People continue to demonstrate devotion to John Paul II

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—From starting prayer groups to cheering at the mention of his name, people around the world continue to show their devotion to Pope John Paul II. A year after Pope John Paul’s death, the Vatican still maintains a separate entrance to the grotto under St. Peter’s Basilica where he is buried, and Pope Benedict XVI still cites his writings and example in many of his public speeches.

While the cause for Pope John Paul’s canonization continues with interviews of people in Rome and Poland who were close to him, Pope John Paul prayer groups are springing up around the world.

Msgr. Slawomir Oder, the official promoter of the pope’s sainthood cause, said the groups—one in Argentina calls itself “Juan Pablo Magno” (John Paul the Great)—not only support the cause with their prayers, but they study Pope John Paul’s writings.

Pope Benedict does not appear jealous of the attention; in fact, from the beginning of his pontificate, he has urged the Church to continue to study the teachings of his predecessor.

Speaking to the Roman Curia in December, he said: “No pope has left us a quantity of texts equal to what he left us; no pope before him could visit the entire world like he did and speak directly to men and women of every continent.”

“The Holy Father, with his words and his works, has given us great things, but no less important is the lesson he gave us from the chair of suffering and silence,” Pope Benedict said.

In addition to the television movies, documentaries and books on the life of Pope John Paul, and the work of the pope’s canonization, the closing of the Year of the Faith, the canonization of Pope John Paul and Pope John XXIII, and the election of Pope Benedict XVI, events that captured the world’s attention and introduced a new style of papacy.

Benedict XVI

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—In April, the Church marks the first anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II and the election of Pope Benedict XVI, events that captured the world’s attention and introduced a new style of papacy.

Thousands will gather to pray in St. Peter’s Square the evening of April 2, a poignant reminder of the vigil outside the late pope’s window on that date last year, when a hushed crowd was told the pontiff had “returned to the house of the Father.”

As his sainthood cause gathers momentum, Pope John Paul remains in people’s hearts, a fact witnessed daily in the seemingly endless line of pilgrims who come to his grave carrying flowers, notes or a silent prayer.

Pope Benedict, meanwhile, has used a simple and direct approach to win over the record crowds that are flocking to his appearances at the Vatican and elsewhere. Quietly and slowly, in more than 200 sermons and speeches, he has engaged the faithful and the wider society on fundamental issues of truth, freedom, faith and human dignity.

In some ways, it has taken a full year for the papal transition—a year to absorb the legacy of Pope John Paul’s long pontificate and a year for Pope Benedict’s papacy to come into focus.

The new pope found himself presiding over many events scheduled under his predecessor, like the Synod of Bishops last October, several canonizations, the closing of the Year of the Faith, and the canonization of Pope John Paul and Pope John XXIII.

Mission trip takes students to hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast

By Sean Gallagher

Vacationing along the Gulf Coast over spring break has become an annual tradition for high school students.

During the first week in April, 110 high school students, teachers, youth ministers and campus ministers from in and around Indianapolis will leave for Pascagoula, Miss., in the Biloxi Diocese.

Only they won’t be lying on a beach getting a tan. Instead, they’ll be working up a sweat doing relief work along the hurricane-ravaged Mississippi coast.

Seminarian John Hollowell, who is in his second year of formation at Saint Meinrad School of Theology at Saint Meinrad, worked with the archdiocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry to develop the trip idea.

Hollowell initially thought about going down by himself to stay with his brother Tony, who teaches at Resurrection High School in Pascagoula, Miss., in the Biloxi Diocese.

“My original plan was to bring a couple of chainsaws and some work gloves and just kind of pitch in,” John Hollowell said. “But as I started to realize how extensive the devastation was, I thought of ways to try and get more hands down there, more people to help out.”

He has since worked with Father Jonathan Meyer, director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, to expand the trip to include scores of youth from central Indiana.

The trip is being supported by a $25,000 grant from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis Hurricane Katrina Fund. The fund was created from second collections taken in parishes across the archdiocese, as well as other contributions received in the weeks following Hurricane Katrina.

In all, 90 students from 18 high schools in central Indiana will leave for Pascagoula on April 1. For a week, they will be sleeping and eating in Resurrection High School’s gymnastics, Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School, Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School and Cathedral High School, all in Indianapolis.

According to Father Meyer, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, the youth and their adult chaperones will help the families who send their children to...
Biloxi seminarians continue formation at Saint Meinrad

The page will include written accounts and photos of the relief work undertaken by the 110 youth, teachers, youth ministers and campus ministers who will be staying at Resurrection High School in Pascagoula, Miss., in the Biloxi Diocese.

By Sean Gallagher

When Hurricane Katrina crashed ashore on Aug. 29 last year, it left no aspect of life in coastal Mississippi untouched. Like so many others in their home state over the last seven months, seminarians from the Diocese of Biloxi, Miss., are slowly coming to terms with the impact the hurricane has had on their lives.

Two of them, Adam Chapman and Jose Vazquez-Morales, who before the storm had been studying at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, have been picking up the pieces of their priestly vocations at Saint Meinrad School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

Chapman, 23, grew up in the coastal city of Pascagoula, Miss. Living so close to the Gulf had led him to seek God's presence in the sea and in the storms that blow off of it. "But in his life he had prepared him for Katrina. And when it came ashore, its destructive forces led him to question his faith. "It was a temptation for me," Chapman said in a recent interview with The Criterion. "It was a very difficult time for [my] faith."

For two weeks after the storm, Chapman struggled to live with his parents and five other families in a relative's home 10 miles north of the coast. Yet the help that he saw flowing into his state bolstered his trust in God. "You're able to really see the love of God in the people that there is going to blow our mind," he said. "I think that in itself is going to be a blessing for these young people to see.""}

A sign outside a house in Biloxi, Miss., on Sept. 12, 2005, displays a bit of humor after residents endured the destructive force of Hurricane Katrina. The frame of this house was one of few still standing in the neighborhood.

A verse from Revelation, "Behold, I make all things new," (Rev 21:5) is the theme for the mission trip. "From suffering, God brings forth his great life, his great power, his great mission," Father Meyer said. "And that’s what this whole trip is about. It will be a great, great week of lives being changed." 4

Theetry wrought by Katrina.

Father Meyer spoke about the impact the faith of the people who bore the brunt of Katrina might have on the youth traveling to the coast. "I think to see the faith in the people that are there is going to blow our mind," he said. "It’s going to be a blessing for these young people to see.""}

"You’re able to really see the love of God in the people that there is going to blow our mind," he said. "I think that in itself is going to be a blessing for these young people to see.""}

The preparations include helping the youth view their ministry and the ravaged coast will likely have on the youth.

"It’s probably going to be pretty overwhelming for them," Hollowell said. "We’ve been trying to prepare for that.

The fact that the trip will happen the week before Holy Week, according to Father Meyer, will also be important for its participants. "I think that the time is coindicential," he said. "The time is providental, that we’re going down there so close to the celebration of our Lord’s Passion, and then looking forward to the Resurrection.

Hollowell described the timing in devotional terms. "What the kids are going to see is going to be a Stations of the Cross," he said. "They’re going to see people who have fallen and who have been scourged and crowned with thorns, so to speak.

"[But] we are going to be Simon of Cyrene in some ways."

Just as the Catholic faith does not end with Jesus being laid in the tomb, neither will this trip to Mississippi focus on the impact seeing the devastation on the coast will likely have on the youth.

TRIP

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Teens will have
Internet journal

Friends, relatives and anyone else interested in the spring break mission trip to the Mississippi coast can follow what happens on it on the Internet.

A page on the archdiocese’s Web site will host a journal for the trip that will be updated daily.

