Adversity can be overwhelming at times. Indianapolis resident Steve Doudt understands the challenges of adversity better than many people because his life changed forever when he sustained irreparable leg injuries during a motorcycle accident 14 years ago in North Carolina. He is now 37.

Doudt meets adversity head-on by trying to overcome it every day. He uses a wheelchair, drives a car and enjoys hunting and fishing in his spare time. The husband and father of four children also works as a licensed basketball official for the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA), National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) and Catholic Youth Organization (CYO).

“I enlisted in the Air Force in 1987,” Doudt said after officiating two CYO girls’ high school basketball games on Dec. 20 at St. Jude School in Indianapolis. “I was full-time, active duty in the military for six years,” he said, “and was stationed at Fort Bragg in North Carolina when I had my motorcycle accident. That’s what brought me back to Indiana. My first months here were spent in rehabilitation.”

It only took a few seconds to sustain severe injuries during the motorcycle accident, and surgeons had to amputate his leg.

Before the accident, the U.S. Air Force sergeant served his country as a Special Operations Command, pararescue and rescue from aircrafts on covert missions around the world.

A graduate of New Haven High School near Fort Wayne, Ind., Doudt had planned to be a career military officer. “I’ve been in this chair since 1992 and I rehab every day,” he said. “I learn something new. I experience something new every single day. With hunting and fishing, I had to forge the way on my own. Now I want to make it easier for other people [with disabilities] by giving them opportunities to do different kinds of things. I guess the best advice is that you can’t be afraid to go out on a limb and change yourself or make a difference in somebody else’s life.”

Doudt said that he’s still the same person he was before the accident, but about “what if” the accident hadn’t happened, Doudt said he has learned how to maximize his physical abilities and stays positive by focusing on ability rather than disability. “I’ve been in this chair since 1992 and I rehab every day,” he said. “I learned something new. I experience something new every single day. With hunting and fishing, I had to forge the way on my own. For me, it was all about finding it on my own. Now I want to make it easier for other people [with disabilities] by giving them opportunities to make a difference in somebody else’s life.”

Catholic Youth Organization basketball official Steve Doudt of Indianapolis prepares to throw the ball to a St. Jude student for a free throw during a CYO basketball game on Dec. 20 at St. Jude School. Doudt is licensed by the Indiana High School Athletic Association, and is a two-time Para-Olympian in volleyball.

Tyler, died unexpectedly of complications from influenza in 1999.

As part of his therapy, Doudt began participating in wheelchair athletics, and excelled in basketball and volleyball. He played for the Indiana Wheelchair Pacers basketball team for 10 years. Doudt also is a two-time Para-Olympian in volleyball. He competed at the Atlanta Games in 1996 and at Sydney, Australia, in 2000.

He also coached several high school volleyball and basketball teams in Indianapolis. Now he enjoys officiating for basketball games.

“No I’m a stay-at-home dad,” he said. “It was a lifestyle change for me. I also travel a lot officiating for the National Wheelchair Basketball Association. I’m out of state almost every weekend during the NWBA season.”

Instead of asking “why” or thinking about “what if” the accident hadn’t happened, Doudt has learned how to maximize his physical abilities and stays positive by focusing on ability rather than disability. “I’ve been in this chair since 1992 and I rehab every day,” he said. “I learned something new. I experience something new every single day. With hunting and fishing, I had to forge the way on my own. Now I want to make it easier for other people [with disabilities] by giving them opportunities to make a difference in somebody else’s life.”

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Chair of St. Peter: Bishop’s teaching seat, not king’s throne for Church
Indiana’s informed consent law may reduce abortions if a bill which passed the Indiana House of Representatives by a 70-30 vote becomes law.

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) supports, requires that before an abortion, women be given information that the fetus may feel pain, and that after 20 weeks an anesthetic for the fetus may be available. It also changes the informed consent statute to require written information about adoption alternatives and physical risks concerning abortion. Also, the written information must include the statement that life begins at fertilization.

Rep. Tim Harris (R-Marion), author of the bill, said, “As more information has become available and agreed upon by those in the scientific and medical community, it becomes evident when you look at Indiana’s informed consent law that it is lacking important evidence.”

In making this difficult decision, a mother should know all the facts.

There is evidence from fetal surgery that the baby feels pain. The hope is that when the mother does realize that, she may change her mind about the abortion.” Harris said. “The other really important part of the bill requires that written information about adoption options be provided to the mother, as well as physical risks to abortion. And the bill defines that human life begins at fertilization.”

Rep. Eric Turner (R-Marion), who co-authored the bill, said, “I think it is only right to provide this information to women who are considering an abortion because choosing the procedural steps to have an abortion has many physical and emotional risks. I also hope that by providing this information, women will understand that there are other options besides ending the life of the unborn child.”

Rep. Robert Bishop (D-Green) and Troy Woodruff (R-Vincennes) are also co-authors of the bill.

“The number one goal of this bill is education,” said Sen. Jeff Drdza (R-Westfield), Senate sponsor of HB 1172 in the Senate. “We need to understand there’s a baby involved, and the baby will feel pain.”

Drdza said he is uncertain whether women will receive a hearing or pass the Senate. For this reason, he encouraged people to contact their state senators and tell them they want House Bill 1172 to get a hearing and legislators to support the bill.

“This is an issue where legislators will respond to their constituents,” said Sister Maria St. Goretti Parish in Indianapolis, Ind. in the Lafayette Diocese. Sens. Mike Delph (R-Carmel) and Allie Craycroft (D-Selma) are co-sponsoring HB 1172.

Last month, Glenn Tebbe, executive director for the Indiana Catholic Conference, testified in support of HB 1172 before the House Public Policy Committee.

“Because the effect may be to reduce abortion, ICC supports HB 1172,” Tebbe told committee members. “Support for the bill does not imply support or approval of the practice of abortion or that providing an anesthetic makes the practice acceptable. ICC abors the reason and necessity of the law—abortion itself. Each life is sacred and created in the image of God. All life is to be protected.”

Groups which also testified in support of HB 1172 primarily based on moral grounds included Advance America, the Indiana Family Institute and Indiana Right to Life. Groups testifying in opposition to HB 1172 primarily based their testimony on the arguments of privacy and reproductive rights, and included Planned Parenthood, the Jewish Community Relations Council (ICRC), Indiana National Organization of Women (NOW) and the Indiana Civil Liberties Union.

Kristi Barnett, one of the Indiana regional coordinators for the Silent No More Awareness Committee, is a ministry for post-abortive women, said, “Silent No More does not have an official position on this bill; however, my comments reflect my experience as a post-abortive woman and the wisdom gained from working with others healing from their abortions.”

Barnett, a member of St. John the Apostle Parish in Bloomington, said, “One of the most important components of this bill is the clause that requires the mother be informed that life begins at fertilization. I have heard countless testimonies from women that were told it was simply a ‘clump of cells’ and not a real baby. Many of these abortions beyond 20 weeks are done if they only knew the truth that life begins at conception, they would not have chosen abortion.

This aspect of the bill would effectively undermine the abortion industry’s deceitful tactic of denying the humanity of the baby.”

“For Indiana, the Indiana Department of Health reported there were 11,458 abortions performed in Indiana. Mothers believed that they wereistering for a health account for 35.7 percent or 4,087 abortions. Nearly 2,500 abortions, or 21.6 percent, involved women 15 to 24 age group.

Sixty-three percent of mothers in Indiana who had abortions were Caucasian, 27.4 percent were African American, 6.4 percent were Hispanic and 3.2 percent were of unknown race. Nearly 80 percent of those women who received abortions were not married.

