Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

A blessed and joyful Easter to you all!

This Easter edition of The Criterion is being sent to all households in the archdiocese, including those that don’t normally receive the newspaper.

If you are not a regular reader of The Criterion, I hope you will take the time to look over the many important news stories and features offered, and to discover for yourself that we are fortunate to have one of the finest diocesan newspapers in the country.

Not long after I was made a bishop by the late Pope John Paul II, he remarked to me that a bishop should first pray the words he teaches. That’s why I like to write in my weekly “Seeking the Face of the Lord” column immediately after my hour of morning prayer.

My first column appeared in The Criterion on Sept. 18, 1992, and I have never missed a week. As you can see, I take my responsibility of writing this column seriously, because it is the primary means I have each week of communicating with all of the faithful of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Publishing a weekly newspaper is an expensive undertaking, but one I believe is worthwhile. Our Catholic weekly plays an important role in carrying on the mission of the Church in central and southern Indiana by informing, educating and evangelizing. More simply put, it can help you live your life more fully as a Catholic.

I live in a time when we are bombarded by around-the-clock news reports. It can be difficult to make heads or tails out of complicated issues, such as medical bioethics or the political responsibilities of our officials. A place called The Criterion can help you to better understand Church teaching on issues such as these.

To all of you who already subscribe to The Criterion, I thank you, and to those of you who don’t regularly receive it, I hope you will spend some time with this issue of the paper and consider receiving it each week.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Cardinal M. M. Bruechlein
Most Rev. Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.
Archbishop of Indianapolis

About page 1

The Crucifixion is depicted in an illumination from an Italian Bible. The Passion and Crucifixion are commemo- rated on Good Friday, which is April 14 this year. The cover photo was taken by Nancy Weischec of Catholic News Service in Washington, D.C.

Our newspaper plays a key role in the life of the Church

Father Richard Terrill served in archdiocese for 36 years

Father Richard F. Terrill, a retired diocesan priest and former pastor of St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County, died diocesan priest and former pastor of Father Richard Terrill served in archdiocese for 36 years.

Burial followed at Newaygo Cemetery.

Fr. Richard F. Terrill

Father Terrill’s priestly service in the dated March 31 that he is “grateful for Diocese during his retirement years. ”

Grand Rapids Diocese was underscored over 15 years.”

The Crucifixion is depicted in an illumination from an Italian Bible. The Passion and Crucifixion are commemorated on Good Friday, which is April 14 this year. The cover photo was taken by Nancy Weischec of Catholic News Service in Washington, D.C.

Father Terrill “assisted as he was able,” Bishop Hurley said. “May Father Terrill now rest in eternal peace and enjoy the fullness of the glory of the Lord he so faithfully served. Let us continue to remember him in our Masses and prayers.”

The archivist said “the esteem in which Father Dick was held by the priests of the Grand Rapids Diocese was underscored by the presence of numerous concelebrants from near and far.”

Richard Francis Terrill was born on May 2, 1920, in Marcellus, Mich., to Elmer and Charlotte (Robinson) Terrill. He graduated from Newaygo High School in 1938, then attended St. Mary College in St. Mary, Ky., and Saint Meinrad Seminary in St. Meinrad.

He was ordained a deacon on May 2, 1953, his 33rd birthday, by Archbishop Paul C. Schulte, then ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Indianapolis on May 3, 1954, by Archbishop Schulte.

His first assignment was as assistant pastor of the former Holy Trinity Parish in New Albany. In 1956, he was named assistant pastor of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis. Five years later, he was appointed assistant pastor of Holy Cross Parish in Indianapolis and served as a high school instructor.

In 1964, Father Terrill was named pastor of Our Lady of the Springs Parish in French Lick and Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Paoli. In 1971, he returned to Indianapolis to serve as pastor of St. Philip Neri Parish.

He began his pastorate at St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County on Jan. 14, 1978, and served there until his retirement on July 5, 1990, when he moved home to Newaygo and continued his priestly ministry in the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

He was a member of the American Guild of Organists and the Newaygo County Ministerial Association.

Surviving are one brother, Bus Terrill of Clearwater, Fla.; three sisters, Inez Eckert of Newaygo, Joyce Anderson of Sparta, Mich., and Maxine Terrill of Marcellus; and several nieces and nephews.

Memorial gifts may be sent to St. Bartholomew Parish, 599 Brook St., Newaygo, MI 49337 for the parish or the Newaygo Area Emergency Food Pantry.

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About page 1

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Father Richard F. Terrill, a retired diocesan priest and former pastor of St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County, died.
Thousands participate in march for immigration reform

By Mike Krokos

Dressed in white to show solidarity, they lined up for blocks on downtown Indianapolis streets, waving miniature American flags and carrying placards.

“God Bless America,” “The Dream continues,” “Immigrants make good Americans” and “Immigrants are Hoosiers” read some of the signs.

Others in the crowd of more than 20,000 people displayed bilingual posters: “Somos todos inmigrantes,” one read in Spanish; “We are all immigrants,” in English.

As part of a national “Day of Action for Immigration Justice,” similar scenes played out in cities across the country as hundreds of thousands of rallygoers urged lawmakers to help an estimated 12 million immigrants set legally in the United States.