To see it, log on to www.archindy.org/biloxi.
By John Shaughnessy

“The girls’ academies gave us the gift of making us the people we are. We were always told we were to be women of worth.”
—Rosie Thomas Houk

“High school is where some of the deepest friendships are formed. These women have such deep and lasting memories of those relationships that they want to keep the experience alive.”

That’s the goal of Dorothy “Dot” Ryan, a 1952 graduate of St. Mary Academy who is a member of the committee.

“I don’t know if I knew it at the time, but being at an all-girls’ school, we got to do it all,” said Ryan, a member of St. Matthew Parish in Indianapolis.

“Then we had the feeling that we could do it all. The whole experience fostered faith and friendship. I still get together with some of the kids from high school.”

Committee members especially recognize the influence of the different religious orders that shaped the girls’ academies, including the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, and the Sisters of St. Benedict.

A souvenir booklet from the junior prom at St. Agnes on May 9, 1952, shows how faith was connected to nearly every aspect of life at the girls’ academies. The booklet notes that in the middle of the prom there was a May crowning ceremony of the Blessed Mother.

“We want to preserve the rings, the yearbooks, the newspapers and most important of all—the memories,” Houk said.

She laughed at the memory of an unusual tradition surrounding the marble steps at St. Agnes.

“The tradition was you could not go on those marble steps unless you were a senior,” said Houk, who graduated in 1963. “If you were caught on them and you weren’t a senior, you had to clean them with a toothbrush.”

Such stories will undoubtedly be shared again at the April 20 ceremony.

Another opportunity will come on Aug. 5 when graduates of the all-girls’ academies are invited to a reunion lunch at Cathedral.

“I have a lot of deep feelings for St. Agnes, and those feelings are the same of everybody at the other girls’ academies,” Houk said. “At our lunches in August, we all have our clusters of girls. The best part is sharing the memories and connecting again.”

(For more information about the April 20 ceremony or the Aug. 5 reunion, call 545-7681 or e-mail rwaner@archindy.org.)
The Church's future

What will the Catholic Church in the United States be like in the future?

With the current condition of the Church, that’s a question many people are asking themselves, or perhaps their friends.

We are now well aware of the priest shortage, which is complemented by a huge increase in the number of lay ecclesiastical ministers.

Polls indicate that Catholics are nearly equally divided politically between Democrats and Republicans. A smaller percentage attends Mass weekly than in the past. Many Catholics dissent from some Catholic teachings, but there seems to be a revival among some of our young Catholics. We could go on, but you get the picture.

Meanwhile, we have become cognizant of the situation of the Church in Western Europe. Even in the strongest Catholic countries like Ireland and Italy, few people now attend Mass regularly. Europe seems to have rejected its Christian roots in the last thirty years. It is only a secular culture.

In that what will happen in the United States, too?

Sociologist Joseph Varacalli takes a look at both our past and possible future in his new book The Catholic Experience in America (Greenwood Press, $55). We can be proud of our past since we have grown from a very small presence (only 56 congregations in 1776) to the largest church in the country—23 percent of the population. We are firmly in the mainstream now. But did we lose something along the way?

The Catholic presence grew because of large families and through immigration, mainly from Ireland and Germany. The new immigrants met strong opposition and anti-Catholicism from nativists, which forced them into their own neighborhood—the Catholic ghetto. Perhaps they started their own schools to teach the truths of our religion to our children. It wasn’t until after World War II, when the G.I. Bill made it possible for Catholic youth to attend college, that they began to leave the ghetto. Today they are firmly in the mainstream. It’s a success story.

Varacalli isn’t so sure. He views the assimilation of Catholics into the mainstream as “organizational hari-kari” because Catholics have abandoned their subculture. He says that the secular culture of our society, not the Church, has “an almost uncontested ability to shape the minds and hearts of the younger generations of American Catholics.”

Is that what happened in Europe?

Varacalli believes that there are six possibilities for American Catholicism. although three of them seem strongly improbable: dissolution, formal schism from the universal Church, and “retreat to a 1950s style pre-Vatican II Church.” The other three possibilities are maintenance of the present pluralism that now undoubtedly exists; the establishment of an American Church, thus discarding the Church’s traditional beliefs; or, at the opposite end, a return to orthodoxy. Surely a neo-orthodoxy is devoutly to be desired, but it isn’t the trend. Catholics today are so divided in their pluralistic viewpoints that bishops and priests appear to tread lightly for fear of offending or antagonizing someone. However, if everyone is left to do his or her own thing, we have abandoned the Catholic subculture that existed prior to World War II.

A modern phenomenon in the Church is the tendency of Catholics to church-hop, to select the parish where they feel most comfortable because of either the liberal or conservative viewpoint expressed by the pastor. What could better demonstrate the pluralism in our modern Church?

Then there are those Catholics who like to parade their independence from the pope and the rest of the magisterium. They want to remain Catholics, but think that some of the Church’s teachings are outdated or obsolete.

And what do we make of the fact that the percentage of Catholics is greatest in the most liberal states? Massachusetts is the state with the largest percentage of Catholics—46.2—followed by Connecticut with 38 percent. Evidence in those states indicates that their citizens’ viewpoints are closer to those of secular Europeans when it comes to traditional values than they are to the teachings of the Church.

We will require effective leadership, both clerical and lay, for the Church in the United States to become again as vital as it once was.

—John F. Fink

Making a Difference

Tony Magliano

Reaching for the gold during Lent

“Jesus, at the sight of the crowds, was moved with pity.” With these words from the Gospel of Matthew, Pope Benedict XVI laid the foundation of his first Lenten message.

The pope draws our attention to the “compassionate gaze of Christ” that “continues to fall upon individuals and peoples... He chooses to defend them from the wolves, even at the cost of his own life.”

Within the light of this truth, the pope moves us to the question of human development. “In the face of the terrible challenge of poverty afflicting so much of the world’s population,” writes Pope Benedict, “indifference and self-centered isolation stand in stark contrast to the gaze of Christ.”

The pope undoubtedly was thinking of the 1.2 billion people who struggle to survive on less than $1 a day. For these fellow human beings, life’s basic necessities, which we often take for granted—sufficient food, clean drinking water, safe sanitation, decent housing, comprehensive health care, quality education and adequate employment—are unreachable dreams.

“Moved like Jesus with compassion for the crowds, the Church today considers it her duty to ask political leaders and those with economic and financial power to promote development based on respect for the dignity of every man and woman,” wrote Pope Benedict.

During the Games of Salt Lake City, this winter, one Olympian refused to be absorbed by indifference and self-centering. In imitating the compassionate gaze of Christ, American speedskater Joey Cheek donated the $40,000 bonus money he received for winning a gold and silver medal to “Right to Play,” a humanitarian organization dedicated to using sport and play in aiding the development of some of the world’s most needy children.

Cheek directed that his gift be used to help the children of Darfur. Cheek believed that the war in Darfur has been exported to the Sudan because of brutal attacks launched upon them by the Sudanese government and proxy forces.

In addition to his selfless donation and in the spirit of Benedict’s plea to those with power, Cheek challenged Olympic corporate sponsors to match his gift. His challenge resulted in more than $300,000 pledged to “Right to Play.” But the good achieved by Cheek’s donation and corporate challenge continued to snowball. Inspired by his generosity, Canadian gold medalist Clara Hughes, another speedskater, pledged $10,000 to “Right to Play.” She called on Canadian businesses to match her donation and asked fellow citizens to help. As a result, more than $200,000 has been donated.

Also inspired by Cheek’s gift, China’s speedskater Yang Yang A donated her $10,000 bronze medal bonus to “Right to Play.”

In the spirit of Lent, let’s keep that winter Olympics snowball rolling. Joey Cheek has given the world an example of selfless compassion. He also has taught us the power of good examples. Like a stone tossed into a pond, acts of human kindness create ripples of love that extend beyond our view.