(Brigid Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion.)

Pope: To respect life, people must remember God created it

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The more people set aside belief in God the creator, the greater the danger that they will lose respect for the life and dignity of human life, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Celebrating Mass on Feb. 5 in the Vatican’s parish church, the Church of St. Anne, and marking Italy’s pro-life day, Pope Benedict said that before organizing pro-life initiatives, “it is fundamental to promote a correct attitude toward the other. The culture of life is in effect, based on attention to others without exclusion or discrimination,” he said.

While men and women are called to safeguard and administer creation, they are not the lords of life, and they cannot pre-empt the right of others to determine whether life is or is not of value, he argued.

Reciting the Angelus after Mass, Pope Benedict said he wanted to focus attention on “the importance of the service of charity to support and promote human life.”

Before organizing pro-life initiatives, “it is fundamental to promote a correct attitude toward the other. The culture of life is in effect, based on attention to others without exclusion or discrimination,” he said.

Pope Benedict XVI

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What happens next and abortion resources

March 14

To view the full report of Indiana abortions beyond 20 weeks, go to the Indiana State Department of Health’s Web page at www.in.gov/health/index.html. Click on data and statistics, then click on induced terminated pregnancies for abortion information. For more facts on abortion, go to the abortion facts’ Web page at www.abortionfacts.com or to Silent No More Awareness Campaign’s Web page at www.silentnonore.org.

To track legislative action or to contact your state legislators, go to www.indianasenate.com, click on “committee” and open the Indiana House of Representatives at 317-232-9000 or 308-382-9842. For the Indiana State Senate, call 317-232-9400 or 308-882-9467. Indiana Catholic Conference Executive Director Troy Woodruff wrote in the book “The Criterion.”

Indiana Catholic Conference Executive Director Troy Woodruff wrote in the book “The Criterion.”
Love must be at the heart of charitable activity, pope teaches

By Sean Gallagher

This is the first in a periodic series of updates that will be published in The Criterion. Its purpose is to let readers know about the latest additions, not only to the newspaper Web site, but also changes to the archdiocesan Web site. If you haven’t been to either site in a while, a lot has changed—and more changes are on the way.

Electronic forms

The latest feature of The Criterion Online Edition is the ability for visitors to submit information electronically. It can be accessed by clicking on “Forms” on the left-hand menu. The newly redesigned forms pages on The Criterion Online Edition now feature the opportunity for visitors to submit information electronically. It can be accessed by clicking on “Forms” on the left-hand menu of any page on the Web site at www.CriterionOnline.com and click on the links for “Forms” on the left-hand menu.

Updated archive format

New in 2006 is a slightly revised format for the online archives. Instead of listing only local content, we now offer a listing of all the content in a given issue, with links to local content. Also, the weekly content is separated into the following categories: Local stories, Special supplements, Regular features, Catholic News Service stories and FaithAlive.

Remapped vocation page

The archdiocesan homepage for religious vocations (www.archindy.org/vocations) got a big update late last year and, in the past week, new content has been added. The site, while maintaining much of the material from its previous version, has a completely new and sharper look. On its opening page, visitors are now greeted with a group picture of the archdiocesan seminarians.†

Archdiocesan Web sites undergoing changes, adding features

By Brandon A. Evans

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Ten Commandments teach us how to live

When the Catechism of the Catholic Church was being drafted, there was vigorous debate among the bishops who were responsible for the catechism’s contents about whether it was appropriate to include the Ten Commandments.

Some argued that negative, proscriptive laws were out of place in a compendium of Church teaching designed to recover joy in the beauty of the faith and wonder over its vital energy. Others were concerned that the Decalogue’s origins in the Old Testament, with its strong emphasis on the Law (Torah), would undermine the catechism’s responsibility to call attention to New Testament themes of liberty and love.

In the end, the majority of bishops decided in favor of including the Ten Commandments in the Catechism of the Catholic Church as an assemblage of the Church’s teaching on the Ten Commandments. It teaches us to put the good of community or as communities. At the same time, the catechism teaches that the Ten Commandments can be seen as “laws of growth.” Their faithful observance leads to the maturation of personality and to an increased sense of responsibility (stewardship) for the gifts we have been given by a good and loving God.

The Ten Commandments are summarized by Jesus’ response to the Pharisees’ question about the first (most important) commandment. Jesus says, “The first is: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Mk 12:29-31). Love is the fulfillment of the law. We hear this in the words of Jesus. We see it concretely in his life and in his death on the cross.

Catholics who want to grow in their understanding of their faith should practically consider the catechism’s positive interpretations of the Ten Commandments (§820A-92550). They are an amenable and forceful direction for daily living. Yes, they tell us what to do and we want to be happy, holy people living in a state of grace. But the catechism’s loving exhortation of the positive values reflected in each Commandment also offer wonderful insights into who we are (human persons created in God’s image) and how we are supposed to live (as a free people called to love God and one another).

Even since Pope John Paul II solemnly presented the Catechism of the Catholic Church to the universal Church on Dec. 7, 1992, pastors and catechists throughout the world have been gifted with what the Holy Father called a “sure norm for the teaching of the faith.” Church teaching is not meant to be sterile or cold—especially in reference to the vital moral and spiritual challenges of our Christian living.

We suggest that all Catholics re-read the Ten Commandments as presented in Part Three (“Life in Christ”) of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. We think those who do will be delighted by the positive tone and the insights given into living life fully and freely in Christ.

Editor’s note: A group of Indiana High School public school coaches is proposing a “1.5 multiplier” in athletics. If approved, it would count every student at a non-public school as 1.5 for enrollment eligibility or for determining athletic class.

In the scenario, a Catholic school of independent status could be classified as if it had 1,500 students, potentially forcing the school to compete against Division I schools.

Proponents of the proposal say it will level the athletic playing field. Catholic schools are unilaterally against the measure and say they will fight it.

As part of Catholic Schools Week activities, Father Mclean, Roncalli High School chaplain and administrator of St. Anthony and Holy Trinity parishes, both in Indianapolis, delivered the following homily during a Mass at Roncalli on Jan. 31, the feast of St. John Bosco—patron saint of youth.

Ten Commandments...
Rerum Novarum: principios del siglo XX, en su encíclica sobre la protección del trabajo y los derechos laborales.

El Papa León XIII expresó: "Si el obrero, obligado por la necesidad de mantener a su familia, trabaja por la ganancia que le permita mantener a su familia. El trabajo es necesario para preservar la vida."

El Papa Leo XIII también escribió de la necesidad del derecho a procurar lo necesario para vivir.

Durante mucho tiempo, la Iglesia ha procurado que sus parroquias y trabajadores sean generosos con la Iglesia, especialmente como sacerdotes y religiosos.

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en febrero es significativa. El Papa Juan Pablo II y León XIII: Paladines de la dignidad del trabajo.

John Paul II y Leo XIII: Champions of the dignity of workers

One of the repetitive themes of the difunto Santo Padre Juan Pablo II, y León XIII: Paladines de la dignidad del trabajo.

Juan Pablo II y Leon XIII: Paladines de la dignidad del trabajo.

El Papa León XIII vinculó estrechamente el derecho a formar sindicatos laborales con el derecho a ganar un salario justo. "El salario es personal. Con gran frecuencia, la enorme ganancia generada por dichas adquisiciones puede ser de compañías pequeñas por parte de grandes empresas."

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The Criterion Friday, February 10, 2006

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La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en febrero es significativa.
Marian football coach excited about building program from scratch

By John Shaugnessy

Alex Karras, played professional football for the Detroit Lions.