“Immigration reform is something many Indiana residents support. On Monday, April 10, they let their voices be heard on the matter.”

“I really believe immigrants need our respect,” said Sara Spalding, who attended the rally with her 4-month-old daughter, Mariana Spalding-Price, and her 2-year-old son, Miguel.

Spalding, who is a 1995 graduate of Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis, said the social justice lessons she learned in high school shape the person she is today.

“It was really empowering to learn [those things],” said Spalding, who is a tutor and also teaches English as a Second Language. “It is our responsibility to work to make things better. I feel it’s really important to others in our community.

“Some people are not being recognized as full human beings,” she added.

Juan Escamez, pastoral associate to the Hispanic community at St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis, attended the rally with 50 other supporters of immigration reform.

He said St. Philip Neri’s Sunday Spanish Mass is always packed, and added there are currently 500 to 600 Hispanic families who worship there.

“I think it’s important to stand up for the rights of people,” said Escamez, a native of Spain who moved to the United States with his family 25 years ago.

“It is important to defend the poor, the oppressed, the outcast,” he added. “That’s what we’re here.”

Lisa Guerrero, who works with the youth at St. Philip Neri Parish, has been married to her husband, Rene, a native of Mexico, for seven years. She said many Hispanic immigrants are Catholic, and they are made to feel welcome at the parish.

“They have dreams,” she said. “They’re very good people, down to earth, but a lot of them are so scared here.”

Some, like Ismael Aguilar, embrace the chance to begin a new life here.

The rally, said the native of Mexico who moved to Indiana two years ago, was “a way we can show we’re here.”

“We’re humans, too,” said Aguilar, who works with Hispanic youth at St. Patrick Parish in Indianapolis. “We want to better our lives.”

As a Church made up of immigrants, the Catholic Church teaches its members to welcome the stranger, said Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein in a prepared statement.

“Our nation has always welcomed immigrants, refugees and exiles fleeing oppression and seeking the opportunity to achieve a full life,” Archbishop Buechlein wrote. “We must ensure that our immigration policy fulfills this precedent for recent immigrants and not only those in the past.”

The archbishop said we need an immigration policy that protects human dignity and promotes the common good.

Franciscan Father Tom Fox, who ministers to Hispanic Catholics at St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis and St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville, said the Indiana rally was a “wonderful demonstration.”

“We were definitely happy to see all the people,” Father Tom said.

He emphasized that participants had an important message: Immigrants are real people, with families, who want a life here.

“Being an immigrant is not a disgrace,” Father Tom said.

Others in the crowd of more than 20,000 people marched in downtown Indianapolis on April 10 to voice their support for immigration reform.

It’s now up to politicians to get the immigration situation resolved, Father Tom added.

While Congress continues its debate on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., the Church will stand in solidarity with its immigrant brothers and sisters in Christ, Father Tom said.

It is, after all, a fabric of our faith, one shared in a joint migration statement issued in 2002 by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Mexican bishops’ conference, Father Tom noted.

“I think it’s because the immigrant needs to be welcomed,” he said of the Church’s support. “That’s Jesus’ message to us.”

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Easter TV Mass for Shut-Ins

More than 20,000 people marched in downtown Indianapolis on April 10 to voice their support for immigration reform.

The Mass is produced from the Crypt Church at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

We invite you to participate in the financial underwriting of this program. Please send contributions to Catholic Community Appeal, Inc., P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410. Write or call for a free copy of the weekly missal for your use at home. Send a request to the above address or call (317) 236-1585 or 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1585.

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St. Vincent Health
Welcome to our new brothers and sisters in Christ

Holy Week marks a special time for us as Catholics. We are only days away from Easter, the chief Feast in the liturgical calendar of all Christian Churches. The Triduum leads from the upper room where Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his Apostles to Calvary, where Jesus gave his life for us, to the empty tomb that showed forth his glorious resurrection. We celebrate this paschal mystery on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. And it is during the Easter Vigil on Saturday night that tens of thousands—including many in the archdiocese—will enter into the full communion of the Church. Catechumens—people not yet baptized—will be baptized, confirmed and receive their first Communion at the Easter Vigil. Candidates, who are already baptized Christians, will enter the full communion of the Church by making a profession of faith, being confirmed and receiving their first Communion.

As believers who emulate Christ’s example of hospitality, we know other Church members will offer a warm welcome to our new brothers and sisters in Christ, who are joining us on the journey to the kingdom this weekend. The Catholic Church has been criticized for various things over the years, but one thing we do right is build community. May that practice continue this Easter and beyond.

— Mike Krokos

Lessons on death and suffering not forgotten

They died within days of each other last spring, a show way Pope John Paul II and Terri Schiavo lived—and died—continues to influence how many people view suffering and death.

Our late Holy Father’s witness—his acceptance of his failing health and his public suffering in his last days—offered an example of him humbly picking up his cross and carrying it for all the world to see. His successor, Pope Benedict XVI, may have recently best summed up his predecessor’s last days, when “the Lord gradually stripped him of everything.” Even in his weakness, John Paul II was teaching us about suffering in silence.

Lessons on death and suffering not forgotten

cardinal Mahony’s words send wrong immigration message

In response to the article in the March 10 edition of The Criterion, Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles latches out at anti-immigration feelings in the United States, and asks Catholics to dedicate their prayers and practices to help immigrants.