Living in an increasingly secular, materialistic society tends to dull our conscience to the suffering of the poor. And we aren’t careful, little by little we tune-out the cries of the poor.

Isn’t that what happened in Europe?

The Church continues to fall from the minds and hearts of the younger generations of American Catholics.

Letters to the Editor

We must help the least of our brothers, sisters in the United States

This letter is in response to a letter writer in the March 10 issue of The Criterion and published on page 4.

I don’t know if the United States is responsible for feeding the children of the world or not. I think we are our brother’s keeper, so we probably should (be responsible).

I hope the U.S. and all the developed countries can feed the children of the world, but don’t. Instead, the U.S. allows Japanese corporations to buy up our farmland, thus farming that has been in families for generations away from them. Let farmers grow crops How crazy is that?

I think every household in the U.S. with an income less than $30,000 per year should receive food stamps: $150 for one person, $250 for two and $350 for four or more people in the household.

This would stimulate our economy, allow Japanese corporations to buy up our farmland, and perhaps give them the time free of mind and peace of mind to be volunteers— and eliminate the need for “handouts”?

Mary Schott, Indianapolis

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and will be published if well expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous and respectful. Letters must be signed, but for serious reasons, names may be withheld. Letters should be addressed to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
Ir, se debería ver a Jesús.”

Estas palabras las dijeron unos griegos al Apóstol Felipe, quienes formaban parte del séquito que iba subiendo (a Jerusalén) para la adoración en el festival. Felipe le dijo a Andrés y ambos fueron a decirle a Jesús. Jesús respondió: “Ha llegado el momento de glorificar al hijo del hombre. Les digo solemnemente que a menos que un grano de trigo caiga en tierra y muera, continuará siendo un simple grano; pero si muere produce una cosecha rica. … Si un hombre me sirve, deberá seguirme…”

Este domingo, la palabra del Evangelio nos conduce al momento de la Pasión de Cristo. Al igual que los griegos, formamos parte de un séquito que va camino a Jerusalén. El Domingo de Ramos descenderemos con Jesús en su entrada triunfal a Jerusalén. Y rápidamente la procesión triunfal se desvanece en la Pasión de Jesús.

“Nos gustaría ver a Jesús.” El dijeron Papa Juan Pablo II citó estas palabras en su carta sobre nuestra entrada al tercer milenio. En nuestros días, indicó el Santo Padre, al igual que los griegos del Evangelio, la gente desea ver a Jesús.

Desean ver a Jesús. Quieren ver a Jesús. Pero a muchas personas les cuesta admitir que no solo se quiere ver a Jesús, sino que se quiere ver a Jesús en la vida cotidiana. ¡No más un Jesús en la Cruz! En la vida cotidiana, el rostro de Jesús es lo más querido.

“Estamos en el agua. El agua nos vivir, así que busco agua.”

Durante Lent, rejuvenecer tu deseo de holiness

“S

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO DANIEL M. BUECHLEIN, O.S.B.

La ayuda espiritual que necesitamos se encuentra a nuestro alcance. Darnos cuenta de la presencia de Dios a nuestro alrededor implica un programa de devoción a la oración diaria y a los sacramentos, especialmente la Eucaristía y la penitencia. La oración y los sacramentos nos transportan fuera de nosotros a los demás, especialmente los pobres, como una medida externa de la santidad.

El hecho de que sea sencillo no significa que sea fácil. Para muchos de nosotros la santidad puede parecer algo fuera de nuestro alcance. Después de todo, Dios es perfectamente santo, y la Madre de Cristo lo es por medio del privilegio de su maternidad. El hacer santos tiene que ver con nuestro acercamiento a la santidad de Dios. Si deseamos calentar nuestros corazones, debemos acercarnos a la llama del amor de Dios. Si deseamos irradiar el rostro de Jesús, debemos estar cerca de la luz de Cristo. El hacer santos significa alejarnos de la búsqueda de todo aquello que nos impida buscar el rostro de Jesús.

Si deseamos hacer santos, podemos beneficiarnos de dos aspectos prácticos. La hermana de Santos de Aquino le preguntó qué tenía que hacer para hacerse santa. “Tienes que querer,” le contestó él. El otro aspecto es el siguiente: debemos estar dispuestos a empezar un nuevo día y una nueva semana. La spiritualidad que necesitamos se encuentra a nuestro alcance. Darnos cuenta de la presencia de Dios a nuestro alrededor implica un programa de devoción a la oración diaria y a los sacramentos, especialmente la Eucaristía y la penitencia. La oración y los sacramentos nos transportan fuera de nosotros a los demás, especialmente los pobres, como una medida externa de la santidad.
Regular Events

**Events Calendar**

**Daily events**
- St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. Liturgy of the Hours, Mon.-Fri., 2:30 p.m., prayer, 5:15 p.m. Information: 317-635-5201.
- Sacred Heart Jesus Church, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis. Liturgy of the Hours, Mon.-Fri., morning prayer, 11 a.m., evening prayer, 5:15 p.m. Information: 317-875-5818.
- Marian College, St. Francis Hall Chapel, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Catholic mechanical Renewal, prayer, worship, healing prayers, 7 p.m. Information: 317-977-2460.

**March 31**
- St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. Liturgy of the Hours, Mon.-Fri., 2:30 p.m., prayer, 5:15 p.m. Information: 317-635-5201.
- Sacred Heart Jesus Church, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis. Liturgy of the Hours, Mon.-Fri., morning prayer, 11 a.m., evening prayer, 5:15 p.m. Information: 317-875-5818.
- Marian College, St. Francis Hall Chapel, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Catholic mechanical Renewal, prayer, worship, healing prayers, 7 p.m. Information: 317-977-2460.

**April 1**
- Marian College, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Right to Life prayer, family event, registration 7:30 a.m., participants 5k hike, bike 522 prerегист, 25 race entry, one day, free fun walk. Information: www.isu.edu

**April 2**
- Holy Rosary, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. First anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II, holy hour, exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, rosary and special prayers for vocations, silent adoration, 3-4 p.m. Information: 317-636-4478.
- Marian College, Ruth Lilly Student Center. 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. People of Peace, Secular Franciscan Orders, noon-2 p.m. Information: 317-955-6775.
- St Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. Daily Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 7:30 a.m. Information: 812-486-3012 or vocindremond@isusu.edu
- Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. Spiritual and Spiritual ministries. 5:45 p.m. meatless pasta dinner, 6:30 p.m. “Pope John Paul II: The Great: Vocations.” Information: 317-636-4478.
- Indianapolis Civic Theatre. 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. “Community on Screen” at St Meinrad Archabbey. Information: 812-486-3012 or vocindremond@isusu.edu

**Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, College.**
- St. Mary-of-the-Woods, College. Mary Stone, presenter, 7:15 p.m. Information: 317-797-8200.
- St. Simon the Apostle Church, 4161 W. 56th St., Indianapolis. ‘The Great’: Vocational. Information: 317-797-8200.
- St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. Liturgy of the Hours, Mon.-Fri., 2:30 p.m., prayer, 5:15 p.m. Information: 317-635-5201.
- Sacred Heart Jesus Church, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis. Liturgy of the Hours, Mon.-Fri., morning prayer, 11 a.m., evening prayer, 5:15 p.m. Information: 317-875-5818.
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Afghan Christian jailed for conversion released from prison

KABUL, Afghanistan (CNS) — An Afghan man who faced a death penalty for converting to Christianity dodged out of sight on March 26 after his release from prison the previous day.

The court dismissed the case on March 26 after the prosecution dropped charges against Abdul Rahman, 41, who was jailed after declaring his conversion to police officers. The Associated Press reported on March 29 that Rahman disappeared after his release, apparently out of fear for his life, because Muslim clerics still considered him a heretic.

