stigma attached to resource lessons, Payne said, and students enjoy spending time with “Mrs. Payne and Mrs. Linard.” “We assist students in all subject areas as they progress through their years at St. Thomas Aquinas School,” Payne said. “Some students just need a little bit of help to get a jump-start on the year and then they’re fine, but usually those are the students who don’t have a diagnosed learning disability.”

Payne said the term “learning disability” is “a kind of catch-all phrase” that covers many different kinds of special needs. “As we do more research and learn more about the brain, we’re finding that it encompasses so much more than just cognition and learning,” she said. “Especially in terms of the spectrum disorders—autism or Asperger’s [syndrome], for example—we’re finding that there’s a lot of connections … where these conditions will exist side by side.”

She said various types of sensory activities can help students cope with their learning disabilities and figure out ways to increase their level of comprehension.

St. Thomas Aquinas School’s resource program earned its second national SPICE (Selected Program for Improving Catholic Education) Award from the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) last year.

Payne and Linard attended the 2005 NCEA Conference on June 24-26 in Boston to present a workshop about resource techniques that enhance learning skills.

Payne earned the school’s first national SPICE Award in 1997. They are especially grateful to the Guardian Angel Guild in Indianapolis, whose members fundraise to support resource programs at Catholic grade schools in Marion County. The guild was founded in 1959. “They have done so much to help the Catholic schools throughout the years,” Payne said. “They underwrite so much of the private tests that have to be done at St. Mary’s Child Center in Indianapolis, and that has helped parents who can’t afford to pay for tests for their children. The guild also supplied specially engineered sound therapy equipment to help us improve students’ learning modalities.”
Students’ ISTEP scores show continued improvement

By John Shaughnessy

For five straight years, Catholic school students in the archdiocese have shown continued improvement in Indiana’s standardized testing—just one of the trends that excite educators and administrators at the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education.

“The trend lines we want to show are that the longer the students are with us, the better they get,” said G. Joseph Peters, associate executive director of Catholic education for the archdiocese.

Both trends surfaced in the office’s report of the archdiocese’s scores for the 2005-06 ISTEP+ (Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus).

Since the 2001-02 school year, the percentage of archdiocesan students passing both the math and language arts tests has risen from 75.7 percent to 86.2 percent for this school year. The 86.2 percent compares to the 64.1 percent of all Indiana students passing both tests.

“One of the advantages we have is the continuity we’re able to maintain with our students from the K-8th grade,” said Ronald Costello, associate executive director of Catholic education and school improvement and director of Project EXCEED. “And we’re able to sustain that at the high school level.”

Costello and Peters credit this success to stressing two key areas: aligning the curriculum to meet the academic standards and providing expanded training for educators.

The increased emphasis began in 2001-02 with a $10 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. that was combined with $5 million from other corporate and individual donors.

“We focused on the areas where the students needed the most help—writing and problem solving,” Costello said.

Now, the Office of Catholic Education has added another focus: an approach to standardized testing called “Value-Added Assessment.”

Developed by an education researcher in Tennessee, the approach concentrates on measuring not only a student’s proficiency, but also the “growth” of a student’s improvement in test scores from one year to the next.

For the archdiocese, the focus is a combination of achieving high proficiency for all students and “high growth” for each individual student.

“We really ought to be looking at each student,” Costello said. “We’ve moved accountability away from the school level to the individual level. You can look good on the average, but not be meeting the needs of the individual student.”

The Office of Catholic Education has already begun to collect information from several schools concerning that approach.

To show the benefits of value-added assessment, Costello shared an article written by Theodore Hershberg, executive director of Operation Public Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

In his article, Hershberg notes that several states—including Arkansas, Minnesota, Colorado and Florida—have passed legislation calling for the introduction of value-added assessment models.

“These states have recognized the many advantages of value-added assessment,” Hershberg writes. “It traces the academic progress of individual students, rather than cohorts; it focuses on ensuring that all students, not simply the lowest performers, receive at least a year’s worth of growth in a year; it provides educators with rich diagnostics to improve instruction.”

Costello stated the goal of the archdiocese’s educational ministry more simply.

“Every student has value,” he said. “We expect them to grow at more than a year’s level each year.”
By Sean Gallagher

Catholic schools should be centers of evangelization and places where young boys and girls are formed to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

This is the vision set out for Catholic schools by the new National Directory for Catechesis (NDC), published last year by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. According to Harry Dudley, associate executive director of faith formation for the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education (OCE), the NDC affirms many of the things that Catholic schools in central and southern Indiana are already doing, but asks them to be more deliberate about passing on the faith.

“Let’s do them intentionally and well or say, ‘Let’s not do them unconsciously. We’re doing a lot of good, but asks them to be more deliberate about passing on the faith,” he said. “We’re doing a lot of good about passing on the faith. If [the students] grow in their faith, it’s because we’re not here just to teach religion,” she said. “It permeates every subject area. You can’t separate it.”