Cardinal Mahony should know that Catholics don’t have a problem with immigrants—Catholics have a problem with illegal immigrants.

Nowhere does Cardinal Mahony use the word “illegal.” He is quoted in The Tidings newspaper that “anyone who does anything for someone here who doesn’t have legal status.”

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be informed, relevant, well-expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous and respectful. The editors reserve the right to select and edit the letters based on space limitations and other criteria. No more than one letter from the same writer will be published in any given week.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious issues, names may be withheld. Send letters 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.
The mystery of Easter holds out promise for everyone

E aster is called the feast of feasts, the solemnity of solemnities. It is the first feast the Church ever celebrated. We wish each other a Happy Easter.

What do we mean when we say Happy Easter? Are we rejoicing because Lent is over and we no longer have to abstain from meat on Fridays? Or is it because now we don’t have to keep Lenten resolutions for another year? Does Happy Easter mean Happy Spring? Let’s feel good because another gray winter is behind us!

There is probably some of all that and much more in Happy Easter. I feel sorry for those among us for whom this is just another Sunday in April. There will be thousands of people roaming our streets and roads looking for something to do on this feast of feasts, perhaps more annoyed than usual because many shops and stores are closed. They will be looking for something worthwhile in life, for someone who cares.

The truth is that the mystery of Easter holds out promise for everyone. But even if those lonely and bored folks were to walk into our churches on Easter Sunday, it would not be easy for them, as it is not easy for us to understand the tremendous gift of Easter for our human family.

We say Jesus won a great victory over death. We believe it, but maybe a bit haltingly. We don’t understand death—and what we do understand frightens us. So we don’t let ourselves think about it too much. It is far off, we think. Maybe it is not.

I dare say those among us who have brushed face-to-face with death feel more strongly the impact of what it means that Jesus conquered death once and for all. For the moment, most of us have to believe it in our minds.

Then, common sense moves us to stop and think. If this life is the end of everything, if our existence ended with death, there really would not be enough to live and work and suffer for. Sure, we have fun, and there are so many joys in life. But they are always here today and gone tomorrow. There is always the letdown of the morning after. And we want more.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ means that after you and I walk through the vestibule of this life and go through the door of death, as we all will, then life just begins. Joy beyond all imagining, unending happiness and peace of heart just begin.

Our first parents locked the door of death. Christ, by his incredible suffering and death, in love, opened the door. He showed us a glimpse of a deeper reality. As the Son of God, Jesus shattered the power of death and sin. His death tells of powerful love, and his Resurrection is a call to deeper faith and hope. We have found a hope stronger than superficial history and a love mightier than death. Do we believe that?

On Easter Sunday, we renew our baptismal promises and we are sprinkled with the holy water of Easter as a reminder that we have entered a deeper reality of life. We believe we were made sisters and brothers in the baptismal womb of Mother Church.

In baptism, we passed with Jesus from death into a deeper reality of life, which does not end with death. We may not understand birth and death, we may not understand rebirth and resurrection. Yet, like Peter, as he stood to look into the empty tomb, we can only be amazed.

Thank God for the gift of our faith! There is more to life and reality than meets the eye!†

† Artículo de Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.

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

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en abril

Priestas: que they may joyfully and faithfully live our their priestly promises and encourage other men to embrace God’s call to the priesthood.

Sacerdotes:

¡Que ellos realicen sus promesas como sacerdotes con júbilo y fe y den ánimo a otros hombres para que contesten la llamada de Dios al sacerdocio!

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en abril

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The Criterion Friday, April 14, 2006

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**Events Calendar**

**Regular Events**

**First Fridays**
- Holy Name Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., eucharistic adoration following Mass until 5 p.m. Benediction. Information: 317-784-5454.
- St. Peter Church, 1207 East Road, Brookville. First Friday of the Black Madonna, 5 p.m. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament after 8 a.m. until Communion service, 1 p.m. Information: 317-784-8261.
- Holy Guardian Angels Church, 405 U.S. 52 S. Cedar Grove. Eucharistic adoration after 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Benediction, 4 p.m. Information: 317-784-8261.

**Second Mondays**
- Church at Mount St. Francis. Holy hour for vocations and religious life, 7 p.m. Information: 731-484-2762.
- St. Nicholas Church, 4661 E. St. Nicholas Drive, Sunnyside. Mass, praise and worship, 8 a.m., then SACRED gathering in the school Information: 317-831-4842.

**Second Thursdays**
- Lake Catholic, 7277 Holiday Drive E, Indianapolis. Holy hour for priests and religious vocations, 7 p.m. Information: 317-359-4242.
- St. John’s Church, 1220 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Holy hour for vocations and religious life, 7 p.m. Information: 317-784-8261.