Deputy Attorney General Mohammed Eshak Alokho told AP that prosecutors issued a letter for a warrant of his arrest because “he was mentally unfit to stand trial.”

Rahman reportedly became a Christian several years ago, after working for a Christian aid agency in Pakistan. The Afghan Supreme Court had said Rahman could face the death penalty unless he reverted to Islam, prompting a worldwide outcry.

In a telegram sent on March 25, Pope Benedict XVI urged Afghan authorities to drop charges against Rahman.

The telegram to Afghan President Hamid Karzai said the pope’s appeal was intended by “a profound human compassion” and by “the firm belief in the dignity of human life and respect for every person’s freedom of conscience and religion.

“It would then contribute in a most significant way to our common mission to foster mutual understanding and respect among the world’s different religions and cultures,” it said.

The case has generated discussion about the extent of religious freedom in Afghanistan, whose government is supported by a strong U.S. military presence. Despite the defeat of the Taliban regime in 2001, Islamic law remains in force, and many Muslim leaders in the country hold strong views about conversion.

Christians are a tiny minority in Afghanistan, numbering only a few thousand. An estimated 99 percent of the population is Muslim.

The pope spoke about religious freedom at his weekly blessing at the Vatican on March 26. He did not name specific countries, but said some governments, while adhering to human rights on paper, in practice impose many restrictions on religious liberty.

He encouraged minority Christian communities in such situations to “persevere in the patience and charity of Christ.”

Palestinian diplomat, a Catholic, criticizes Israeli checkpoints

CLEVELAND (CNS) — Some 2 million Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza have lost time coming through the 450 checkpoints the Israeli government has established to control the movement of all Palestinians, Christians and Muslims alike.

“It’s an arbitrary system, where the indigenous population of the country is made to feel unwelcome every moment of every day,” Safieh said in an interview with the Catholic Universe Bulletin.

Democratic，“the name of the game is how Israel will get the better of Palestinians living in an effort to separate them from Jewish settlements. Israeli officials say the walls are necessary to prevent terrorism.

Prospects for peace were further clouded in January when Hamas, a more militant organization that has used terrorism to promote its push for an independent Palestine, became the majority party of the Palestinian Liberation Organization Legislative Council.

A member of the Palestine Liberation Organization rather than of Hamas, Safieh said he expects to continue in his diplomatic post based on his long years of service to the Palestinian effort and broad experience as a diplomat in the West.

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Prospects for peace were further clouded in January when Hamas, a more militant organization that has used terrorism to promote its push for an independent Palestine, became the majority party of the Palestinian Liberation Organization Legislative Council.

A member of the Palestine Liberation Organization rather than of Hamas, Safieh said he expects to continue in his diplomatic post based on his long years of service to the Palestinian effort and broad experience as a diplomat in the West.
Diocese of Biloxi’s vocations director, spent a week driving around the diocese searching for his seminarians. After finding them, contacting the United States bishops’ vocations office and Saint Meinrad School of Theology, Father Carver told six of his seminarians to drive north to the southern Indiana seminary.

“I didn’t even know where it was,” said Vazquez-Morales, a second-year theologian. “I didn’t even know how to spell the name.” Leaving their storm-ravaged diocese was a challenge for Chapman, who said he felt selfish and guilty about going north.

“[But] it was better for me to go [there] and prepare for the future because the new Diocese of Biloxi is going to need priests,” he said. “So I felt like it was a better use of my time and energy to push forward.”

The Biloxi seminarians eventually made their way to Saint Meinrad, arriving there late one night in the middle of September. Despite arriving close to midnight, there were seminarians waiting for them. One who arranged for their welcome was transitional Deacon Scott Nobbe, who is scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on June 25. He made sure that their rooms were readied and, upon their arrival, determined each of the seminarians’ particular needs.

“The general consensus, myself included, was that we were very excited we could do something to help individuals out and, in particular, seminarians in this tragedy,” Deacon Nobbe said. The needs turned out to be great. "We didn’t have any money with us,” Vazquez-Morales said. “They provided some for us. We didn’t have much clothing, and we got some from the seminary.

“So it was wonderful just to see the support from our brothers. They didn’t know us. We didn’t know them, but they were so open to just to be with us and help us in whatever we needed.”

That included a listening ear. Chapman noted that the seminarians who welcomed him were curious to hear his first-hand account of Katrina, but respected his and his fellow Biloxi seminarians’ need for space to cope with the storm’s effects on their lives.

“They’ve been very cognizant of that,” he said. “There were times when I was tired of talking about the hurricane, but they’ve been very good about it, very sensitive, even though they had no idea where I was coming from.”

According to Father Carver, Saint Meinrad School of Theology was also mindful of the financial poverty that the hurricane put the Biloxi Diocese into and offered full scholarships for its seminarians.

“That has been a tremendous gift to us,” he said. “[something] for which I will be forever grateful.”

Benedictine Father Mark O’Keefe, the president-rector of Saint Meinrad School of Theology, credits the seminary’s benefactors for the financial aid it offered, and its Benedictine roots for the hospitality shown to the Biloxi seminarians.

“Certainly hospitality and welcoming the guest as Christ is a Benedictine charism, one that we treasure,” he said. “And I think that the seminarians here have been formed by that, [both] consciously and unconsciously.”

Of the six Biloxi seminarians initially welcomed by Saint Meinrad, three, who were transitional deacons, soon returned to Saint Meinrad School of Theology, credits the seminary’s benefactors, and conference organizers for the financial aid it offered, and its Benedictine roots for the hospitality shown to the Biloxi seminarians.

“Certainly hospitality and welcoming the guest as Christ is a Benedictine charism, one that we treasure,” he said. “And I think that the seminarians here have been formed by that, [both] consciously and unconsciously.”

Of the six Biloxi seminarians initially welcomed by Saint Meinrad, three, who were transitional deacons, soon returned to Saint Meinrad School of Theology. Another discontinued his priestly formation.

Chapman and Vazquez-Morales remain at Saint Meinrad and are planning to continue their studies there.

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Biloxi Diocese Seminarian Adam Chapman, a pre-theology student at Saint Meinrad School of Theology in St. Meinrad, sings during the seminary’s Sounds of Spring concert on March 19 at St. Bede Theater. Chapman began his priesthood formation last August at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans and relocated to Saint Meinrad after Hurricane Katrina.

Father Carver is radically aware of the devastation Katrina inflicted on his diocese.

At the time of the storm, he was pastor of St. Paul Parish in Pass Christian, Miss. Katrina completely destroyed nine of its 10 buildings, and a large majority of its members’ homes. It has since been merged with another parish.

But Father Carver believes that the destruction wrought by the hurricane can have a positive impact on the lives of the diocese’s seminarians.

“My hope is that they will minister to a people who have seen ... and understand the Passion of the Lord,” he said. “And I think that by the time they’re ordained, ... the people and the communities will begin to experience the Resurrection of the Lord.

“So I think in simply serving them, they will come to understand Christ better. And I think when a priest understands Christ better through the people, then that priest’s ministry is going to be fabulous.” †
Parishes schedule Lenten penance services

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. The following is a list of penance services that have been reported to The Criterion.