Ted Karras worked on an ambulance crew in one of the roughest cities in America, so the thought of starting a college football program from scratch doesn’t intimidate the new head coach at Marian College in Indianapolis.

Karras has also seen his father live his life with such great faith and passion, so he believes the dreams of people who eventually want to build a multipurpose stadium Marian—-a stadium the city’s Catholic high schools and elementary schools could possibly use, too.

“It’s just a unique opportunity for a coach to build something from nothing,” said Karras, who was announced as the head coach on Feb. 4. “There’s never been football here before, so that’s exciting to me. The players who come here will be the pioneers of football.”

While Karras works to build a program that is scheduled to have its first game on Sept. 1, 2007, administrators at Marian hope the football program will continue the rebirth of the college.

“We’re going to add enrollment, we’ll have more people living on campus and we’ll increase our male enrollment,” said Joseph Haklin, the college’s athletic director. “Right now, we’re 70 percent female and 30 percent male. It [having football] will also provide a certain vitality to the campus. We’re seeking a more vibrant campus life.”

It’s doubtful that Marian could have found a more vibrant or excitable coach than Karras, who led the football program at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute for the past three years.

Ask Karras to describe his approach to football and he says, “It’s extremely intense.”

Even more intense is when Karras describes his favorite moment as a player, when he played at Northwestern University.

“Sacking Indiana University’s quarterback in the end zone for a safety,” Karras recalled. “Those points ended up being the difference in the game. It was 1984. I wasn’t recruited by IU. I felt I was overlooked. I can identify with the kids I’m trying to recruit at Marian. A lot of kids don’t have the stats [that some larger colleges want]. I look for heart and the hunger to want to continue to play.”

The father of two is also looking for student-athletes who want to benefit from Marian’s approach of “developing a person athletically, academically, socially and spiritually.”

He’s seen the impact faith has had in his father’s life and his own.

“My father, Ted Sr., is a converted Catholic,” said Karras, a member of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute. “I admire that. He also taught me my work ethic.

“I just believe faith gives me strength to do what I do. Everyone has a spiritual side. It helps me communicate better. I pray for strength. My faith guides me, humbles me.”

So did his two years of working on an ambulance crew in Gary, Ind. When he drove the ambulance and assisted the emergency medical technicians in the early 1990s, he saw a world that still impacts him.

“I saw blood and death every day,” he said. “I saw young kids with guns in their hands who didn’t have anyone looking out for them. It gave you perspective on what was important in life.”

That perspective helps to explain Karras’s choice for his favorite moment as a coach, a moment that ended with a loss.

In 1997, he led the football team of Andrean High School in Merrillville, Ind., to Indiana’s IA state championship game against Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis. Andrean lost to Chatard in the closing seconds, but he still regards reaching that game as a success.

“Kids feed off energy and animation,” Karras said. “The coach’s jobs I’ve been given have all needed motivation and change. When you take over an ailing program, the energy has to come from the top. When people feed off it, it becomes something special.”

Marian officials hope to create something special with the football program. One goal is to build a multipurpose stadium either on campus or near campus—a goal they hope to achieve within a few years after a football team starts playing.

The school’s men’s and women’s soccer teams would also play there, Haklin said. A track would be installed in the stadium, too.

Haklin also envisioned the stadium being used by Indianapolis Catholic high schools and even elementary schools for Catholic Youth Organization tournaments.

“That’s part of the grand plan,” Haklin said.

For Karras, the grand plan now includes traveling the state, offering potential recruits a scholarship and an opportunity to make history as part of Marian’s first football team.

“You have to find guys who are hungry to play football and who are passionate about getting their degrees,” he said. “It’s exciting.”

— Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocese’s upcoming capital campaign, is guided by the principle of Christian stewardship and addresses the needs of archdiocesan ministries such as Catholic Charities. By contributing to Legacy for Our Mission through your local parish, a portion of your gift will be allocated to Catholic charities programs and distributed to organizations such as the Refugee Resettlement Program.
Colorado bishop mourns sister killed in Indianapolis

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (CNS)—Priests from across the Diocese of Colorado Springs gathered on Feb. 2 to concelebrate a memorial Mass at St. Mary’s Cathedral for Bishop Michael J. Sheridan’s sister, who was killed in an apparent murder-suicide in Indianapolis on Jan. 28.

According to a report in The Indianapolis Star, police said Susan Lockrem, 57, was killed by a machete and a box cutter by Lauren Lockrem, 61, who then suffocated himself by putting a plastic bag on his head. The two reportedly had been divorced about six months. Bishop Sheridan’s mother, believed to be in her 90s, lived with Susan Lockrem, but was not harmed.

“We gather in sorrow, but we also gather in hope as we pray for Susan,” said Father Donald Dunn, diocesan vicar general and pastor of the cathedral.

Father Dunn was the main celebrant, and retired Bishop Richard C. Hanifen delivered the homily.

In an official statement on Feb. 1, Father Dunn said, “The circumstances surrounding her tragic death compound the sorrow and sense of loss for our bishop, his mother, nephews and their families. In his homily, Bishop Hanifen, who drove Bishop Sheridan to the airport for his flight to Indiana on Jan. 28, discussed closeness to Christ, the path toward transformation and the importance of handling grief.

“What will separate us from the love of Christ? Is it anguish, stress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, the sword?” asked Bishop Hanifen, referring to the day’s reading from Chapter 8 of St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans. “Who will separate us? What will? Here to me is the mystery of our life and faith: What seems to tear us apart can’t separate us. Not only are we not separated from Christ by pain and anguish and distress—even the sword—but in pain we are united with Christ.”

Bishop Hanifen described his drive to the Denver airport with Bishop Sheridan and described profound moments emanating through silence.

“I said to Bishop Sheridan, ‘If you don’t mind, I’m going to keep my mouth shut.’ When I was suffering grief, the last thing I wanted was small talk,” said Bishop Hanifen. “We rode in silence. It was only broken from time to time by a deep sigh. When you’re in too much pain to groan, you sigh. It’s like the breath went out of his system and would not go back in.”

Bishop Hanifen explained that breath is more than just an involuntary reaction.

“Why does the breath of the Spirit enliven us? Why did Jesus choose baptism?” he asked. “Because it seems to me, as the Church has taught ever since, to be brought into Christ you need to be transformed, to be changed. ‘Baptism, in a sense like birth, is a painful thing. Baptism is about transformation, and in your life transformation doesn’t come from comfort,” he said.

Bishop Hanifen relayed the importance of getting through grief, rather than getting over it.

“Maybe in your experience, in your own grieving, you’ve heard others say, ‘Get over it,’ ” said Bishop Hanifen. “You can’t get over grief. You can only get through it.”

In the end, he said, getting through grief is about accepting the role of Christ in one’s life.

“I ask myself, ‘How many more times must I stand quiet before nonsense? How many times before I surrender to the cross—through which, not around which, we discover our eternal glory?’” he said.

Besides her brother and mother, Susan Lockrem is survived by two sons, Michael and Joseph Lockrem, a daughter-in-law and four grandchildren. A funeral Mass was celebrated for her on Feb. 3 at St. Pius X Church in Indianapolis.

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  - Exp. Date: __/____
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Denver Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila celebrated Mass last year at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Denver. (Tessa Horine)
Men’s conference offers chance to connect with peers

By John Shaughnessy

Daryl Whitley knows the deep, private longing that many men have to find more meaning in their lives. He knows the emptiness that can overwhelm a man even when he has a wife he loves, a child he adores and a good job that pays the bills.