**First Saturdays**
- Holy Angels Church, 740 W. 28th St., Indianapolis. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 11 a.m. Information: 317-784-8261.
- St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. Apostolate of Fatima holy hour. 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-8261.
- Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S Meridian St., Greenwood. Devotions, Mass, 7:30 a.m. sacrament of reconciliation, rosary, meditations following Mass. Information: 317-888-8261.
- St. Thomas More Church, 1200 N. Indiana St., Mooresville. Mass, 8:15 a.m. Information: 317-831-4842.
- St. Nicholas Church, 4661 E. St. Nicholas Drive, Sunnyside. Mass, praise and worship, 8 a.m., then SACRED gathering in the school Information: 317-831-4842.
- Catholic Social Services, 5225 E. 56th St., Indianapolis, “Social Services,” Thurs., Fri., Sat. 7:30 a.m. Masses, 11:30 a.m., and 1 p.m. reserved seats, 15 general admission. Information: 317-595-6558.

**Fourth Saturdays**
- Holy Name Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., eucharistic adoration following Mass until 5 p.m. Benediction. Information: 317-784-5454.
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**VIPS**
- Edward and Constance (Roedl) Ortmann, members of St. Mary of the Rock Parish in Brookville, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on April 21. The couple was married April 21, 1966, at St. Michael Church in Brookville. They have seven children: Paula Ingleb, Jill Mooreman, Susan Ortman-Leifig- well, Kathy Roth, Bob Rick and Tony Ortman. They also have 20 grandchildren.
Youths spend spring break rebuilding homes and lives

By Mary Ann Wyand

Internationally known Catholic musician and speaker Jesse Manibusan will perform a concert to benefit youth ministry projects in El Salvador on April 21 at the Indiana State Fairgrounds.

"People can see God in the midst of the hurricane’s devastation," said Peter Marshall, a volunteer leader at the center. "Many youths had similar experiences as Stephanie, a junior at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis and a member of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville. "People can see God in the midst of the hurricane and Biloxi because of you," Father Jonathan Meyer told the youths in a homily. "Father Meyer is the archdiocesan youth ministry and sports programs coordinator at John Guiliano in Guajira, El Salvador. St. Pius X Parish has supported the Tamarindo Foundation since 1999. It was incorporated on Jan. 4, 2005, as a 501(c)(3) public charity with a mission statement that focuses on "providing opportunities for education, spiritual growth and athletics in order to promote the well-being of Salvadoran youth and to improve economic conditions in disadvantaged areas of El Salvador." Guiliano has never had a regular salary, they said, and "has existed financially only on contributions, speaking tours, hosting high school and college groups for school credit and other unpredictable arrangements." They said members of the Tamarindo Foundation think Guiliano and his family—as well as the impoverished people of Guajira and Portillo—"deserve better" through support of these faith-based educational and programs.

April 21 concert to benefit youth ministry projects in El Salvador

By Mary Ann Wyand

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ROME (CNS)—Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres said Pope Benedict XVI told him he would like to visit the Holy Land in the first half of 2007.

Peres held a press conference in Rome on April 6 after his 40-minute meeting with the pope, said he renewed the Israeli government’s standing invitation for a papal visit and expressed his hope that it would take place “as soon as possible.”

“The pope has indicated that he may do it in the first part of next year,” Peres said.

In an official statement published after the meeting, the Vatican acknowledged the invitation, but gave no indication that the pope accepted it or had discussed the timing of the visit.

Peres told reporters, “I do believe his visit could have a positive impact on the peace process.”

Asked whether Pope Benedict might postpone the trip while the radical Hamas organization leads the Palestinian government, Peres said that he doubted that Hamas would be in power next year.

While Hamas easily won the Palestinian elections in January, he said, “They cannot govern.” Hamas is not a political party, but a group of people operating out of a specific interpretation of Islam, he said.

A religious organization cannot govern because “politics is based on compromise, but religion is uncompromising,” Peres said.

The former prime minister said during his meetings with the pope and later with Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Vatican secretary of state, they discussed the still-uncompleted Vatican-Israeli agreements regarding the taxation of Catholic property in Israel and other legal issues.

While Peres assured the pope and Cardinal Sodano that Israel would “raise the level of negotiations” and finalize an agreement soon, he did not think it would delay a papal trip.

“The late pope did not wait until all the problems were solved” before he visited in 2000, Peres said. †

Catholic Choir of Indianapolis to present free Mozart anniversary concert

To mark the 250th anniversary of the birth of Wolfgang Amadues Mozart, the Catholic Choir of Indianapolis will perform some of Mozart’s finest music at its 13th Journey Concert at 3 p.m. on Sunday, April 30, at St. Pius X Parish, 7200 Sarto Drive, Indianapolis. A reception will follow.

Mozart (1756-91) is among the most significant and enduringly popular composers of European classical music, concert organizers said. His works are widely acknowledged as pinnacles of symphonic, chamber, piano, operatic and choral music. Many of his works are part of the standard concert repertory and are widely recognized as masterpieces of the classical style.

The Catholic Choir of Indianapolis was incorporated in 1997 as a not-for-profit organization. The all-volunteer, unpaid choir members are from Indianapolis-area parishes.

The group is dedicated to the preservation of sacred classical music with a repertoire in excess of 500 pieces. They sing in Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, German and English. Any donations collected at performances are earmarked for the paid professional choir director and accompanist.

Carolina Gamboa-Hoyos, who is pursuing a doctor of music degree at Indiana University, will serve as artistic director for this performance. A native of Bogota, Columbia, she has extensive experience with choirs and operatic productions, and in teaching and conducting.