Batesville Deanery
April 4, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
April 5, 7 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan
April 6, 7 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County
April 7, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood

Bloomington Deanery
April 4, 7 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington
April 6, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville

Connersville Deanery
April 5, 7 p.m. at St. Elizabeth, Cambridge City
April 6, 7 p.m. at St. Anne, New Castle

Indianapolis South Deanery
April 5, 7 p.m. for Good Shepherd and St. Roch at Good Shepherd
April 5, 7 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Joseph at St. Joseph
April 5, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Jesus

Indianapolis West Deanery
April 5, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph
April 6, 7 p.m. at Holy Angels

New Albany Deanery
April 2, 2 p.m. at St. John, Starlight
April 2, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
April 5, 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs
April 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul, Sellersburg

Indianapolis North Deanery
April 4, 7 p.m. for Good Shepherd and St. Roch at Good Shepherd
April 5, 7 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Joseph at St. Joseph
April 5, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Jesus
April 10, 7 p.m. for SS. Francis and Clare, Greenwood, and Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

Indianapolis North Deanery
April 5, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Jesus
April 10, 7 p.m. for SS. Francis and Clare, Greenwood, and Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

Tell City Deanery
April 2, 5 p.m. for St. Michael, Cannelton, St. Pius V, Troy, and St. Paul, Tell City
April 4, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany
April 5, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Jesus
April 12, 7 p.m. at St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad

Terre Haute Deanery
April 3, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle
April 6, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Patrick, Terre Haute
April 8, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Greencastle

Knobs
April 5, 7 p.m. in Indianapolis, Indiana.

New Albany Deanery
April 5, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph
April 6, 7 p.m. at Holy Angels

Indianapolis South Deanery
April 5, 7 p.m. for Good Shepherd and St. Roch at Good Shepherd
April 5, 7 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Joseph at St. Joseph
April 5, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Jesus
April 10, 7 p.m. for SS. Francis and Clare, Greenwood, and Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

Indianapolis West Deanery
April 5, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph
April 6, 7 p.m. at Holy Angels

New Albany Deanery
April 2, 2 p.m. at St. John, Starlight
April 2, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
April 5, 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs

Knobs
April 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul, Sellersburg

April 9, 4 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany
April 10, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville

Seymour Deanery
April 4, 7 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace, Madison

Tell City Deanery
April 2, 5 p.m. for St. Michael, Cannelton, St. Pius V, Troy, and St. Paul, Tell City
April 4, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany
April 5, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Jesus
April 12, 7 p.m. at St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad

Terre Haute Deanery
April 3, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle
April 6, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Patrick, Terre Haute
April 8, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Greencastle

South Deanery
April 5, 7 p.m. for Good Shepherd and St. Roch at Good Shepherd
April 5, 7 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Joseph at St. Joseph
April 5, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Jesus
April 10, 7 p.m. for SS. Francis and Clare, Greenwood, and Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

Indianapolis West Deanery
April 5, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph
April 6, 7 p.m. at Holy Angels

New Albany Deanery
April 2, 2 p.m. at St. John, Starlight
April 2, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
April 5, 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs

Knobs
April 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul, Sellersburg

April 9, 4 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany
April 10, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville

Seymour Deanery
April 4, 7 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace, Madison

Tell City Deanery
April 2, 5 p.m. for St. Michael, Cannelton, St. Pius V, Troy, and St. Paul, Tell City
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Terre Haute Deanery
April 3, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle
April 6, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Patrick, Terre Haute
April 8, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Greencastle

“... going to be treated as people. “

To keep our health care human, human for our patients, human for our families, human for our doctors and human for all associates. The poor will come and the rich will come, if they know they are going to be treated as people.”

~ Spoken by one of the four founding Daughters of Charity who arrived in Indianapolis in 1881 to start St. Vincent
The pope's only major document so far has been an encyclical that focused on what he called the foundation of the Christian message, "God is love," and its implications for personal and institutional charity.

The much-discussed Vatican document barring men with deep-seated homosexual tendencies from the priesthood, although approved by Pope Benedict, was a project inherited from the previous pontificate.

The long-rumored tsunami of replacements in the Roman Curia has not hit yet. The pope's only major appointment came last May, when he named U.S. Archbishop William J. Levada as head of the doctrinal congregation and later named him a cardinal.

But in March, the pope made his first move to streamline Vatican offices. At least temporarily, the council dealing with migration was combined with the justice and peace council, and the council that dialogues with non-Christian religions—including Muslims—was combined with the council for culture. The final alignment of curial offices is not yet clear and the changes may take months, but most expect a significant shrinking of the number of agencies.

For the last year, however, Pope Benedict’s priorities have not been administrative. Instead, he has embarked on what might be described as a project to water the roots of the faith. He has urged Catholics to rediscover Christ as the focus of their personal lives and to resist the tendency to make the individual ego “the only criterion” for their choices.

The pope has been careful to phrase this as a sympathetic invitation and not a warning.

“We continually close our doors; we continually want to feel secure and do not want to be disturbed by others and by God”—and yet still Christ will come for his people, the pope said in a sermon last May. As a teacher, he has turned to Scripture far more than he did as pope. In a talk in March.

He has zeroed in on what he has called Europe’s spiritual fatigue, occasionally rapping the cages and rallying the forces on issues like gay marriage, cohabitation and abortion.

The pope’s style—deliberate and thoughtful—was seen in the way he took up residence in the Apostolic Palace. He commissioned a lengthy remodeling of the papal apartment, and only in December did he really move in, along with his 20,000 books.

It impressed people at the Vatican that the pope took the time to meet separately with the often-overlooked groups of employees who serve him every day, including ushers, papal gentlemen, members of the papal antechamber and the Vatican’s security force.

Pope Benedict has had an overwhelmingly favorable reception, too, among the tens of thousands of pilgrims who come to see him each week. When he moves through a crowd, he seems to look people in the eye.

Last year, when the pope waived the normal five-year waiting period for the start of Pope John Paul II’s sainthood cause, he showed he was sensitive to the popular voice of the Church.

In April, when the crowds gather to pray in St. Peter’s Square, he will join them in remembering the late pontiff and the dramatic events set in motion by his death.

Record Vatican crowds continue a year after pope’s death

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—One year ago in April, the city of Rome saw record numbers of crowds when millions of people flocked to the Vatican and St. Peter’s Basilica for the funeral of Pope John Paul II, the conclave of cardinals and the subsequent election of Pope Benedict XVI.

In just one week, more than 3 million people descended on the Vatican to honor Pope John Paul, who died April 2, 2005.

According to the Vatican, the crowds have just kept coming.

In just the first eight months of his pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI drew nearly 3 million pilgrims to public events.

In addition to the Prefecture of the Pontifical Household, more than 2.8 million people attended the weekly general audiences, the Sunday blessings, special papal audiences or liturgical celebrations at which Pope Benedict presided.

Also, the number of visitors going through the doors of the Vatican Museums in 2005 broke all records, even surpassing the huge crowds that came during the jubilee year when the museums extended opening hours into the afternoon.

Last year, more than 3.8 million people squeezed through the turnstiles. That number was up from more than 3.4 million people in 2004.

Some speculate the unprecedented global media coverage the Vatican received during last April’s papal transition had a hand in putting Rome and the Vatican back on the map as a sought-after tourist destination for both secular globetrotters and Christian pilgrims.

While curiousity about the new pope and the desire to pay homage to the late pontiff with a pilgrimage to his tomb have accounted for some of the boom in visitors, one tour guide said there are other factors involved.

For example, the exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and the euro, which became Italy’s official currency in 2002, has stabilized, said Paul Encinis, co-founder of the Rome-based Eternal City Tours.

“That means there’s more economic accessibility” for tourists coming from the United States, he said.

While the number of visitors “has definitely increased since last April, it was already on the rise from two years ago,” he said.

“I would say having a new pope accounts for about 5 percent” of the increase in the number of visitors who use the company, said Encinis.

“The Colorado native said while tourists want to see Rome’s religious sites their motives are different.

“The Da Vinci Code is still a buzz over here; now that the movie is coming out, it’s blown in some new interest,” he said. “The secular tourists want to see the religious sites” depicted in Dan Brown’s best-selling novel, “while the Christians want to see the sites, too, but for different reasons.”