But more than simply allowing the school’s Catholic identity to be embodied in all its academic subjects, Sister Joanita emphasized that the Catholic nature of St. Mary School seeps down into the way that students and staff relate to one another. “It’s the courtesy,” she said. “It’s the respect [shown] toward another one. It’s the expectations throughout the whole day and the way they treat one another. Ultimately, we learn this through Jesus.”

This focus on evangelization that the NDC calls Catholic schools to take on brings forth the challenge of how Catholic schools relate to their students who are not Catholic.

“It’s the courtesy,” she said. “It’s the respect [shown] toward another one. It’s the expectations throughout the whole day and the way they treat one another. Ultimately, we learn this through Jesus.”

Sister Joanita encourages St. Mary School students to be involved in the parish’s service ministries, including its St. Vincent de Paul Society chapter. “Our students help out with that whenever they can,” she said. “We’re all in it together. [We’re] not separate.”

Clady is looking forward to studying the NDC with both members of the staff and those in the parish involved in religious education programs. “That is one of the [top] priorities for us,” he said.

Dudley said that over the next year and a half, other school leaders in the archdiocese will have the opportunity to learn more about the NDC through archdiocesan-sponsored convocations and deanery-based workshops. He also said the University of Dayton is offering online courses for school leaders to learn more about the National Directory for Catechesis.

Catholic Schools
Character. Compassion. Values.

By Sean Gallagher

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This bond was embodied recently by a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary and a crucifix adorning a stairwell at St. Mary School in New Albany in this file photo from 2004. The National Directory for Catechesis, published last year by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, calls Catholic schools to be centers of evangelization and places where its students are formed to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

The Criterion Friday, January 27, 2006
Second-graders Ashley Sedler and Kirsten Stenger both drew illustrations about the fun they have living near the Ohio River.

By Mike Krokos

The sun shines in the morning air,
The moon will glow when you say a prayer.
The sky is so blue you’d think it’s a sea,
Southern Indiana will fill you with glee.

Titled “Southern Indiana,” that poem by sixth-grader Margo Tedesco begins Along the River in Southeastern Indiana, a collection of fictional stories and poems written by students of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception School in Aurora. What makes the 121-page book, published by Pen & Publish in Bloomington, even more impressive is the fact that all 145 of the school’s kindergarten through eighth-grade students share their talents. While some students wrote poems or stories, others used their artistic gifts to draw illustrations.

“A parent suggested it,” explained Beth Eldridge, the sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade language arts teacher, of the book project. “I got the kids started on it at the beginning of the school year.” What followed was two months of brainstorming and work where the students focused on creating fictional stories about southeastern Indiana. Some chose to focus on well-known local sites such as Hillforest Mansion and Riverview Cemetery. Others felt compelled to include other nearby treasures like the Ohio River.

Sixth-grader Mark Hetzer’s poem titled “The Ohio River” speaks volumes about how he feels about the body of water that plays a big part in the life of many Aurora residents: “The Ohio River runs by here, I like it a lot cause it’s so near. Boats go by every day, But never stop to chat and play. I swim and I fish, And boy do I wish I could. I like that students were able to put their ideas into the stories,” Natalie Taylor said of the project. Eldridge said, but the biggest challenge was “getting organized and getting all the students involved.”

The community response to the book project was overwhelming. Eldridge said, seventh- and eighth-grade students went around Aurora seeking $10 donations from businesses to help pay for the book’s publishing costs. More than 40 businesses contributed—with some giving as much as $50 each for the project. To date, 220 copies of the book have been sold, and the proceeds are being used for the school’s accelerated reading program. Despite the challenges and hard work, Eldridge said she hopes to repeat the project.

“I got to see all types of creativity, she said. In the end, the various gifts that students shared are what really make the book so special, the teacher said. “I’m so proud of the students and the work they did,” she said, “and I think they’re proud of it as well.”

Taylor agreed. “It was awesome,” she said.

(For more information or to purchase a copy of Along the River in Southeastern Indiana, call St. Mary School in Aurora at 812-926-1558. The book may also be purchased online at amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com)
Leadership program recruits strong administrators

By Sean Gallagher

Catholic schools in central and southern Indiana have a long history of excellence. A part of maintaining this achievement record is the recruitment and training of strong candidates for administrative positions at archdiocesan schools.

For more than 10 years, the archdiocese’s Office of Catholic Education (OCE) has been effective in doing this through its Catholic School Leadership program. More than half of the program’s 45 participants during its first eight years became administrators of archdiocesan schools.

Rob Rash, OCE’s associate director for schools, administrative personnel and professional development, oversees the program and thinks it is a good way for the archdiocese to be pro-active about recruiting strong school leaders.

“It’s a deliberate effort,” Rash said. “We just don’t sit around and wait for them to come.”

The Office of Catholic Education encourages current school principals to identify strong candidates among their teachers for the leadership program. Rash also offers informational sessions that let prospective principal candidates know more about it.

Over an approximately 12-month period, the program’s participants learn in 18 sessions about specific aspects of leading a Catholic school that ordinarily would not be covered in graduate school classes required for those interested in becoming principals.