“Even if they aren’t troubled, they’re looking for something more,” said Father Martin, the author of *A Man and his God and The Quest for the Male Soul*. “Even though they work so hard, they’re not satisfied with working. Eventually, they say, ‘Is that all there is?’ They want to make a difference. They want to improve their lives, have more time with their children.”

Yet men struggle with changing their lives because they feel isolated, said Father Martin.

“They often feel alone. They feel they can’t talk about their lives and their faith to people at work,” he said. “We don’t let people know how we feel. Our training as men is to be independent. The first thing we have to do is just let God know we need him.”

He shares the story of a man who became depressed and stopped going to church after he learned his wife had cheated on him.

“He came out to talk to me,” said Father Martin, the retreat director of the St. Anthony Retreat Center in Marathon, Wis. “He and his wife both wanted to get back together, but he struggled to forgive her. I got him to pray. I just find the power of prayer is enormous. I told him to talk to God in his own words, to tell God, ‘I’m in trouble, I’m hurting and I need help.’ “He man reunited with his wife, Father Martin said.

He encourages men to attend men’s conferences and to form small men’s groups as a way of creating relationships with other men of faith. Once the sharing of dreams begins, it opens people to their highest goals.

“I want men to not just experience good feelings, but to bring a positive message to the world around them—to reach out to other men, to make an impact in their families and their workplace,” he said. “I hope they would see their lives can be fuller and deeper if they’re connected with their family and with God.”

Whitley has made that approach his goal in life. In the midst of his struggles with the death of his grandson, he sought help from the late Father Clarence Waldon, then the pastor of Holy Angels Parish.

“One of the things I loved about him was he always encouraged me to acknowledge what I felt,” Whitley said.

He told me it was OK to grieve. He also told me to keep my faith.

“With the death of my grandmother, one of the things I realized is that without having God in the center of your life, there’s no way to hold everything together.”

(The men’s conference is Feb. 18 from 8 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. at St. Christopher Parish, 3301 W. 16th St., Indianapolis. Registration is $35, which includes lunch. The deadline for registration is Feb. 15. For more information, call 317-241-6314, ext. 126.)

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17:**

4:00 - 5:00 pm Talk
Woman: God’s Masterpiece
7:00 - 9:00 pm Talk
God, the Meaning of Life
Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church
89 N. 17th Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46202
Contact: Jonathan Chamblee
Telephone: 317-784-5414 ext. 4
Free W&D offering will be available.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18:**

9:00 am - 4:00 pm Seminar
Introduction to Theology of the Body
Catholic King Catholic Church
5848 N. Crideren Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46220
Pre-Registration (by February 10)
$10 per person (includes study guide and lunch)
Registration (after February 10)
$15 per person (includes study guide and lunch)
Contact: Cindy Flaten
Telephone: 317-255-1664
Catholic Charities head criticizes budget as ‘morally objectionable’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The president of Catholic Charities USA criticized the House of Representatives for failing to take advantage of “one last opportunity to defeat a morally objectionable spending plan.”

Father Larry Snyder, who heads the Alexandria, Va.-based Catholic Charities, and Bishop William S. Skylstad, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, had urged House members to reject a budget reconciliation bill that they said would hurt society’s poorest and most vulnerable members.

The House, which originally approved the budget agreement on Dec. 19 by a 212-206 vote, agreed on a 216-214 vote on Feb. 1 to go along with procedural changes made by the Senate, which passed the bill in a Dec. 21 vote that required Vice President Dick Cheney to break a tie.

House members “failed America’s most poor and vulnerable today by passing a budget that further weakens an already fragile safety net,” said Father Snyder in a statement. “By slashing new holes in the safety net, this budget will undermine efforts to promote soil conservation, improve water quality, protect wildlife and maintain biodiversity.”

He said the budget reconciliation plan had some positive elements, including “additional funding for victims of Hurricane Katrina and a program to promote marriage and healthy families.” The bishop also expressed gratitude that proposed cuts to the food stamp program had been eliminated from the bill.

“However, we believe that, overall, the impact of this bill will be to fail to meet the needs of the most vulnerable among us,” Bishop Skylstad said.

“THERE are many challenges and much tumult in Washington that demand the attention of our leaders,” he added. “However, an essential priority of government is to provide for the general welfare of its people, especially the least among us.”

Bishop Skylstad cited many of those same concerns and also opposed “cuts in agriculture conservation programs, which will undermine efforts to promote soil conservation, improve water quality, protect wildlife and maintain biodiversity.”

In an earlier letter, Father Snyder told House members that the budget agreement “attempts to exercise fiscal discipline by cutting programs crucial to the well-being of low-income children, vulnerable families, the elderly and the disabled.”

“The bill cuts back funding for child support enforcement, adds new provisions to Medicaid that will harm low-income recipients, raises TANF [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families] work requirements that put additional burdens on states, and cuts kinship foster care,” Father Snyder added.

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“There are many challenges and much tumult in Washington that demand the attention of our leaders,” he added. “However, an essential priority of government is to provide for the general welfare of its people, especially the least among us.”
Snapshot of faith
God is at center of Bishop Chatard senior Beth Reed’s life

By John Shaughnessy

There’s always something going on in her life. She ranks third in her class of 183 students at Bishop Chatard. She will have earned at least 10 varsity letters before she graduates—four in soccer, four in basketball and two in softball. She works summer sports camps at Chatard. She does community service. She leads retreats. “Her leadership just extends in everything she does,” said Ben Beaasley, the head coach of Chatard’s girls’ soccer team, who has also taught Beth as a student in his English class. “My recommendation letter to colleges talks about her ability to adapt and excel in any situation. She’s also a perfectionist. I see kids in the classroom who will settle. I see players on the soccer field who settle for mistakes in practice. She never settles. She takes it to the highest level.”

That focus led to her recognition as an Academic All-American by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. It helped her lead her team to Chatard’s first City Championship in girls’ soccer in 2004. It also helped her lead the school’s girls’ basketball team to its first-ever sectional championship in 2005. Beth smiles at the memories, but she doesn’t take credit. “It isn’t just me,” she said while relaxing after school. “Every sport I’ve played has been a team sport. It’s bringing the effort that your team needs. It takes everybody to do it. When everyone realizes that, you have success.”

That attitude also marks her approach to spiritual retreats, according to Mary Schaffner, Chatard’s director of campus ministry. “She’s going to be leading the student leaders at one of our sophomore retreats,” Schaffner said. “We just had a meeting with the team, and she’s asking questions, she’s taking responsibility. She’s not only concerned for her role, but she’s interested in being the leader of the team so it functions well. That’s rare. She’s also willing to be open about her faith.”

One of Beth’s favorite memories of her senior year so far is the four-day retreat she made with classmates. “It was great—just hearing everybody’s experience in life and how much better our faith has made our lives,” she said. “Ask her about her role in planning the St. Augustine prom, and the first thing she mentions is the work of her co-planner, Lauren Fohi, a Chatard senior and soccer teammate who Beth describes as her neighbor and best friend.”

“You never think you would make a connection between a nursing home and teenagers at a high school, but it’s really a special thing to do—bringing together the old and the young,” Beth said. “We set up [on] the day of the prom, and we always take pictures of the [residents] with their teenage dates. We put the pictures in frames, decorate the frames and take them over to the [residents]. It’s fun.”