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God uses adversities to bring us back to him

By Christopher Carstens

I have been a psychologist since 1975. For a while, I ran a family crisis service. Later, I managed the psychiatry service in a major urban emergency room.

For more than 30 years, I’ve sat with people while their worlds were falling apart in every imaginable way.

Meeting a new patient, one of my first three or four questions always has been the same:

“Why are you here today—not last week, not last month, but today?”

Mostly, people try to answer that question by naming their diagnosis or giving an explanation for their long-term predicament:

“My child has ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder).”

“I’m an alcoholic.”

“My son is disobedient at school.”

“We think our daughter may be bipolar.”

But those explanations don’t answer the question, “Why today?”

Why are you here now? You have known for years that your marriage was coming apart. Why did you call this week and not last week?

About their present motivation to seek help brings up important clues about what put this person over the edge—about what was unexpected and was finally too much to handle.

A guy who has had a gambling problem for five years loses next month’s rent at the casino, then sees his wife weeping at the kitchen table. He is not seeking help because he gambled and lost, but because he finally saw the pain that she was causing and realized he could not call himself a “good husband” anymore.

So much of the time we live in our own little “pretend world” where everything is just fine. We ignore the problems and imagine everybody else will ignore them too. Only when a crisis slams into us do we take stock and get serious about making real changes.

From a Christian perspective, God seems to use such moments to crack our shells of self-deception and expose the reality of our situation. I do not believe that God intentionally sends pain and suffering, but when those happen to us, as with the Prodigal Son, he uses them to bring us back to himself.

As long as I believe that I can solve problems with my own hard work or a credit card, as long as I can master a situation through my cleverness, my self-control or my network of friends, I won’t feel that I really need God. But an excessive belief in our own abilities has been called pride.

St. Thomas Aquinas saw in pride the root cause of every other sin.

A few years ago, I met a man who truly had burned all his bridges. He had been fired from a series of highly paid jobs, and most of the people in his industry were so mad at him that he hardly could hope to find work again. His wife finally had thrown him out because of his nasty temperament. To make it worse, he had contracted a disease that probably was killing him, and the treatments to save one part of his body were wrecking other parts almost as fast.

Still, he kept thinking that he was one job, one sale, one good break from getting back on top. If he just had a chance, he could fix it all by himself.

He finally called for an appointment on the day that his teenage son refused to spend the weekend with him because he couldn’t stand being with his dad again.

The man’s “pretend world” cracked.

In other words, something unexpected had happened, something that made a critical difference.

When I asked why he was here “today,” he told me about his illness, his employment problems and the old story of his divorce. But the real reason he called was that the only person who still loved him did not want him around anymore.

In his “pretend world,” he was the victim and the bullies kept pushing him around. When the walls finally cracked, he realized that he had spent his life angry at other people, resentful of their advantages and had ended up treating those closest to him with a hostile arrogance that drove them away from him.

It was a problem of pride. My first recommendation was that he go back to Mass. He had not been to church for years. We worked together for a little while, but I have good reason to know that God’s work with him has continued ever since.

Christ has been called the doctor of sin-sick souls, and indeed he is. But the doctor cannot do the treatment if the patient will not acknowledge that he is sick.

That is how Christ uses our worst failures for his own good ends—to turn us back to him.

(De: Christopher Carstens is a psychologist in San Diego, Calif.)

Listen for God’s voice in daily life

By Allan F. Wright

Recently, our family experienced a major and unexpected problem that prompted us to move in with my parents.

Now we are wondering how God could allow one person to totally disrupt our lives. In the midst of the questioning, I have found God breaking into my life through the concern of others.

When looking for God’s kingdom, it rarely comes in dramatic, outward signs and wonders, but through people.

I beginning to hear God now in the ordinary, often expected and unpredictable events of daily life. He is whispering in my ear. “All will be well.”

A thoughtful reading of Scripture has many examples of God reaching out to people in unexpected ways, trying to get our attention. Consider God’s appearance to Moses in the burning bush or the gentle voice God used to get Elijah’s attention.

Jesus used the ordinary and dramatic to get our attention. He washed the disciples’ feet and turned over tables at the temple to show his displeasure. He used conception imagry to communicate the kingdom of God.

It seems that God reaches us where we are in life to get our attention.

While God is unpredictable, God is never unfaithful.

It is the “unpredictable” aspect of our relationship with God that has given believers pause to reflect down through the generations.

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

Seek God’s help with needs

This Week’s Question

Did you ever grow—and how—because of something unexpected and at first unwelcome that occurred in your life?

“The whole situation with Hurricane Katrina here. At first, it was devastating and heartbreaking, and it still is. But to see the dedication, resolve and faith of people in our parish is inspiring.” (Lisa Sturta, Long Beach, Mass.)

“I wasn’t able to have children, and it made me sad and angry with God. We adopted four children—two Filipino, like my husband, and two biracial. It turned my life around... I wouldn’t have it otherwise.” (Jean Zilles-Soberano, Washington, D.C.)

“At 5, our daughter was [diagnosed with] severe dyslexia and auditory and memory deficits. ... Around that time, she expressed a desire to receive Communion. When we told her she had to wait a year, she cried every Sunday at Mass. Our pastor asked about her crying and, when I explained, he said she could make her First Communion early. A week afterward, she attended a healing service with us, and within a few weeks her problems cleared. ... We attribute the change to God’s grace and the power of the Eucharist.” (Kathy Lemoine, Orange, Mass.)

Lend Us Your Voice

Faithful Lines/Cornucopia/
Cynthia Dewes

From the Editor Emeritus/
Jesus to death. Both required different that? But how could he accomplish that one man should die rather than danger to the Jews and, therefore, “It was necessary of a project that has reflected the resource that the entire family may use
This is the time
Building up fortitude in Lent
The fifth Sunday of Lent is coming up. We’ve been journeying through this holy season for several weeks now. Meanwhile, we still have a couple of weeks to go...
The Book of Jeremiah is the source of this Lenten season's first Scriptural reading.

Jeremiah ranks among the greatest of the ancient Hebrew prophets. He wrote at a very difficult time for people. Outside pressures had come to be so strong that the very future existence of the nation, and indeed of the race, was at risk. It was easy under these circumstances to blame God for all the misfortune.

Jeremiah, however, insisted that God had not delivered the people into peril. Rather, they had decided for themselves to pursue policies and to move along paths that inevitably would lead to their downfall.

These policies were dangerous because they were sinful. They ignored God, and they rebelled against God. Nothing good could come of them. Great trouble was to be expected.

Through all these acts of rebellion, God was true to the Covenant. The people broke the Covenant. Nevertheless, God, who is forever merciful and forgiving, promised a new Covenant. If the people would be faithful to this new Covenant, and if they would sin no more, they would survive.

However, being faithful to the new Covenant, and sinning no more, meant more than verbal pledges. It meant living in accord with God's revealed law.

For its second reading, the Church offers us this weekend a selection from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

This reading looks ahead to the Passion that will be the centerpiece of next Sunday's liturgy, the liturgy of Palm Sunday. It will surround the Church as it celebrates Holy Thursday. It will envelope the Church on Good Friday.

The Church will rejoice at the victory of Jesus over death in the Easter Vigil and at Easter. Jesus was perfectly obedient to God.

He was the teacher, therefore, of perfect obedience. Because of this obedience, Jesus attained life after death. He pledges life after death to us if we are obedient ourselves.

St. John's Gospel provides us with the last reading. Virtually every verse in John's Gospel is a masterpiece of eloquence and instruction. These verses are no exception. Indeed, quoting Jesus, they are nothing less than jewels of literary and theological exposition.