Wayne Lundberg, who will serve as principal accompanist in both organ and piano, is the music director at East 91st St. Christian Church in Indianapolis. He has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Symphonic Choir, and recorded a 21-track CD titled “Reflections in Praise.”

(Admission to the concert is free, but donations are appreciated. New choir members are welcome. The choir is available for funerals, weddings, Masses, festivals and concerts. For information, call 317-255-6486 or 317-849-7684.) †
The Resurrection is depicted in an illumination from an Italian Bible. The Easter season begins with the celebration of the Resurrection, which is April 16 this year in the Latin Church.
Jesus’ rising confirmed all that he had done and taught

By John F. Fink

Why did Jesus rise from the dead?

The fact that he did is a basic doctrine of Christianity. But have you ever asked yourself why he rose?

Another basic doctrine is that the Son of God, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, assumed a human nature in order to redeem humanity. He did that through the Incarnation and then by his Passion and death by crucifixion. With that, his mission on earth was complete and he could return to heaven, where he lived for all eternity.

So, was the Resurrection really necessary?

When phrased like that, we’d have to say that no, the Resurrection wasn’t strictly necessary for God to accomplish our redemption. So why did Jesus rise from the dead?

Basically, it was to prove that he is God and to confirm all that he had done and taught. Before his death, he claimed that he was one with the Father, that he had power to forgive sins (which only God could do), that he existed before Abraham and several other claims to be God. Now, by rising from the dead, he proved it for anyone who might doubt it.

He had predicted his resurrection, but the Gospels indicate that even his Apostles didn’t take him seriously. They didn’t understand what he meant by rising from the dead. They didn’t even realize that he was about to be arrested and put to death. When that happened, they were completely demoralized.

We can imagine the conversations that took place in that upper room where the Apostles had gathered after Jesus’ crucifixion: “Well, I guess it’s all over. It looks like Jesus really wasn’t the Messiah as we thought he was. We might as well go back to Galilee and get on with our lives.”

What else could they have been thinking? Even when they began to hear from Mary Magdalene and the other women that the tomb was empty and they had been told that Jesus was risen, they didn’t believe it. Thomas wasn’t the only Apostle to be skeptical about the Resurrection. It’s just that he was the only one who wasn’t present when Jesus appeared to the other 10 Apostles. The others had also doubted the report of the women.

Now, of course, Jesus’ resurrection changed everything! God the Father had raised his Son from the dead! That meant that all that Jesus had been teaching was true. What he had said about the Father glorifying him had come to pass. Now it was possible to look more deeply into the meaning of Jesus’ death. He had said that he had the power to lay down his life and to take it up again, and now he had done so. But exactly why had he done so?

We believe that he died to atone for our sins. St. Paul’s letters are full of expressions that say that Jesus took our sins upon himself so he could bear them away. John’s Gospel says that he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Before his death, Jesus prayed that he might somehow be spared from undergoing his passion and death—that the “cup” might pass from him. But then he accepted his Father’s will because that was God’s plan for our redemption. It wasn’t that God was punishing Jesus on our behalf. As the great theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote in You Crown the Year With Your Goodness, “Not can we say that God the Father ‘punishes’ his suffering Son in our place. It is not a question of punishment, for the work accomplished here between Father and Son with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit is utter love, the purest love possible.”

John’s Gospel says it best: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

This act of redemption could only be done by God. No mere human could accomplish it. However, if redemption was to be accomplished through death, God cannot die. That is why the second person of the Trinity became human. He could, and did, die as a man while remaining alive as God.

St. Augustine explained it this way: “He had no power of himself to die for us; he had to take from us our mortal flesh. This was the way in which, though immortal, he was able to die.” He went on to say, “He effected a wonderful exchange with us, through mutual sharing: we gave him the power to die, he will give us the power to live.”

That’s what he accomplished on Good Friday. Who would have known that, though, if he had not risen from the dead on Easter Sunday?

That’s why Jesus rose from the dead.

(John F. Fink is editor emeritus of The Criterion.)
Embrace the paschal mystery as it unfolds in daily life

By H. Richard McCord
Catholic News Service

I keep reminding myself that life is changing, not ending,” said recently when he described how he was dealing with some difficult situations in his family and work.

Looking through the eyes of faith, he was trying to see and embrace the paschal mystery unfolding in his life.

Oblate of Mary Immaculate Father Ronald Rolheiser, in his book The Holy Longing, presents the paschal mystery as a process of transformation that begins with suffering and death then moves to new life.

He uses the Church’s journey from Good Friday to Pentecost as a way to unfold the paschal mystery. He sees it as a five-step process:

1. “Name your deaths” (Good Friday).
2. “Claim your births” (Easter).
3. “Grieve what you’ve lost and adjust to the new reality” (40 days after Easter).
4. “Do not cling to the old; let it ascend and bless you” (Ascension).
5. “Accept the spirit of the new life you are living” (Pentecost).

This process is a key that opens a door to meaning. Without it, we’d remain locked in a room that grows increasingly dark as suffering and loss accumulate in our lives.

The longer we live, the more loss we suffer—the deaths of family and friends, the gradual dying of dreams, the loss of innocence, idealism and youth. Denial of these deaths will not help. Naming them is the beginning of new birth.

Something is always dying in life, perhaps a cherished relationship or a plan to start a new business or maybe to retire early.