Tina Albin, in her first year as the principal of St. Nicholas School in Ripley County, participated in the program last year. She had been studying for her administrative license at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind. and found that the Catholic School Leadership program helped her to become a strong school leader in the archdiocese.

“It gave me the knowledge of exactly [what] … being an administrator at a Catholic school is about,” she said. Part of what Albin learned is the close relationship that Catholic school principals in the archdiocese form with each other and those who serve them in archdiocesan leadership.

The program helped her and the other participants form these bonds with other principals, those who work in OCE and such diverse archdiocesan leaders as Edward Isakson, director of human resources, and Jeffrey Stumpf, chief financial officer of the archdiocese.

Ruth Tinsley was a program participant with Albin and now leads St. Andrew & St. Rita Catholic Academy in Indianapolis.

Tinsley said that the relationships she formed through the program gave her a broad base of knowledge that she can use to face her center-city school’s challenges.

“You didn’t just get one possible solution,” she said. “You had the combined knowledge of everyone in the group [and the presenters] to help you solve your problem.”

Topics that the program’s presenters address include the budget process for Catholic schools, how to do job interviews, school fundraising and the professional standards for Catholic school principals.

But, according to Rash, the program is set up for its participants to gain practical knowledge in these and other areas.

“It exposes the candidates to real-world situations,” he said. “It’s designed to be more experiential than traditional textbook [learning].”

But Tinsley also noted that, in addition to helping her know the specific administrative tasks of leading a Catholic school, the program helped her be more attentive to a parish school’s overall Catholic identity.

“This allowed us to specialize,” she said. “It brought the specialty area of the Catholic [faith] in and so it reinforced the Catholic identity and how we can lead as Catholic principals.”

“When I’m in a Catholic school, I can pray with my students,” Tinsley said. “I can model what it is to be an adult who is Catholic. And I can do all of that in any subject that we have here at the school, whether it be math, science or social studies. It does not have to be religion classes. It’s in what we do every day.”

The program will start again soon, and Albin encouraged Catholic school teachers who might be interested in administration to consider participating in it.

“It’s such a wonderful program for aspiring administrators to take,” she said. “It gives you a hands-on experience and knowledge of what exactly a Catholic school principal does.”

(Students who want to learn more about the Catholic School Leadership program should call Rob Rash at 317-236-1544 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1544.)
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 235,000 Catholics.

Special programs operating under the auspices of OCE are A Promise to Keep, a peer-mentoring sexual abstinence program sponsored by St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis, and SPRED, the Special Religious Education (OCE), the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) and St. Mary’s Child Center.

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 Excel 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 parish councils, 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 curricula, provide inservice training, produce manuals and guidelines, and foster professional development.

Office of Catholic Education

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Support for site-based programs is provided through direct service, resources, consultation, training, community-building and collaboration with constituents in the parishes and schools in conjunction with other archdiocesan agencies.

Annual savings to Indiana taxpayers (estimate): $200 million

Estimated operating costs of Catholic schools in the archdiocese, 2004-05:

- Catholic: $5,006 $7,085
- Non-Catholic: $2,795 $3,992
- Interparochial high schools: $5,006 $7,085
- Percent of graduates entering college, 2005 94.5%
- Percent of graduates continuing college, 2005 94.0%
- High school graduation rate, 2004-05: 98.4%
- Total pre-school-12: 23,336
- Elementary (K-8): 16,063
- High school (9-12): 5,508
- Religious composition: Elementary Catholic: 86% 80%
- High school: 86% 80%
- Interparochial high schools: 94% 98%
- Elementary schools cost-per-pupil: $3,989
- Interparochial high schools: $7,679
- Total operating cost of archdiocesan schools: $98 million
- Total pre-school-12: 23,336
- Elementary schools: 60 (28 in Marion Co.)
- Interparochial high schools: 55 (34 in Marion Co., 21 private high schools, 3 in Marion Co.)
- Pre-school programs: 34 (Pre-K programs for 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds)
- Extended care programs: 55 (Pre-K-8, before and after school care or both)

Professional staff: 2,220 (full-time and part-time)

Enrollment 2005-06: (unofficial Oct. 1, 2005, enrollment)

Total pre-school-12: 23,336
Pre-school: 1,765
Elementary (K-8): 16,063
High school (9-12): 5,508

Facts about Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

**Archdiocesan administration**

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  - Raise the level of students’ performance and report their progress.
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Viable parish fosters sense of belonging and responsibility

By Margo MacArthur

When Father Curtis Guillory became bishop of the Beaumont, Texas, Diocese five years ago, he sought, first of all, to understand the people he was to shepherd.

Though he was aware of the problems common today to Catholic parishes almost anywhere, Bishop Guillory sought to grasp firmly the particular problems facing the 45 parishes in his charge and to respond to them.

His first act was to visit every parish, meet with every pastor and—using a town-hall-meeting forum—ask the people how they perceived their parishes.