Jesus is clear. His hour is approaching. It will be the hour of the Passion. It also will be the moment of Resurrection. The cross meant intense suffering for Jesus. He was a human, after all, as well as the Son of God.

Yet, Jesus accepted the cross. He died, as all humans must die. However, in glory, Jesus rises from the dead. All believers must walk in the Lord's footsteps. All must die, literally, but also they must die to sin. Death will be hard in coming. But, if occurring in the love of God, resurrection itself will follow.

Reflection

The Church leads us through the last remaining two weeks of Lent. For four weeks, we have been living through this season. It may have become dreary. The Church gives us these readings to inspire us and to encourage us.

As inspiration, and as encouragement, it reassures us that if we are faithful to God, eternal life awaits us. However, more than any one season is at stake here: The season of Lent— and our response—merely reflects life, which can be dreary. Life can mean for any of us, often for many of us, a daily carrying of crosses to our personal Calvaries.

The Church this weekend therefore speaks to us about life, not only about Lent. If we follow Jesus, indeed follow Jesus to Calvary, by obediently consenting to God’s will and putting God first in our lives, then the glory of eternal life awaits us.

Lent has been a time so far to focus ourselves. We need to be faithful to the Covenant. The Church urges us today to re-commit ourselves to this process and to the Covenant itself.

On this 13th Sunday of Lent, My Journey to God includes a story from a parishioner who thought she could not be saved. Someone else’s story can encourage us to think beyond the limits of our own lives. It can help us to understand the Church’s teaching about salvation.

Question Corner/ Fr. John Dietzen

Catechism addresses question of who will be saved through the dictates of their conscience— those too may achieve eternal salvation.

Note the words “moved by grace.” Jesus is, we believe, the universal and only Savior of mankind. All good and virtuous actions, even by those who never heard of the Gospel or Jesus, or of God as we believe in him, happen because of the saving grace of our Lord’s life, death and resurrection.

In other words, God’s grace is guiding and saving those who live sincere and conscientious good lives, but who have, for whatever reason, honestly never seen the Gospel of Jesus, or heard the Church’s message.

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 2, 2006

• Hebrews 5:7-9
• Jeremiah 31:31-34
• John 12:20-33

Monday, April 3

or Daniel 13:41c-62
Psalm 23:1-6
John 8:11-11

Tuesday, April 4

Isidore, bishop and doctor
Numbers 21:4-9
Psalm 102:2-3, 16-21
John 8:21-30

Wednesday, April 5

Vincent Ferrer, priest
Daniel 3:14-20, 94-95, 99 (Response) Daniel 3:52-56
Psalm 8:31-42

Thursday, April 6

Genesis 17:3-9
Psalm 105:4-9
John 8:51-59

Friday, April 7

John Baptiste de la Salle, priest
Jeremiah 20:10-13
Psalm 18:2-7
John 10:31-42

Saturday, April 8

Ezekiel 37:21-28
(Responsky) Jeremiah 31:10-13
John 11:45-46

Sunday, April 9

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion
Mark 11:1-10
or John 12:16 (procession)
Isaiah 3:4-10
Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18a, 19-20, 23-24
Philippians 2:6-11
Mark 14:1-15:47
or Mark 15:1-39

The Criterion Friday, March 31, 2006

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Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith 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.

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

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.
WASHINGTON (CNS)—The impres- sion of Opus Dei conveyed in Dan Brown’s novel, The Da Vinci Code, is “the complete opposite of what Opus Dei is about,” said Brian Finnerty, U.S. spokes- man for the international Catholic organi- zation.

The book portrays Opus Dei as a secretive cult within the Church plotting to take over the Church and willing to kill those who stand in its way. One of the main characters in the book is a murder- ous albino Opus Dei monk named Silas.

In fact, Opus Dei, headed by a bishop, is a personal congregation—part of the hierar- chical structure of the Church—and it has no monks.

With the vast public attention given to the book over the past three years, and now with the movie coming out in May, Opus Dei is using the occasion “to get the word out about who we really are,” Finnerty told Catholic News Service in a phone interview.

He said one of the things the organiza- tion has done is provide a brief descrip- tion of the real Opus Dei for a new Web site funded by the Catholic Communication Campaign, www.jesusdecoded.com.

“Opus Dei” is Latin for “God’s work,” and members often refer to it simply as “the Work.”

And what is the Work really about? “Coming closer to God and finding God in everyday life,” Finnerty said.

While the novel portrays it as being in opposition to the world, “Opus Dei is about seeing the world as a place of encounter with Christ,” he said.

Founded in Spain in 1928, Opus Dei now has more than 87,000 members in more than 60 countries, including 3,000 in the United States, according to Finnerty.

Members seek to make their faith infuse all aspects of life, including their work in the secular world as a form of service to God.

Father John Wauck, an American Opus Dei priest who teaches at Opus Dei’s Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome, has a personal Web log, known as a blog, on Opus Dei and the Da Vinci Code.

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Workers install a statue of St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, the founder of Opus Dei, outside St. Peter’s Basilica in 2005. The marble statue, about 17 feet high, is in a niche on the external wall of the basilica’s left transept, also known as the arm of St. Joseph, near the entrance to the sacristy. Pope Benedict XVI blessed the statue in September 2005.

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Options for Lenten Dining

Continued on next page
in the book, Father Wauck said the whip used by Opus Dei numeraries is “small and light enough to carry in a closed fist.”

Linda Ruf of Chicago, an Opus Dei member for more than 20 years, has led parish information sessions around the Midwest and appeared on television to discuss the errors in The Da Vinci Code—"not just errors about Opus Dei, but about Christianity itself, where author Brown constructs an elaborate two-millennium conspiracy theory that challenges fundamental Christian beliefs."

“I was astounded that women were having faith crises over this,” she told CNS. Of the criticisms of Opus Dei that the novel uses to fashion a picture of a secretive sect within the Church, she said, “Opus Dei, I’m sure, has made some mistakes. They should learn from some of those possible mistakes.”

She said a recent book titled Opus Dei by John L. Allen Jr., an American journalist and author who covers the Vatican, “does a pretty good job of saying what some of Opus Dei’s problems are and what some of its strengths are,” giving voice to the critics, but also reporting the organization’s response to those criticisms.

Some critics claim Opus Dei recruits people aggressively and excessively controls the lives of members, but Shaw and Hickey described their decisions to join as a free choice without pressure from members. Hickey said that while her children were involved in the organization’s clubs they were never asked to join.

Bruce Lachenauer, 46, of Irvine, Calif., a father of five and a partner in a large executive search firm, said that as a student at Northwestern University he was invited to participate in activities at the nearby Opus Dei center.

“There was nothing high pressure about it,” he said, and he didn’t become interested until a couple of years later, after the center moved closer to campus.

He described himself as “a product of the ‘60s” who went to public school and to parish religious education classes that did not get much beyond “how Jesus loves us.”

“One of the first things Opus Dei helped me with was a theology class, where I learned so much more about my faith,” he said.

Lachenauer said as an Opus Dei member he finds his faith “woven into every aspect of life,” from his work environment to his relationships with family and friends. He said he has invited “many, many friends to participate” in retreats, talks, parenting seminars and other activities sponsored by Opus Dei because he thinks they will benefit from those experiences.

He said he has invited some people to consider joining Opus Dei, but to his knowledge none have joined, although several friends have become “cooperators”—nonmembers who support Opus Dei financially or volunteer their time for some of its projects.
HONOLULU (CNS)—In many ways, Meaghan Ababa is a typical 7-year-old girl. She loves playing with her Bratz dolls, going to the Chuck E. Cheese restaurant and attending catechism classes on Sunday. But after an astonishing total recovery from a rare and sudden illness that nearly killed her, some are calling her a “miracle girl.”