As the fun and hard work of high school continue, Beth also focuses on her future. She wants to become an engineer like her father. One possibility for pursuing that dream is at the United States Naval Academy, where the school wants her to continue her soccer career. “I’ve talked to people who go to Navy, and they say the administration wants you to be faith-based,” she said. “They say your faith is the one thing that’s stable in your life. I feel that’s true for me.”

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will celebrate the 60th anniversary of her profession as a religious this year, was praised the religious men and women in the community of Saint Meinrad.

Saint Meinrad welcomes two new monks, including St. Paul School in Tell City and St. John Vianney School in Oldenburg.

“The blessings come every day,” she said. Whatever you need, you ask for it. Somehow, God answers your prayers.” In his homily, Archbishop Buechlein praised the religious women at the cathedral for the example that they give to young people.

“The three-year period of temporary vows provides a continuing opportunity for the monk and the monastic community to determine his vocation as a monk. During this time, he is permitted to profess his vocation as a monk. "How tremendously important it is for our young Church and our youth in general in this kingdom to know that some are consecrated so that they may give their whole lives of consecration sow the possibility of infirmary beds - perhaps even more beautiful because the ministry of prayer is so much a part of the life of a follower of Christ." One older sister unable to attend was Franciscan Sister Noel Marie Werland, who was moved to present-day Shelby County and eventually donated the land for St. Vincent de Paul Parish there, which was founded by the Servant of God Simon Bruté in 1837, eventually donated the land for St. Vincent de Paul Parish there, which was founded by the Servant of God Simon Bruté in 1837, among the first English Catholics in North America.

“Those 75 years have been wonderful,” she said. “I call this place the vestibule of heaven.”

Sister Noel Marie entered the “vestibule” from the Indiana Benedictine Basilica. Her family, which included many priests and religious through the years, is deeply rooted now in the monastic ministry but also in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States.

“In a three week period over 3200 families get food, Distribution Center for almost 3 weeks. We operate our Client Choice Food Pantry and seven hundred and seventy seven kind people gave to St. Vincent de Paul by Thank you to all who gave to St. Vincent de Paul by Memorial Gift. In the fiscal year ended 7-15-05, the Servant of God Simon Bruté in 1837, eventually donated the land for St. Vincent de Paul Parish there, which was founded by the Servant of God Simon Bruté in 1837, among the first English Catholics in North America.”

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Sacred and secular are part of the one divine life

By Fr. Robert L. Kinast

Secular humanism is a godless pursuit of happiness and perfection, relying on human ingenuity and personal effort alone. A secular lifestyle values material comfort and pleasure to the exclusion of anything spiritual or religious. Secular culture celebrates human creativity and aspirations with no explicit reference to God.

For many people, these are the only meanings associated with the word “secular,” but this is a one-sided perspective because the word “secular” has at least three different meanings.

First, there is the literal meaning. The word itself comes from the Latin term for age or period of time—“saeculum.” As such, it refers to the events that happen within a given time period and is equivalent to words like “era,” “epoch” or “generation,” with the added notion that these ages are consecutive rather than repetitive or cyclical.

For example, in the Latin version of Mark 12:18, the word “saeculum” is used to mean “through all the ages of ages” or “for as long as time lasts.” In this literal sense, the word “secular” has a neutral meaning.

The second meaning of “secular” derives from the first. What happens in time is time-bound; it is part of a finite, historical creation. In this respect, the term “secular” stands in contrast to the timeless, the infinite, the eternal.

As a contrast term, the “secular” is more than neutral. It draws attention positively to words like “era,” “epoch” or “generation,” with the added notion that the ages are consecutive rather than repetitive.

The third meaning of “secular” is inherent in the word’s etymology, which comes from the Latin word “saeclum,” meaning “time” or “age.” In this way, “secular” can be understood as referring to the time period during which something occurs.

However, with this contrast comes the possibility of a third understanding, a more negative connotation. If the secular is other than the sacred or heavenly, it can easily be perceived as opposed to the sacred or heavenly. This is because the secular is not inherently opposed to each other; they are both incorporated into the one divine life.

The second meaning of “secular” is more than professionals would criticize for belittling the world for being secular any more than they would criticize Atheists for belittling the world for being spiritual. Not everything that is secular is inherently opposed to the sacred.

The third meaning of “secular” is hostile to the sacred. Not everything that is secular is hostile to the sacred. Secular culture is not hostile to the sacred. Secular culture is not inherently opposed to each other; they are both incorporated into the one divine life.

In its literal sense, the secular is as much a part of God’s life as the sacred is. It is in this time-bound creation that God became human. The human experience, including the limitations of finite existence, is a necessary component of our life.

The sacred and the secular are not inherently opposed to each other; they are both incorporated into the one divine life. Furthermore, as a contrast term, the “secular” points beyond itself to a completion which it instinctively strives for but cannot attain by itself.

The world as God created it is essentially incomplete. Despite its boundless potential for development and fulfillment, the world cannot satisfy its deepest aspirations through secular success alone. It is destined to be transformed and perfected through union with the Creator.

This belief does not mandate Christians to build the world for being secular any more than professionals would criticize amateurs for not being professionals. Rather, it is a question of seeing where their present state of development can lead and helping them to achieve it.

Christians always should remember that as long as we live in this time-bound life, we are inherently secular.

At the same time, our very secularity points toward a fulfillment that comes not from within the historical world itself, but from union with the eternal and sacred source from which it came.

Challenging people to go beyond themselves in their secular pursuits to their God-given destiny is the privileged role and responsibility of secular Christians. (Father Robert L. Kinast is director of the Center for Theological Reflection in Clearwater, Fla.)

“On the following day he entered Caesarea … This verse in the Acts of the Apostles describes St. Peter’s likely first venture into a non-Jewish town. He was stepping into the unknown secular world of his time. The city of Caesarea and other Roman and Greek cities housed many graven images, gymnasiuums and theaters in honor of the “gods” and enough “unclean” food to offend self-respecting Jews. I suspect Peter found that some clever innovations and new ideas benefited society.

St. Paul’s familiarity with the secular and pagan ways of the non-Jewish cities allowed him to see that it is possible for all things to work together for the good.

Like St. Peter, Christians today must enter the cities, towns and offices where they live, work and raise families, trying their best to follow God’s will in the secular world.

However, some innovations, inventions and conveniences in society are worth giving thanks to God. Consider science and medicine. How many diseases have been eliminated or greatly reduced by the advances of modern medicine? Scientific advances in immunotherapy conclude that the reintroduction of a person’s own white blood cells helps fight cancerous cells.

Scientists researching gene therapy and molecular testing continue to pursue ways to diagnose and treat diseases that affect quality of life and are a significant expression of human determination over creation.

There also have been great strides in the areas of technology and communication that seemed unimaginable only a short while ago. The computer, Internet, cell phone, CD and DVD allow us to live life more fully in communion with each other.

Even secular media, so often criticized for perpetuating the culture of death, can also be a force for good. Television, radio, movies, sports and all facets of the media can bring us together in community to entertain, inform, uplift and inspire us.

(Allan F. Wright is the author of Silent Witnesses in the Gospels, published by St. Anthony Messenger Press.)

Christians follow God’s will

By Allan F. Wright

“On the following day he entered Caesarea … This verse in the Acts of the Apostles describes St. Peter’s likely first venture into a non-Jewish town. He was stepping into the unknown secular world of his time. The city of Caesarea and other Roman and Greek cities housed many graven images, gymnasiuums and theaters in honor of the “gods” and enough “unclean” food to offend self-respecting Jews. I suspect Peter found that some clever innovations and new ideas benefited society.

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Secular world challenges values

This Week’s Question

What is the most difficult challenge that parents face today in helping to form their children’s values?