What he learned from the faithful became the basis for his groundbreaking pastoral letter titled “Revitalizing Our Parishes for Mission” in January 2005.

It holds the ideas and actions of a shepherd determined to help his parishes grapple with the difficulties of remaining viable and vibrant in an increasingly secular world.

“They told me: ‘We’re dying [as a parish].... It’s hard to attract the young. We need a spiritual spark,’” recalled Bishop Guillory.

His response was to challenge Catholics to examine their parishes’ viability in terms of worship, community, service and education/formation.

“A viable parish is a faith community that fosters in each member a sense of belonging, ownership, responsibility and Christian growth,” the bishop said. "It requires the full participation of everyone, not just priests and religious, not just the members of Church committees and councils—but every baptized Catholic.

Volunteers revitalize parish life

By David Gibson

Do you have strong organizational abilities? If so, Bishop Curtis Guillory of Beaumont, Texas, would say that is one of the gifts you might contribute to your parish, perhaps by “volunteering to head a parish council—but every baptized Catholic.

The challenges that face the Beaumont Diocese mirror those of many other dioceses:

• a priesthood spread thin,
• smaller congregations at weekend Masses,
• shifting population trends that impact parish membership,
• failure to adequately instruct and retain young Catholics.

These are intended to prepare laity for ministry and administrative services.

There are unlimited, if only we have eyes to see,” Bishop Guillory said. He proposed that such sharing is needed for revitalizing a parish, essential for parishes at risk of “slipping into ‘maintenance mode’ rather than becoming ‘mission driven.’ “

He encouraged people to become more informed about faith and more grounded in it because then they will become “more spiritually energized” and want to share that with other people.

“You will be more alive and willing to share your enthusiasm with your parish,” he said. “This will, in turn, revitalize your parish.”

And, he said, enthusiasm is contagious.

Viable parish fosters sense of belonging and responsibility

“Each person has to undergo conversion into a new way of thinking about—such as stewardship. This is not first and foremost about money. It’s much more about giving of one’s time and talent as well as treasure.

For one Catholic, this may mean assisting in the celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays as an usher, musician or altar society member.

For another Catholic, it may mean sharing time or people skills to visit the elderly or sick.

Another parishioner may contribute skills as a tradesperson to help repair and maintain the church’s physical plant.

All of these—and many more—are acts of stewardship that contribute to the parish.

To survive in today’s expensive world and increase their opportunities to become more viable and vibrant, many parishes are becoming more collaborative and proactive, reaching out to adjacent parishes and sharing resources.

This “partnership mentality,” said Bishop Guillory, is vital to the good health of the parishes.

Two or three parishes, for instance, may share a bookkeeper. Or parishes may want to come together for Bible study, management of youth groups or retreats.

This can mean simply living the faith on a daily basis in ways visible to others or consciously sharing faith with others.

“If parishes do not continue to mobilize as they have begun to in recent years, many will decline to the point that they must merge or close, as has occurred elsewhere in the United States,” Bishop Guillory reminded his people.

“If people are not being served, if faith is not being nourished, if the community is not being evangelized,” he said, “then the parish is built on sand, not on solid rock, and its future is uncertain at best.”

(The full text of Bishop Curtis Guillory’s pastoral letter is available online at www.diocesan.com. Margo MacArthur is a free-lance writer in Andover, N.J.)

Discussion Point

Programs inspire Christian service

This Week’s Question

Describe a parish-based educational program/seminar that you found particularly helpful.

“We had one deacon who gave a Lenten program on the Acts of the Apostles. He supplied us with a lot of material, was very informative and provoked a lot of discussion.” (Jim Welch, Pawtucket, R.I.)

“Our Bible study group is using ‘Adventures in Ministry’ by Jeff Cavins and Sarah Christmyer, there are 24 sessions and we really go deep into Matthew. It’s very educational and a priority for me.” (Kay Engman, Waukesha, Wis.)

“As the co-chair for adult education at our parish, I am a presenter. We mostly have biblical and spirituality programs like ‘Finding God in All Things,’ an adaptation of Week 1 of the Ignatian spiritual exercises. Presenting forces me to read and pray before I can share it with an audience.” (Jim O’Brien, Birmingham, Ala.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: How do you use the Bible in your prayer and/or spirituality?

To respond for possible publication, e-mail cgreen@catholicnews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †
Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

Devotional book fosters interfaith understanding

When someone suggested last year that I contribute to a 20th anniversary devotional book being published by IAI: Interfaith Alliance Indianapolis, I did not follow through. Why? Because after prayer and personal experiences and observations. The readings are so varied that one comes away with gratitude and a better understanding of varied religious traditions.

The book is divided into sections representing Religious/Spirtual/Journey, Appreciation for Those Differently Gifted; Interfaith Faith; Prayer, Poetry, Images and Visions; Dialogue, Listening and Peace.