Because a hope or plan does not work out doesn’t mean that we’ve reached the end. God can make a way for us out of darkness. Sometimes it takes effort for us to dispel the shadows and glimpse the tiny buds of new life. To do so is to begin claiming the birth, the resurrection.

The process might not be easy. Whatever we lost could have been so important that we must grieve and struggle to accept what has replaced it.

When my family moved to an unknown place after 23 years spent in comfortable surroundings, it was difficult to see anything new in the death of the old. The new life, at first, didn’t seem all that desirable.

Here the process reaches a crossroad. We can let the loss overwhelm us. Then the death will be terminal. Or we can properly grieve the loss. Then the death becomes paschal, as Father Ronald points out.

Failure to grieve and move on is like the Apostles clinging to Jesus and trying to prevent him from ascending to heaven. Only when Jesus ascends can he bless them and send the Holy Spirit, who strengthens them for their new life.

With this, the paschal mystery is complete. But in our daily Christian lives, the cycle will happen again and again—if we have eyes to see it.

(†H. Richard McCord is director of the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat for Family, Marriage, and Divine Vocation.

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VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Just days before the first anniversary of his election, Pope Benedict XVI will preside over a full schedule of Holy Week and Easter liturgies at the Vatican and in Rome.

The pope will celebrate his 79th birthday on Easter, April 16, and mark the first anniversary of his election on April 19. The Vatican’s Holy Week and Easter schedule released on April 4 included:

apis

April 15—Celebration of the Easter Vigil at St. Peter’s Basilica at 10 p.m.
April 16—Celebration of Easter Mass at St. Peter’s Square, followed by the papal blessing “urbi et orbi” (to the city of Rome and the world). †
A Gulf Coast Easter
Return to normalcy is ‘resurrection’ area residents seek

By Shirley Henderson
Catholic News Service

Some days, I am surprised to hear myself humming “From the ashes of disaster, grow the roses of success”—a little ditty from the movie Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

Those are good days. On other days, I keep thinking of the phrase “waiting to exhale.”

Post-Katrina, I feel my own body tense for days at a time. Then I say to myself, “Breathe, breathe.” And then I can stop and breathe, stop and exhale.

Like me, so many people living in communities on the Mississippi Gulf Coast still are wallowing in “ashes.” We have been covered in ashes and sackcloth, living six months of a forced Lenten period—forced to do without the living accommodations, food, clothing, recreation and comfortable lifestyles that we enjoyed pre-Katrina. And we have so very far to go.

The 80-mile Mississippi coastline from Alabama to Louisiana, which is part of the Diocese of Biloxi, is a heavily populated Catholic area—more than 40 percent Catholic, according to a U.S. Census.

Ten diocesan churches were destroyed—gutted during Hurricane Katrina. Ten other churches were severely damaged. Six schools were destroyed—no even one desk was recovered among the rubble of those six schools, and another six school buildings sustained major damage.

With Easter upon us, we look to a “resurrection” period.

I would like to think that the people of the Gulf Coast could proclaim their resurrection on Easter this year, but that calendar date is only seven and a half months after Katrina.

We really won’t feel like we’ve resurrected from the devastation. Right now, we are working toward “resuscitation.” We need to be “revived.” The word “normalcy” is the new buzz word for the people of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. To return to it is the resurrection we all long for.

Last Thanksgiving was truly an emotional time for everyone living on the coast and for all those who were here lending a helping hand. We all had something to be thankful for because we had survived the hurricane.

But what a melancholy time it became for many people as they gathered at folding tables instead of the family dining table, and ate from paper plates instead of from the family china.

Christmas presented many people torn about “how much” to celebrate. Some decorated their FEMA trailers and their yards. They needed some “Christmas spirit.” Others even hosted Christmas parties—the normal thing to do during the Advent season.

Mardi Gras usually is celebrated in grand style here. Again, we faced a moral dilemma. Could we, should we, have balls and parades for Mardi Gras when so many people were still homeless, even trailer-less?

So an unspoken compromise was reached from state line to state line. There would be no balls, but some small gatherings as well as fewer and smaller parades.

These efforts and many others have been small milestones of growth—of proving to be.

Even when some of our high schools had no school building and no classrooms, football players still competed on the gridiron. Athletes worked all day cleaning up debris and gutting houses then gathered for football practice late in the day. Normally, they would have been in school and playing football through the fall months.

Parents have begun to sign up their children for soccer this spring. And a parish festival that usually runs for a three-day weekend in the fall will be held for just one day this spring. The effort may actually only be an excuse to get together with parish friends as in years past to experience something that was normal in their lives.

Never again will we take God’s blessings for granted.

When the Catholic News Service (Shirley Henderson is the editor of the Gulf Pine Catholic, the newspaper of the Diocese of Biloxi, Miss.)

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HILLENBRAHND
Family traditions during season strike a spiritual cord

By Louise McNulty
Catholic News Service

Ask a half-dozen Catholics what they do to make Easter a special day and they may give you a blank stare. They may expand on that facial expression with comments like, “Well, we go to Mass as a family. We hide Easter eggs for the children. We have a nice dinner and take the children to see their grandparents.”

At least no one mentions the Easter Bunny.