“Weeding through outside influences and deciding what makes media a good or bad influence.” (Cathy Smith, Faith, S.D.)

“In the society we live in, everything is relative and what makes media a good or bad influence.” (Cathy Smith, Faith, S.D.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: How have you participated—individually or with others—in eucharistic adoration?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to eene@catolinews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †
The high adventure of everyday life

Some people lead adventurous lives, no doubt about it. They dive deep into the ocean depths to explore shipwrecks, who swap crime scenes for bombs or try to climb any mountain you name.

To be sure, some lives are kind of adventurous just because of the circumstances of birth. These are the lives of sons and daughters of presidents and kings, world famous celebrities or even (gasp) long ago popes. Their adventure consists in living up (or down) to the reputation of their parent. Or, perhaps, trying to live a life entirely uninfluenced by it.

Adventure is defined as “an undertaking or enterprise of a hazardous nature” or “to expose to danger or risk.” Some people’s lives might be considered adventurous because of the circumstances of birth. Some might say citizens of warring countries, or Holocaust victims and soldiers of World War II, experienced adventure (which I say冒险者). Some might say citizens of warring countries, or Holocaust victims and soldiers of World War II, experienced adventure (which I say might say citizens of warring countries, or Holocaust victims and soldiers of World War II, experienced adventure (which I say)

On so many levels, some easy and some difficult, God and us, as well as with each other—through the give-and-take relationship between the living and the dead—provide us with the adventure of freedom to go anywhere, anytime.

Hurricanes, tsunamis and natural disasters of every kind create scary situations for their unfortunate victims. But natural events with a potential for danger, such as flying in an airplane for the first time or moving to an entirely new place—might be considered adventures while awaiting their results.

Still, it seems that most of us think we really lead pretty dull lives. The rhetorical questions we ask each other. “What’s new?” or “How are you doing?” often produce blank stares or the odd, “Oh, not too bad.” No adventures here, we think. B-o-r-i-n-g.

Think again. In my own life, I am a genuine adventurer. I have kept myself in a constant state of awareness so that I am notified to the signs. We don’t have to be astronauts or movie stars to experience it, just hopeful people who expect wonders to happen when we wake up every morning.

The case of an innocent person in ordinary lives, namely me and my husband, in lifetimes filled with unremarkable events, is not beyond our greatest adventures, which illustrate my point.

Right now, we’re enjoying a visit from our German granddaughter and her two children, ages 1 and 3. The adventurous part here includes communicating with little kids who don’t have a word for “praise” and using our rusty skills to entertain them. As added bonus is watching the baby take his first steps alone, an adventure in any language.

Then, the other day as I drove along, proverbial minding my own business, a 40-foot-tall crane and a companion light pole crashed to the street in front of me, barely missing my car. What’s more, a young man in the car behind me even knew how to back up, so he turned my car around for me and I headed off unafraid. Isn’t that something?

They say wonders never cease. In this complex and wonderful world God made for us, every moment has the potential for adventure. Don’t miss it.

(Cynthia Dews, a member of St. Pual the Apostle Parish in Greenscagel, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.)

Love is responsible for everything right in life

When my brother, Michael, and his fiancée, Betty, planned their wedding, I gave them this title, “Harmony.” I delivered it at their ceremony. To conserve space, I share it here: "Love is a poem written by God and loved with care until it stands alone with joy. Love sets the tone, trims the text, unfolds through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, illuminated by the light of Christ. Holy truth and love transcend anything that is not good. Love is a poem rising from the soul in harmony with our Divine Father. Because Catholics and members of the Salvation Army are holy kin, I am sure that Mike and Betty (Majors in the Salvation Army, stationed in Grand Rapids, Mich.) are as interested as I am in Pope Benedict XVI’s first encyclical, “God Is Love,” recently released to the public. My brother and his sister-in-law have been regularly putting their Christian love into action for years. (She is beautiful when referring to the give-and-take relationship between God and us, as well as with each other—on the life level of a Tuesday night! Very challenging, Art, music, films, poetry and novels reflect love in ways only limited by the human imagination. Love is, after all, the most basic description of God, but love translated into service for God is especially right and good.

The love that we receive can also be degraded. I will not mention such situations because we are on the threshold of Valentine’s Day, a time to especially show love in gentle and caring ways. Nor will I go into the countless ways that love is trivialized except to say that even I am guilty of saying “I love…” instead of “I like” when speaking casually about inconse- quential things.

In tennis, love means “nothing.” In our love for God and in personal relationships, it means everything! Love is the driving force for everything we do right in life. How put love into action identifies us as Christians and, if we do not act with loving kindness, we need to re-assess our behavior. Recently I read a statement by Pope Benedict at www.storyfest.com: “I learned there is no price to pay for redemption from sin. God is so easy and so welcoming. Redemption is not gained by wit, nor wages, nor wealth, nor accomplishment, but it is won by the pure love that has no price. It is without measure.”

William stated this after carefully researching Robert Louis Stevenson’s story, The Bottle Imp, which he shares on his free Storyfest eJournal at the above Web address. Bill, his wife, Kathy, are Catholic writers and pilgrimage leaders who have enlightened me for years through e-mail. Readers can also contact William via storyfest@mac.com

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

DNA evidence helps free innocent victims

My attention was caught when I read that a new ABC TV show is based on the strange title of “In Justice.” The publicity released that it was based on some real crime.

It appeared that if the show is based around cases of people who were convicted of crimes they did not commit, it also had to make sure people in the criminal-justice system are very, very, very offended. The way I read it was that for every innocent person freed from prison, this fiction-not-fact show would make sure the person really guilty of the crime would be found and put behind bars.

Interestingly, the day before I read about the new TV show, I read a one-paragraph story in The New York Times headlined “Post-Convicted in 1944 Murder.” It went on to tell that these two men, who spent 18 years in prison for the rape and murder of a 9-year-old boy named Wes, were cleared because their DNA did not match that found on her body.

Recently, I read an article in The Times of an editorial titled “A Light on Justice Denied,” commenting on a situation in Virginia: “A horrifying postponement of official justice begins with a legal document that says precisely that. More—than 15 months—that the Last Supper was on a Tuesday. The Synoptic Gospels are just as clear that the Last Supper was the Passover meal. This was a huge problem for biblical scholars until recently. Also, the Essene Scrolls were discovered in 1947 and later, and then translated, it became clear that the Jews had two calendars at the time of Christ. The Essenes, who most scholars believe composed the scrolls, rejected the authority of the leaders of the temple and believed composed the scrolls, rejected the authority of the leaders of the temple and believed...
The First Reading for this weekend comes from the Book of Leviticus.

"If your people Israel sin against you, the Lord your God, by transgressing his covenant and doing evil in his sight, so that his anger is kindled against them and he brings them to destruction, and you remember the entire commandment of the Lord and do what is right in his eyes by keeping all his statutes and commands, I will purify you from all your sin.

"For I will be zealous for your good, says the Lord, to give you entrance into the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers, entering by the way of one good act."

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**Sunday Readings**

**Sunday, Feb. 12, 2006**

- **Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46**
- **1 Corinthians 10:31-11**
- **Mark 1:40-45**

The first reading for this weekend comes from the Book of Leviticus. In accordance with the Pentecost, the Pentecost includes the five books of the Bible attributed to Moses. These five books are the Torah.

The Pentecost forms the fundamental law and philosophy of Judaism, both in current understandings and in ancient practices as well.

In this reading, God speaks to Moses and to Aaron, the brother of Moses. The topic is leprosy.