International Faith, and Indianapolis and Indiana Faith Alliance Indianapolis. IAI membership includes six Indianapolies Catholic parishes, the Carmelites of Indianapolis and the Roman Catholic Union of Indianapois community in addition to the Butler Seminar on Religion as well as a variety of Christian/protestant, Jewish, Buddhist, Islamitc, Jewish, Protestant, Sikh, and Universalist faith groups.

The book contains meditation attention all 39 contributets for the 55 devotions, but—because this is a Catholic publication—I list these Carmelites of Indianapolis separately. There are almost 300 other people who were present for their appearance: John Shaughnessy, assitiant editor of The Criterion and member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis, whose foreword first appeared as an Indianapolis Star article last May, Jeff Fites from St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church in Indianapolis, Mary Weber, a member of St. Paul Parish in Indianapolis, and Mary McEntyre from Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis.

The book is available now in the regular columnat for The Criterion.

Carmelites of Indianapolis Parish in Indianapolis, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Baptismal anniversaries can be special celebrations

The Church celebrated the feast of the Baptism of the Lord recently, yet I suspect for most of us, the event passed by without notice.

Ordinarily, the feast falls on a Sunday, when parish communities gather for worship. But because Christmas fell on a Sunday this year, the feast was transferred to the Monday after Epiphany, which happpens this year on January 27.

In Rome, Pope Benedict XVI baptized several infants at the Stotine Chapel that day. On that occasion, he offered some reflections on the meaning of the great sacrament of baptism.

"Through baptism each child is inserted into a gathering of friends who never aban-don him in life or in death because these companions are God's family, which in itself bears the promise of eternity," the pope said.

We've all been inspired occasionally to "inserted into a gathering of friends, which in itself bears the promise of eternity," but Michael's bote was a humorous reminder that until that eternity dawns for us, we'll experience pain—even from those friends who make up the family of God.

Yet the grace poured out on this generations begins not with the big baptisms, but with the small, ordinary baptisms of ordinary families and children. Even the smallest, most ordinary baptisms have the power to move us, to change us, to bring us closer to God. That's what a baptismal anniversary does. It's a special moment that we'll do to bring it light and brighten the candle before the family.

Just as we were turning to go back to our pew, it seemed like Michael wanted to give his little brother a kiss. But as he leaned forward to him, him, just moments earlier during his baptismal anniversary he made a press, filled the church with wails of pain.

One special thing that we'll do to bring

It's 2 Cor 4:10: "I take this to mean that Jesus became a man, not only as a sacrifice for human sins, but also as an example for human living and dying. The Messiah, the Christ, shows us the way to be truly human while striving for eternal connection with divinity. It's as though he's truly human while striving for eternal connection with divinity. It's as though he's..."
Deacon and lay minister can administer blessing of throat

On the feast of St. Blase, it is customary to have our throats blessed. We were surprised to see [lay] ministers giving the St. Blase blessing last year. Have they been mandated by the bishop to perform this blessing? (New York)

A description of the process of blessing of throats on the feast of St. Blase, which is on Feb. 3, “the blessing of throats may be given by a priest, deacon or lay minister who follows the rites and prayers designated for a lay minister.” During Mass, the blessing follows the reading of the Gospel, homily and the General Intercessions.

Outside of Mass, within a prayer service, the blessing is made at an appropriate time. In either case, with crossed candles touched to the throat of each person, the priest, deacon or lay minister says, “Through the intercession of St. Blase, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from every disease of the throat and from every other illness: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Priests and deacons make the sign of the cross over the person as the invocation is recited.

 Lay ministers say the same words, touching the throat of each person, but do not make the sign of the cross over the person receiving the blessing.

Thus, what you experienced is entirely proper in the Church’s regulations for the blessing of throats. A further regulation provides that if the blessing cannot appropriately be given individually, the priest—or whoever is leading the celebration—extends hands over the people and says the prayer of blessing for everyone at the same time.

These rubrics are found in the Book of Blessings for the United States, confirmed by the Vatican in 1989.

Q. A church in our community has a Latin Mass, which we have attended occasionally. The priest says he is a member of the Congregation of Mary Immaculate Queen.

A. The Congregation of Mary Immaculate Queen is one of the groups I wrote about a few weeks ago who reject changes in the Church since Vatican Council II. These changes, so the priests of the congregation believe, threaten the true doctrine and worship of the Catholic faith.

According to their position statement of 1997, these are among their beliefs:

1. The Second Vatican Council is a false council, which erred in its teachings on faith and morals.
2. The New Order of Mass, which the Catholic Church uses today and which is the usual form of Mass in Catholic parishes, is invalid or of doubtful validity. Those who participate in these Masses sins gravely.
3. The new rites for the sacraments used by the Catholic Church today are of questionable validity. Priests of the group should administer all sacraments conditionally for persons who received their sacraments with the “new” rituals.
4. The present “ecumenical” Church stands in contradiction to the true Catholic Church.
5. Since Pope John Paul II taught heresy, promoted ecumenism and fostered enrichment of prayer, he cannot be recognized as a successor of St. Peter in the papacy.
6. The present Code of Canon Law imposes obligations opposed to faith and morals, and therefore lacks all force of law for the Catholic Church.