Let those same Catholics chat a little, however, and you find out that it is the combination of Lent, Holy Week and Easter that strikes their spiritual chord.

Three Ohio families typify that spiritual view.

Mike and Pat Bedell of Akron have six children, ages 12 to 26, and two grandchildren. For the past 20 years, usually on Holy Saturday, they have had a Seder meal, not only with their own children and another family, but often with classmates of their college-age children, who come home for the holiday in time for the meal.

He explained that “Seder” means “order,” so there’s a special order to how prayers and rituals are followed, which takes about 40 minutes before the meal. They follow the steps in a booklet called The Christian Passover Seder, praying and asking the children what they remember about God delivering the Israelites from Egypt.

“The symbolic connection between the Passover lamb and Jesus, the sacrificial lamb, is made clear,” he said. “It shows the Jewish roots of the Mass and the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. Comparing God delivering the Jews from bondage, and Christ delivering us from sin by his death on the cross and resurrection, helps to clarify and give more meaning to Easter.”

Kathy Rubio of Solon, a widow since her now 28-year-old daughter was a baby, hopes her daughter will pass on the Hungarian traditions that Kathy’s mother, Eleanor Varga, taught her as a child.

“We always go to church on Holy Saturday to have food blessed,” she said. “We cook a ham, Hungarian Kolbasc and eggs, and make a special sweet Easter cheese out of eggs, sugar and milk. We have a meal of the blessed food on Saturday evening and then again, with my brother and his family, on Sunday.

“We eat together and celebrate the risen Christ, who is the center of our faith because he died for us and rose again,” she said. “Easter is the culmination of Holy Week. I think Holy Thursday is most important because it’s the source of the Eucharist.”

Maryann and Jim Darcy of Fairview Park are retired and have five grown children and seven grandchildren. They take part in Lenten parish missions or lecture series, and attend all the Holy Week services.

“We’ve reached the time in life when Easter is more of a quiet time for us,” she said. “It’s almost a retreat time when we can attend Mass undistracted and think about the homily. That’s important because you have to feed your spirituality, like you feed your body, for it to grow.

“As a family, we usually get together for Easter brunch at a restaurant and we see all the grandparents,” she said. “It’s good to be with our adult children and see their kids, and how the faith and tradition that was handed down from our parents and through us to our children is being handed down to their children, who we think will pass it on. We’re not just celebrating Easter, but the joy that comes after sacrifice.”

If you talk to a half dozen Catholics about Easter, it gives you hope.

(Louise McNulty is a free-lance writer in Akron, Ohio)
Today's Easter meal is similar to earlier feasts

By Margo MacArthur
Catholic News Service

At Easter, Christians sit down with family and friends to eat special foods that people have enjoyed for centuries.

Although recipes have changed to suit modern tastes, today's Easter meal is often amazingly similar to earlier Easter feasts, and its roots are often more ancient than most of us would imagine. Eating eggs, lamb, ham and ornaments and breads in particular is a modern tradition with very old roots.

In pre-Christian times in Persia, eggs were symbols of spring. Back then, people marveled that new life could emerge from seemingly dead objects.

In the early Christian era, eggs became symbolic of the stone tomb from which Christ was resurrected.

Because eating eggs used to be forbidden during Lent, early European Christians painted eggs in vivid hues, had blessed eggs and gave them to friends as gifts to celebrate the end of the Lenten season.

During the Middle Ages, King Edward I of England had 450 eggs boiled, dyed and covered with gold leaf, which he then distributed to members of the royal household on Easter in 1307. Thus began the tradition of the Easter egg.

Because Jesus was described as the “Lamb of God,” eating lamb on Easter can also be traced back far.

Benedictine monks blessed lamb in the seventh century. In the ninth century, the main feature of the pope’s Easter dinner was a roasted whole lamb, which later popes replaced with smaller pieces of meat.

Today’s cooks often prepare roast leg of lamb for Easter dinner. Small stuffed lamb toys are given to young children on Easter, and a lamb molded from butter and sugar may be found on many Easter tables.

At Easter, smoked or cooked ham has been eaten throughout Europe since ancient times and is often the main course of a traditional Easter meal in America as well.

The meat of the pig—in the forms of roast pork and baked ham—has been the center of both Christmas and Easter meals in many cultures.

Bread, too, has stood the test of time as an Easter food.

Distinctive Russian Easter bread is baked in a square mold. In Germany and Austria, Easter bread dough is braided and baked in an oblong pan. In Poland, many breads are sweetened with honey then filled with fruit and nuts before being baked in pans flatted to resemble a woman’s skirts.

In Hungry and Transylvania, breads may be used to wrap a baking ham or meatloaf of pork and spices.

Throughout Europe in past centuries, Easter foods were blessed during Holy Week, then displayed for several days to show a village’s or a family’s abundance.

Among Germans, Austrians, Poles and Ukrainians, the entire Easter feast of cooked meats and sausages, cheeses, breads and pastries, spices and fruit was decorated with garlands and clusters of leaves, flowers and herbs.

In the early Christian era, eggs became symbolic of the stone tomb from which Christ was resurrected.

Today, with refrigeration and ready access to virtually all foods, modern families of all ethnic backgrounds have infinite possibilities to choose from when planning their Easter menu. Yet lamb, ham, eggs and all the rest of the traditional foods we take for granted continue to connect us to Christians throughout the ages.