Today, it is not known whether these references to leprosy in the Scriptures referred to Hansen's disease or to some other illness. However, regardless of the exact scientific nature of what the ancients called leprosy, the problem was chronic and severe.

An entire social system developed around the disease. Victims were ostracized. They suffered being shunned, but they also lost their virtually all income in life. The need and search for any shelter they could find in order to survive.

Ancient Jews would never have been guilty of the fact for such a serious malady. God was regarded as good, loving and merciful. The ancient Hebrews saw human sin as ultimately the cause of all earthly misery.

St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians furnishes this liturgy with its second reading.

In this reading, the great Apostle counsels the Christians of Corinth never to offend either Jew or Gentile. This advice reveals that the Corinthian Christian community involved both Jews and Gentiles.

Jews actually lived in places throughout the Roman Empire, not just in the Holy Land. Paul urges that the Corinthians follow his example because Paul says that he imitates Christ.

For its last reading, the Church gives us a passage from the Gospel of Mark.

In this reading, a leper approaches Jesus, asking for a cure. The leper is about leprosy, whatever this disease actually was, applied among Jews at the time of Jesus as it did among Jews at the time of Moses. Jesus cured the man, the Lord being "moved with pity," according to Mark. This same name when Jesus touched the man. Symbolic touching is very important in the liturgy. It represents contact and transfer.

During ordination, the ordaining bishop lays his hands upon the candidates to be ordained bishop, priest or deacon.

At weddings, the bride and bridegroom hold each other's hands. Jesus transmitted the healing power of God to the man through this touch then Jesus spoke the miraculous words of healing.

"The Lord ordered the man to go to the priests. The man had been exiled from the community because of his illness. The priest could not have any contact beyond those who had to see that he was free of disease."—Fr. John Dietzen

**Daily Readings**

**Monday, Feb. 13**

- **James 1:11**
- **Psalm 119:67-68, 71-72, 75-76**
- **Mark 8:11-13**

**Tuesday, Feb. 14**

- **Cyril, monk**
- **Methodius, bishop**
- **James 1:12-18**
- **Psalm 94:12-15, 18-19**
- **Mark 8:14-21**

**Wednesday, Feb. 15**

- **James 1:19-27**
- **Psalm 15:2-5**
- **Mark 8:22-26**

**Thursday, Feb. 16**

- **James 2:1-9**
- **Psalm 34:2-7**
- **Mark 8:27-33**

**Saturday, Feb. 18**

- **James 3:1-10**
- **Psalm 12:2-5, 7-8**
- **Mark 9:2-13**

**Sunday, Feb. 19**

- **Mark 8:22-26**
- **Psalm 118:22-23, 24-25**
- **Mark 4:12-13, 14-15**

**Sunday Readings**

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**The Dance**

**My Journey to God**

We were in a dance class, my lead and I, and I fumbled a move—again. The dance was spoiled—he wanted to dip, and I instead wanted to spin.

The instructor asked, “Did you open up and follow your lead’s subtle clues?”

"Or did you ignore the signals he gave and have a plan of your own?"

He said, “To dance well, you must surrender the moves that you have in mind. “Trust in your lead—he’s the one with the plan. Feel for his signs and you’ll find.”

That when you surrender and hold his hands tight, and heed each pressure and nudge, “Then grace will be restored to your dance—and you’ll lose this unfounded grudge.”

These are the rules for dancing well, and they are the same for love. God is the lead and we, the follows, should surrender, listen, hold tight and nudge.

"God is the lead and we, the follows, should surrender, listen, hold tight and nudge."—By Natalie DeHart

(Natalie DeHart is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis. Her poem was inspired by a swing dance workshop she participated in last November. “I’ve heard our relationship with God compared to a dance before,” she said, “but this is what I learned that weekend, the appropriateness of that parallel truly struck me.”)

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**Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen**

**The sacrament of penance affirms God’s presence, love**

As a convert to the Catholic faith of only a few years, I have many problems and questions about the sacrament of penance. As I gather most other Catholics have also. One is about the “penance” that the priest gives at the end. What is this for? Is it to “make up” for our sins, as I hear? How can we possibly do that? Sometimes the penance given is a prayer. Other times, it is to do something, like helping a person in need. Even priests don’t seem to agree. (Florida)

A Perhaps we should first review a few important truths about this sacrament that underlie any useful answer to your question.

First and most importantly, we are talking here about one of the seven sacraments of the Church, which are always, above all else, celebrations of the love and presence of God. To praise this divine mercy and goodness is what we are there for.

Unfortunately, this is not usually the way we see it. As we focus on our apprehensions and sins, perhaps our shame, whatever we Catholics think we are doing when we go to confession, it would not normally include “celebrating” anything.

It doesn’t help that we traditionally refer to this event as “going to confession.” The implication is that we, our sins and our guilt are the focus of attention. The truth is rather that it is God and his mercy and unconditional love for us that hold center stage in the sacrament of penance.

The examination of conscience, for example, is not primarily to scrape the bottom of our souls to be sure we don’t miss any sins. It is rather to discern not only where we may have been sinning, but to be aware of our questionings and tendencies in our lives, especially in our relationships with others, with others and with God.

They may not even be sinful at this point, but they are not good, do not reflect the kind of person we want to be and may lead to something worse if we don’t move in another direction.

After all, our sins (even our good actions and good intentions) are part of our past, part of our history. Not even God can change that. We put our sins in his hands for forgiveness, which we know he have.

But at the time we receive this sacrament, all that’s left is grace and help are for the future, inviting us to always higher levels of conversion and holiness. At baptism, for example, in other words, God is much more interested in what we are doing to than in what we have done. All the focus of the sacrament must be seen in that light.

Thus, the words and suggestions of the priest are meant to help the penitent briefly to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit in his or her life.

What will assist him or her to find a new kind of living and acting that more fully will reflect the mystical heritage? It may best bring fully to life the “new creation” that is given by Jesus in this sacramental communion with God.

A good confessor, in other words, “reveals the heart of the Father who should correspond to the seriousness and nature of the sins. This act of penance may take the form of prayer, self-denial and especially service to one’s neighbor and works of mercy.”

It is that best bring fully to life the “new creation” that is given by Jesus in this sacramental communion with God.

As the Rite of Penance observes, “the inner conversion of heart” to which the Holy Spirit moves us “embraces sorrow for sin and the intent to live a new life.”

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Notre Dame president says universities should balance faith and reason

ROME (CNS)—In its dialogue with culture, the Catholic university must be persuasively, not necessarily opposing arguments and use the light of faith to respond reasonably and persuasively, said Father John J. Jenkins, president of the University of Notre Dame.

Father Jenkins, the Holy Cross priest who took office last year at the Indiana university, told a Rome conference on Feb. 1 that Catholic universities should take their cue from St. Thomas Aquinas, whose writings examined a “disputed question” from all sides.

The saint would present opposing views in a way acceptable to those who held them, and in fact persuasively as possible, before delivering his own response, Father Jenkins said.

This is extremely important today, he said, as the Church seeks to influence critical cultural debates on social questions, theological change, biomedical advances and human dignity.

“We will not engage the great issues of the day unless we are able to listen and understand the contrary voices,” he said.

As an intermediary between the Church and culture, the Catholic university has a responsibility first of all to identify the great questions of the day, he said.

After examining the views of others, including non-Christians, Catholic scholars should attempt to resolve the issue in the light of faith, then try to respond to contrary views in a way that will help persuade others, he said.

In this way, he said, the Catholic university can be a force for spiritual change.