This should answer your question. †

**The Criterion** Friday, January 27, 2006

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**Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion**

**The Sunday Readings**

**Sunday, Jan. 29, 2006**

- **Deuteronomy 18:15-20**
- **1 Corinthians 7:32-35**
- **Mark 1:21-28**

The Book of Deuteronomy furnishes the first reading for this weekend. Deuteronomy appears in modern Bibles as the fifth book in sequence in the Old Testament. It is one of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, all of them attributed to Moses. It is generally written that Moses himself literally wrote these books, in the sense that authorship is understood today. However, since ancient times they have been regarded as containing the thought of Moses. For this reason, these five books comprise the Torah, the basic document of Judaism. In this reading, Moses addresses the Chosen People, whom he has led—with God’s help—from Egypt, where they were enslaved.

Moses promises that God will send prophets, with whom the people can relate. But if anyone presumes to take the role of prophet upon himself or herself, without having been called by God, then this person will die. God will not allow the people to be misled.

St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians is the source of the second reading. From the earliest days of Christianity, virginity has been a treasured virtue. Christians have never been forbidden to marry, although all Christians are bound to be chaste, according to their state in life.

Surely in the first century A.D., and certainly in Corinth, a city infamous for its outrageous licentiousness, virginity was seen as a powerful, countercultural alternative lifestyle. In this reading, Paul brings a more practical reason into play. Persons not obligated by marriage and parenthood can devote their time to God. Persons not obligated to marry, according to their state in life, can devote it to the study of the truth and the advancement of the Gospel. The inner life of the Church can grow.

My Journey to God

**Light a Candle**

Light a candle in the heart. Burn the incense of love. Pray without ceasing.

Ask for God’s mercy. Healing power and wisdom. Pray without ceasing.

Touch the hem of Jesus’ garment. Dry His feet with your hair. Pray without ceasing.

Take up His cross. Seek His face. Call His name. Pray without ceasing.


Light a candle in the heart. Burn the incense of love. Pray without ceasing.

By Trudy Bledsoe

(Trudy Bledsoe is a member of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis 

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**Daily Readings**

**Monday, Jan. 30**

- 2 Samuel 15:13-14, 30: 16:5-13
- Psalm 3: 2-7
- Mark 5:1-20

**Tuesday, Jan. 31**

- John Bosco, priest
- 2 Samuel 18:9-10, 14h, 24:25a, 30:19-3
- Psalm 86:1-6
- Mark 5:21-43

**Wednesday, Feb. 1**

- 2 Samuel 24:2. 9-17
- Psalm 32:1-2, 5-7
- Mark 6:1-6

**Thursday, Feb. 2**

- The Presentation of the Lord
- Malachi 3:1-4
- Psalm 24:7-10
- Hebrews 2:14-18

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**Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen**

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**Readers may submit prose or poetry for fa"ith column**

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column. Some reflections or appreciations 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.com.
In 2005’s cinema, art often triumphed over box office

By Harry Forbes and David DiCerto

NEW YORK (CNS)—In spite of disappointing box-office revenues, from an artistic standpoint 2005 was a rewarding year at the movies. And while the holiday season ushered in the usual flurry of quality fare, in compiling our list of top 10 films, we’ve tried not to discount those pictures that were out of the gate early.

What we’ve come up with is a mixture of titles that were generally praised, such as The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (a no-brainer for our list) and Cinderella Man (an absorbing story of an embittered wife whose husband abandoned her), as well as gems such as The Greatest Game Ever Played, an absorbing story of a young amateur working-class golfer, Francis Ouimet, who played against British golf champion Harry Vardon in the 1913 U.S. Open.

The themes of class, conflict, overcoming the odds, loyalty and good sportsmanship are vividly drawn. (A-I, PG)

The human story of Jimmy’s human dignity, the film’s strong impression. (L, R)

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The St. Francis Cardiac & Vascular Care Center is the only full-service heart facility on Indy’s south side. If you are experiencing chest pain, seek immediate help from the right hospital.

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St. Francis is the only area hospital to earn 2004 awards from both HealthGrades and Solucient for its work with heart attacks for 5 years in a row. And, St. Francis was named Solucient’s Top 10 in Indiana for Cardiac Surgery and Cardiac Intervention.