The apparent cause of what many feel was a miracle? Her classmates’ prayers.

Meaghan went from being hospitalized in Honolulu with what seemed like the flu to being whisked to Los Angeles hospital after doctors determined she had a rare, life-threatening heart ailment, and was a candidate for a heart transplant. She recovered completely turned around, leaving even her doctor feeling her recovery was miraculous.

Meaghan’s remarkable journey began on Feb. 2, when she began experiencing flu-like symptoms. The Honolulu girl, the daughter of Fe Reyes and Alex Ababa, was admitted to Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children in Honolulu with a high fever. Doctors diagnosed her condition as fulminant myocarditis, a rare life-threatening viral infection that causes inflammation of the heart’s muscular wall, making it difficult to contract and circulate blood.

It was determined that Meaghan would likely need a heart transplant, but Kapiolani was not set up to perform one. She needed to be transferred to Childrens Hospital Los Angeles. She was put on a machine to keep her alive until she could be transported. However, the only entity equipped with an airplane and the medical transport team and portable machinery she needed to get her on her way was a U.S. Air Force unit based at Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio.

The Air Force dispatched a 12-member medical crew to Hawaii. They switched her to the portable machine and whisked her and her parents to a waiting plane at Hickam Air Force Base, which took them to Los Angeles.

When Meaghan arrived there on Feb. 4, her condition was critical and extremely unstable, according to Dr. Sylvia Del Castillo of Childrens. The girl’s heart had stopped three times. At Kapiolani she had undergone CPR for an hour and a half. That meant she could have suffered brain damage. “Every time the body codes, that’s very bad for the rest of the organs, including the brain,” Del Castillo explained. “We were afraid her brain would have permanent injuries because of all these events where she was not getting proper circulation.”

In Los Angeles, Meaghan was placed on the national heart transplant list. On Feb. 5, as Meaghan lay near death in a Los Angeles hospital, her weekly catechism class at Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace was meeting 2,000 miles away in Honolulu.

The students—except for one, her brother Anthony—were unaware of the condition of their little classmate. Anthony was in tears when he asked them what was wrong, he could only say that his sister had “the flu” from the hospital. And was in a Los Angeles hospital.

Moore stopped the lesson to lead the class in prayer to ask God to heal their friend and classmate. “I told the children that everything would be all right because the Lord will answer our prayers,” Moore told the Hawaii Catholic Herald, newspaper of the Honolulu Diocese. The class prayed between 9 and 9:30 a.m. Meanwhile, at Childrens Hospital, according to Meaghan’s parents, between 11 and 11:30 a.m. California time, their daughter’s heart began beating on its own. With two hours’ time difference between Hawaii and California, the two events were occurring simultaneously.

It was truly a miracle, Moore said. “Their prayers were answered really quickly,” she said. “She’s our miracle girl.”

Del Castillo, a Catholic, agreed. “I do believe that the reason she recovered is a combination of the Lord’s intervention, along with the excellent care she received” at Kapiolani and Childrens and from the Air Force transport team, she said. “It’s truly miraculous.”

Meaghan soon woke up, said she was hungry and asked if she could go to Chuck E. Cheese. The astonished doctors put her through tests over the next few days and found that she was 100 percent cured and had suffered no brain damage.

Meaghan returned to Hawaii on Feb. 15 and was back at Sunday school on Feb. 19, where her classmates welcomed her with cheers and hugs. The class continued as usual, albeit differently. “They’ve become much more global in their praying,” said Moore. “They see that we can send prayers a couple thousand miles, we can send them all the way across the world where there’s a tsunami or a landslide.”

In early February, Meaghan Ababa, shown at her desk on Feb. 26 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace Sunday School in Honolulu, developed fulminant myocarditis, a rare heart ailment, and was a candidate for a heart transplant in a Los Angeles hospital. She recovered suddenly on the day her Sunday school class prayed for her. Today she is in perfect health, and her doctor credits the prayers and the care she received.
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Let Me Go: The Strength in Weakness

The title of the book comes from the pope’s last words, murmured in Polish: “Let Me Go.” He always demonstrated an attitude of profound interiority which—despite some moments of visible human disappointment and impatience—led him to accept sickness, physical pain and forced inactivity from the hands of God.

“Moments of suffering and death must be lived in the light of faith, with love and Christian hope, in complete abandonment to the will of God,” the pope said.

The pope “was a person very attentive to the light of faith, with love and Christian hope,” said Cardinal Dziwisz.

At the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Benedict seemed surprised when people would interrupt him—especially during a Mass homily—with applause and cheers.

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Cardinals, which now numbers 193 members of the College of Cardinals, Pope Benedict XVI called on them to be even stronger witnesses of God’s love for the world and their own love for the Church.

At the March 24 ceremony in which the prelates from 11 countries became cardinals, he prayed that the red garments they now wear would inspire them to an even more “passionate love for Christ, for his Church and for all humanity.”

“Give them rings during a March 25 Mass, he said to them, are called to serve the Church “with the love of a spouse.”

At both services, U.S. Cardinal William J. Levada, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, was the first of the new cardinals to approach the pope. Cardinal Levada, the former archbishop of San Francisco, addressed the pope on behalf of the new cardinals on March 24.

In accepting their new status, Cardinal Levada said, the new cardinals renewed their commitment of “total love and unconditional fidelity to Christ the Lord and to the Christian people.”

“The love for Jesus Christ and his Church, this fidelity to humanity which has a burning thirst for truth, we want to place into your hands,” he told the pope.

Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley of Boston also was among the 15 to join the College of Cardinals in the first consistory of Pope Benedict’s pontificate.

At the March 24 prayer service, Pope Benedict told the entire College of Cardinals that the elevation of Cardinal O’Malley to the College of Cardinals would mark “a new beginning” for the Boston Archdiocese.

Another Boston pilgrim, Nancy Mandarini, said, “He’s a very humble, holy man.” She said she hoped that the elevation of Cardinal O’Malley to the College of Cardinals would mark “a new beginning” for the Boston Archdiocese.

Cardinal Zen was cheered by some, while Cardinal Levada and his peers. The oldest of the new cardinals, 87-year-old Cardinal Peter Poreiku Dery, retired archbishop of Tamale, Ghana, was seated in a wheelchair and was carried up the steps of St. Peter’s Square to the pope. Pope Benedict stood to place the red hat, called a biretta, on Cardinal Dery’s head and caressed the cardinal’s cheek after offering him the sign of peace.

Among the Boston pilgrims in the group included 100 clergy and nuns from the Vatican from around the world. The group included 100 clergy and nuns from mainland China studying in Rome reported UCA News, an Asian church news agency. The delegation from Hong Kong numbered 141 people, including the cardinal’s oldest and youngest sisters, the agency added.

During the March 24 ceremony, a special prayer was offered in Chinese “for all those who still suffer because of their Christian faith.”

A 60-member group from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles was in reality an expanded version of a pilgrimage from St. Anthony Parish in Long Beach, the home parish of Cardinal Levada.

The core of the group was composed of eight of his high school classmates, including his successor as archbishop of San Francisco, Archbishop George H. Niederauer.

Another group of Cardinal Levada supporters came from Portland, Ore., where he served as archbishop, 1986-1995. Todd Cooper, a 34-year-old member of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Portland, led the 50-member group.

“The Archdiocese of Portland is not that big,” Cooper said, “but [Chicago] Cardinal [Francis E.] George came through there, and now Cardinal Levada. It’s kind of neat to have that connection, and it brings us closer to the universal Church.”

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The last cardinal created was 82-year-old French Cardinal Albert Vanhove, a noted biblical scholar. 

Wearing red

Pope creates cardinals, prays for their love for Church

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