The Church is also enriched and shows that, like St. Thomas Aquinas, it is ready and willing to learn about the truth from anyone, he said.

Father Jenkins made his remarks at Rome’s Pontifical Lateran University, where the Notre Dame Board of Trustees conferred honorary degrees on Father Arinze, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, at an academic conference and convocation at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome on Feb. 1.

He said the issue was not academic freedom. Notre Dame can accept a diversity of views, events and artistic performances, including some that are not in accordance with Catholic teaching, he said.

“We want a diversity of views. That’s part of being a university,” he said.

But he said The Vagina Monologues had run for five years at Notre Dame, involving fundraising and a great deal of publicity, all of which raise the question: Is what we are sponsoring consistent with the sort of institution we are?

Father Jenkins said the question of Catholic identity means universities should make room for explicit reflection on their mission. The basic objectives of that mission should be respected by everyone working at the university, including non-Catholics, he said.

Cardinal George promises change in sex abuse policies after new cases

CHICAGO (CNS)—A contrite Cardinal Francis E. George promised changes on Feb. 2 in the way the Archdiocese of Chicago handles allegations of sexual abuse by priests after removing two pastors from their parishes in the past month.

The archdiocese pledged to find a way to temporarily take priests who are accused of sexual abuse out of parish ministry in every case, whether the charges are credible and to work with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services every time a priest is accused—even if the abuse allegedly occurred decades earlier.

The cardinal said at an earlier news conference that the archdiocese had no mechanism to remove Father Daniel J. McCormack as pastor of St. Agatha Parish after police launched an abuse investigation against him because the alleged victim did not make a statement to Church officials.

The cardinal said at the Jan. 28 news conference and at a meeting two days later with about 200 parents and parishioners at St. Agatha, Cardinal George acknowledged that the system the archdiocese has had in place since 2002, did not work as it should have.

The policies in place, he said, depend on getting an accusation from a victim or a family member which then could be submitted to the archdiocesan review board to determine if it was “credible,” a finding which requires a lower level of evidence than a criminal charge. But the vic-

tims’ family refused to talk to archdiocesan officials, he said, despite several efforts.

“If I knew then what I know now, I would have acted differently,” the cardinal said during the hour-long meeting with the media. “I think I would have found a way to remove him.”

The allegations against Fathers McCormack and Bennett are “like a dagger in the heart” to the broaderfaith communion, with the priests of the archdiocese feeling betrayed and the Church losing any credibility it might have built up in its history of dealing with allegations of sexual abuse, the cardinal said.

He said he had been haunted by worry that his inaction in Father McCormack’s case had allowed more children to be touched.

Asked what he would say to the family of the most recent victim, the cardinal said, “I would like to listen to them first.”

“What can I say?” he added. “That this should not have happened? I apologize? This is so terrible. To come out with stock words now—I can’t do that. I am just terribly troubled and confused.”

Cardinal George promised changes in sex abuse policies after new cases.

Attorney Jeffrey Anderson announced on Jan. 31 that he had filed suit on Feb. 1 against the archdiocese seeking a list of all priests with credible allegations of abuse made against them.

Father McCormack’s Jan. 20 arrest came after a 13-year-old boy at Our Lady of the Westside School’s St. Agatha Campus told a school official about the alleged abuse. The official reported the allegations to the archdiocese and to the Cook County state’s attorney, which led to Father McCormack’s arrest.

But in a matter of days, it was revealed that Father McCormack had been questioned by police in August about allegations of abuse by a second boy, now 11. A third alleg-

ation, in 2000, involved a fourth-grader at the school, but was dropped at the request of the child’s mother. The accusa-

tion was not reported to civil authorities, which is arch-

diocesan policy.

He said that in retrospect there should have been a way under Church law to remove Father McCormack, even tem-

porarily. Now, the cardinal said, he is concerned about the children affected by the case.

“My primary concern is taking care of all the children,” he said. “My concern is the children of St. Agatha School.”

Father McCormack, 37, was released on $200,000 bond, he is staying at his brother’s home in suburban Chicago and has been ordered to have no contact with children.

Father Bennett, who was ordained in 1966, “is cooperat-

ing with archdiocesan officials and is residing in a moni-

tored private setting,” Auxiliary Bishop Joseph N. Perry of Chicago said in a Feb. 5 letter to Holy Ghost parishioners.
Doudt said he encourages people to try new things in life. “There were a lot of times that I fell on my face,” he said. “But you can’t be afraid [of failure]. You’ve got to try new things or otherwise you live with what you are and where you’re at in life.”

Doudt said his wife is a big inspiration for him. “She is the mother of my children and is very strong in that aspect,” he said. “I admire her for her education. She’s working on her Ph.D. and teaching, and that takes a lot of work.”

Jerry Ross, assistant executive director of the Catholic Youth Organization, said Doudt is an inspirational role model for youth who meet him during basketball games. “This is his first year officiating for CYO games,” Ross said. “He started when our boys’ basketball season began the last week of November and also has officiated for girls’ basketball games. It’s been a real treat to have him officiate games for us. He does things from his wheelchair that many able-bodied men and women are not able to do. He’s not only overcome his disability, he’s really made it work for him and has made it a positive part of his life.”

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Suzanne L. Yakinchick, Chancellor, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-1410

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CHAIR (continued from page 1)

Peter and, therefore, of the pope as his successor. Father Ravelli said primacy and authority are naturally part of the idea of celebrating a chair, if the term is thought of like a chair at a university, held by a particularly intelligent and wise professor. But he said his research showed that the primary focus of the feast for centuries was on the role of St. Peter and his successors as the servants of the unity of the entire Church.

The pope’s role as servant is emphasized both in Bernini’s sculpture and in prayers for the feast day liturgy written after the Second Vatican Council, Father Ravelli said.

While the Gospel reading for the Mass has remained the story of Jesus giving the keys of the kingdom of heaven to St. Peter, he said, the Vatican II prayers “focus on service, especially on serving the communion of the whole Church.”

“The tone does not underlie primacy, which remains part of it, but service,” he said.

Bernini’s sculpture also contains both elements and can be interpreted according to one’s point of view, he said.

The fact that it is a Baroque masterpiece exalting the chair on bronze clouds right below the Holy Spirit window can be seen as an expression of the royal, triumphant power of the papacy.

In that case, Father Ravelli said, the chair is obviously a throne.

But while Bernini depicted Jesus handing the keys to Peter on one side of the chair, the presentation is balanced by the scene of the washing of the feet on the other side. The central scene, decorating the backrest, shows Jesus telling Peter that if he loves him he will feed his sheep.

Bernini’s placement of two saintly theologians from the East and two from the West at the feet of the chair also is open to interpretation focusing either on power or on service, he said.

While some would see the theologians in submission under the chair, he said, “the chair is not a weight on them, nor are they holding it up. They are drawn to it, gathered around it.”

To Father Ravelli, the chair is a symbol that the bishop of Rome’s key act of serving the Church is service through teaching.

“The pope has an obligation to teach,” he said. “Even for nonbelievers, he is a point of reference on moral questions.”

The 110 candles do not light up a king’s throne, Father Ravelli said, but a teacher’s chair.†

Gian Lorenzo Bernini’s sculpture behind the main altar in St. Peter’s Basilica is lit by candles on the Feb. 22 feast of the Chair of St. Peter, Apostle in this 2004 file photo. The annual feast day celebrated since ancient times, marks the role of St. Peter and his successors as head of the Church.
Providence Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt taught as a grade-school teacher for 48 years

Providence Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt taught as a grade-school teacher for 48 years.
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