Solucient has named St. Francis one of the key for the USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classifications and Motion Picture Association of America ratings.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, a captivating live-action fantasy adventure based on C.S. Lewis’ beloved children’s classic set in World War II-era England about four siblings’ adventures in the enchanted realm of Narnia. Seeded with Christian symbols and subtext, the beautifully told and faithful adaptation explores themes of good and evil. (A-II, PG)

Cinderella Man, the moving true-life story of Depression-era boxer Jimmy Braddock who—after several years out of the ring—took up fighting again to support his loving wife and their three young children, making a miracle comeback. The human story of Jimmy’s devotion to his family is paramount. (A-III, PG-13)

Crash, a powerful drama with a strong moral center about a disparate, racially mixed group of Los Angeles residents whose lives intersect in unlikely and redemptive ways. A transcendently moving essay on the benevolence that may lie beneath racial intolerance, and the interconnectedness of human beings, showing how good and bad can coexist in all of us, and how the former generally prevails. (L, R)

Dear Frankie, a heart-warming film set in Scotland about a loving single mother who pretends to her 9-year-old deaf son, Frankie, that his father—whom the boy has never seen—is simply away at sea, and forges letters purporting to be from the absent father, then pays a stranger to pose as the father for a day. A beautifully written story that is immensely appealing, sensitively acted and sure to bring a lump to the throat. (A-III, PG-13)

The Greatest Game Ever Played, an absorbing and inspiring true-life story of a young amateur working-class golfer, Francis Ouimet, who played against British golf champion Harry Vardon in the 1913 U.S. Open. The themes of class conflict, overcoming the odds, loyalty and good sportsmanship are vividly drawn. (A-I, PG)

Millions, a disarming tale about the lives of the saints who finds a stash of stolen money and, believing it is from God, tries to do good with it by giving it to the poor. There are delightful vignettes in which the young hero talks with various saints, and the modest film touches on themes of the corrupting influence of money and humanity’s basic decency. (A-II, PG)

The Ninth Day, a quietly arresting drama about an Italian Catholic priest who is given nine days to convince the staunchly anti-Nazi bishop to sign a letter supporting Hitler. Based on the prison diaries of Father Jean Bernard, the film is an emotionally forceful and morally complex meditation on faith, redemption and the cost of true discipleship. (A-III, not rated)

Nordik Country, a compelling drama set in northern Minnesota about a struggling single mother who takes a job at a local mine, encounters a host of sexual harassment and abuse from the predominately male ranks, eventu-

ly riling a lawsuit. The film’s sexual harassment lawsuit against the mining company. Touching on issues of gender discrimination, justice, family, community and human dignity, the film’s highlight is a tender scene with a strong pro-life under-

tone.

An Unfinished Life, the absorbing story of an embittered ex-MMA fighter who takes care of a ranch hand badly mauled by a bear and gives shelter to his 9-year-old and the 11-year-old granddaughter he never knew he had, when the woman flees her abusive boyfriend. The film vividly conveys an admirable message about forgiveness and letting go of the past. (A-III, PG-13)

The Upside of Anger, a profoundly moving comedy-drama in which a daughter encounters hostility and fear as she must coexist in all of us, and how the former generally prevails. (L, R)

Editor’s Note: Following is the key for the USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classifications and Motion Picture Association of America ratings for the above movies.

USCCB:

A-I—Adults; general patronage; A-II—Adults; children.

A-III—Adults; L—Limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling.

MPAA:

G—General audiences. All ages admitted; PG—Parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children; PG-13—Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13; R—Restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

(Forbes is director and DiCerto is on the staff of the Office for Film & Broadcasting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.)
WASHINGTON (CNS)—Catholic organizers expressed hope that a Washington meeting of major world religious leaders on April 26-27 will help people learn to live together amid their diversity after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks spurred a focus on their cultural differences.

"It is a duty to underline that coexistence is possible in this world during the difficult period after 9/11," said Italian Msgr. Ambrogio Spreafico, vice president of the Sant'Egidio Community, a Rome-based lay organization that is the meeting's main organizer and one of its sponsors.

"In the U.S., we want to underline the reality of a society which is already pluralistic," said Msgr. Spreafico, rector of the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome. "People in the U.S. are living in coexistence but are unaware of it."

"There are tensions," he said. "We think dialogue is the answer to the clash of civilizations."

Msgr. Spreafico briefed journalists in mid-January about the meeting, called the 2006 International Prayer for Peace. The briefing was held at Jesuit-run Georgetown University, another meeting sponsor and the site of the events. The other sponsors are The Catholic University of America and the Archdiocese of Washington.

The meeting will mark the 20th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's gathering of top world religious leaders in Assisi, Italy, in 1966.

Since then, Sant'Egidio has been annually organizing similar Prayer for Peace meetings in different cities with Vatican encouragement but without the presence of the pope. The 2006 meeting will be the first time the gathering is being held in the United States.

The theme of the Washington meeting is "Religions and Cultures: The Courage to Dialogue." It will feature prayer sessions and panel discussions on world issues. Planned panel topics include:

- Relationships addressing terrorism in the post-Sept. 11 world
- Mass media and the portrayal of religion as a source of conflict
- Religion and the secular world: pluralism in democracy
- Islam in America.

Among the invited participants are former Presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush, said Msgr. Spreafico.

"In the U.S., we want to underline the symbolic value of seeing different religious leaders talking together. Often, the symbolic value is more important than what is said," he added.

He cited Pope John Paul II's historic 1986 visit to Rome's main synagogue, the first time a pope had stepped inside a synagogue since biblical times.

"I doubt many Italians read the pope's speech. But the visit showed that Jews weren't the enemies of Christians," said Msgr. Spreafico.

"Religion can play a role in lessening fear. Religion can't solve conflicts," he said.

Msgr. Spreafico said that dialogue over disagreements on such things as religion doesn't mean that people have to eliminate what makes them different from each other.

Dialogue is an "effort to 'find what unites us," he said.

"Because I am strong in my faith, I can dialogue without nullifying what I believe," he said.

"But Christians and Jews also have much in common. We all believe we are children of God," he said.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Organizers said events of the "Religions and Cultures" meeting are open to the public and free of charge, but registration is necessary. Information about registration and program events is available online at http://prayertimepeace2006."

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Hockey-playing Chicago bishop dubbed ‘holy goalie’

CHICAGO (CNS)—The puns are obvious: “Who IS that masked man?” “Stuck with me, kid.” And, of course, “Hey, fella, you’re on thin ice.”

But in this case, the “fella” would be Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki—all dressed up in a Chicago Blackhawks uniform and ready to take to the ice at the United Center.

Neither is it all for show.

Bishop Paprocki, 53, has been involved with hockey for a long time—as a fan and a player.

He was profiled in the December issue of USA Hockey magazine, where he was pictured in his episcopal robes holding a hockey stick and helmet.

The article’s headline, appropriately enough, was “Holy Goalie.”

Bishop Paprocki has been playing hockey—floor hockey—since he was a boy, but it’s only been in the past decade, he told the magazine, that he’s taken to the ice. Now, twice a week he plays at McFetridge Ice Center, stopping pucks in an over-30, no-check league. The bishop is also a veteran marathon runner, which he does just to stay in shape for hockey, he told the magazine.

The feature in USA Hockey—the official magazine of the national governing bodies of U.S. ice and inline hockey, with a circulation of 430,000—led to an invitation from the Blackhawks to attend a team practice on Jan. 12 and get a little ice time with the team.

“When they started practice, I watched from the bench for about half an hour,” the bishop told the Catholic New World, newspaper of the Chicago Archdiocese.

Toward the end of the formal practice, goaltender coach Stephane Waite warmed him up on the sidelines. “He did some drills with me. He wasn’t shooting real hard, but stopping his shots boosted my confidence,” Bishop Paprocki said.

But then the warm-up was over. “I was in the net and facing the Blackhawks. Several players took shots at me,” he said. “I stopped several until one of the players said, ‘Has anyone scored yet?’ On the next shot, Mark Bell ripped one past me. Then Denis Savard came over and took a few shots. My head is still spinning from his moves, but I think I did manage to stop at least one of his shots.”

However, Bishop Paprocki conceded that he “lost count of the ones that went through.”

It was, he said, a day he’ll never forget. Is a career on the ice in the offing? The bishop laughed and said, “None of the Blackhawk goalies should feel their jobs are threatened—and the cardinal [Chicago Cardinal Francis George] doesn’t have to worry that I’m going to give up my day job.”

Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki prepares to get on the ice after suiting up to practice with the Chicago Blackhawks on Jan. 12. Bishop Paprocki, 53, has been playing floor hockey since he was a boy, but in the past decade he’s taken to the ice, he told USA Hockey magazine. He was profiled in the December issue of the magazine and was pictured wearing his episcopal robes and holding a hockey stick.

Legacy for Our Mission:
For Our Children and the Future

Sacred Heart Students ‘Care for God’s Creation’

When Santa Claus visited the Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Terre Haute this Christmas, students predictably asked for the year’s most popular toys. One young girl, however, wanted a bird feeder. Her love of the animals grew out of hands-on learning in the classroom.

“It’s making an impression,” said Providence Sister Theresa Bowland, principal at Sacred Heart. The school’s place-based education program uses Care for God’s Creation at its core, and develops “experience lessons” for its students.

“We needed to have a different niche, and it is part of our Catholic identity to take care of God’s creation,” Sister Theresa said. “It increases academic achievement, creates stronger ties to the community, enhances appreciation of nature and heightens commitment to serve as active citizens.”

“We want to be a good choice for parents and have a bigger influence on the neighborhood and community.”

Sacred Heart is also concentrating on building its enrollment in preschool and kindergarten. “We don’t have to be a huge school, but we would like to work with 100 students,” Sister Theresa said. “We want to be a good choice for parents and have a bigger influence on the neighborhood and community.”

The school’s unique educational approach is making a difference in its students, like the girl who asked for a bird feeder for Christmas.

“We’re just at the beginning, that’s the key thing. We want to create a future for our children and for future generations.”

As Sacred Heart looks toward the future, both the teachers and students are excited about what is to come with its programming. “We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation,” Sister Theresa said.

Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocese’s upcoming capital campaign, is guided by the principles of Christian stewardship and addresses the needs of archdiocesan ministries such as Holy Mothers. By contributing to Legacy for Our Mission through your local parish, a portion of your gift will be allocated to Catholic education programs and distributed to organizations such as Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Terre Haute.