(Margo MacArthur is a freelance writer in Andover, N.J.)

Holy Trinity Parish continues ancient Slovenian tradition

By Mary Ann Wyand

The blessing of food for Easter is a long tradition that has been carried on at Holy Trinity Parish, 2618 W. St. Clair St., in Indianapolis since its founding 100 years ago.

Sue Ann Yovanovich, the pastoral associate at the Indianpolis West Deanery parish, said food will be blessed at 5:30 p.m. on Holy Saturday, April 15, in the church, and the public is welcome to join parishioners for the ceremony.

“It is the custom of the Slovenians to take symbolic foods to be blessed in church, which is then the first to be eaten, breaking the 40-day Lenten fast,” she explained. “The food which is blessed will be the food used for breakfast on Easter Sunday morning.”

Special foods are placed in a basket with a handle and covered with a white linen cloth.

The basket is filled with meat—ham, pork or beef—to symbolize the body of Jesus, she said, as well as sausage, which usually homemade and represents the ropes that bound Jesus as he was taken from Golgotha.

Potica, a Slovenian nut-roll bread baked in a round shape, is also placed in the basket to depict the crown of thorns placed on Jesus’ head, she said.

“Horseradish is added to the basket to represent the nails used to crucify Jesus on the cross, and an orange is included as a symbol of the sponge that was offered to Jesus with a bitter drink,” Yovanovich said. “The priest opens the ritual with a greeting and a hymn,” Yovanovich said. “He then proceeds to extend his hands over the food and prays a special blessing for each type of food. He then walks down the aisle and sprinkles each basket with holy water.”

After this blessing, the priest asks the children to come forward with their Easter baskets then he blesses them, she said. The ritual ends with a hymn.

Yovanovich said several Slovenian legends are associated with the blessing of food on Holy Saturday.

“There is a legend that the young girls race out of church to see who will get home first,” she said. “The winner of this race is assured, by legend, that she will be married that year.”

In some villages, she said, “the baskets are placed outside the door of the house or on the windowsill to be accessible to the ‘Pope’s Blessing’ that comes airborne from Rome and is supposed to keep the family safe all year long.”

Another Slovenian legend involves carrying baskets of blessed food to orchards, she said, then touching the baskets to the trees, which is believed to make them produce more fruit that year.

“The blessing of food is a beautiful and meaningful Slovenian tradition which is continued by families of Slovenian heritage,” she said. “At Holy Trinity Church every Easter,” Yovanovich said. “The tradition encourages family participation in its preparation and finally in consumption of the food—all while reminiscing on the religious meaning of this holy day of Christ’s resurrection.”
When we refer to the paschal mystery, we speak of something at faith’s core. The Church uses the term “paschal mystery” primarily to refer to Christ’s passion, death and resurrection. These events took place at the time of the Passover (Hebrew “pesach” and Aramaic “pascha”). The word “paschal”—derived from the Greek “pascha” and Latin “pascha,” also forms of the word “Passover”—recalls this ancient rite.

But what does “mystery” mean in “paschal mystery”?

The biblical sense of the word is found in the Gospel of Mark (Mk 4:11). Jesus tells the Apostles they have been given the “secret” (in Greek, “mysterion”) of God’s kingdom. The paschal mystery is the secret hidden at the heart of all human history.

The passion, death and resurrection of Christ are called a mystery because their meaning and power are the secret hidden in the depths of all human life. Consider the ancient roots of this mystery and how this secret is present in our lives right now.

When God led Israel out of slavery in Egypt in the 14th century B.C., he did so in springtime, the time when nomadic shepherds moved their flocks from winter to summer pastures. It was customary then to celebrate spring’s arrival and the change of pastures with a festive meal.

God used this ancient custom in establishing a new rite in Israel. The blood of the Passover lamb was used to mark the homes of Israelites so they would be spared—“passed over”—during the 10th and final plague that God used to set his people free (Ex 12:13). This Passover lamb, and specifically the blood of the lamb, became a symbol of God’s deliverance of Israel, their passage from slavery to freedom, from death to life.

When Christ began his own “passing over” from the world to God, he did so precisely at the time of the Jewish Passover. John’s Gospel suggests that Christ’s crucifixion took place at the moment the Passover lambs were being slain (Jn 19:14, 31). Christ, St. Paul tells us, became our Passover (1 Cor 5:7).

The paschal mystery centers on Christ’s passage from darkness to light, from death to life, from this world to the next—transitions beginning with suffering, but ending with joy.

The Holy Week rites likewise begin with great solemnity, but end in a markedly joyous celebration. God’s victory over suffering and death, revealed in the paschal mystery, is the source of Christian joy.

The Church celebrates the saving events of the paschal mystery each year at Eastertide and every day in the Mass. It is primarily in the liturgy that these saving events are made present.

Uniting ourselves to Christ in the liturgy, we are made contemporary with the paschal mystery of Christ. We step out of time and into the divine eternity.

We are also invited to see the basic pattern of Christ’s paschal mystery in our daily lives—in ourselves and in our world. Participating actively in the liturgies of the Church can help us understand our own daily sufferings, our small daily deaths and resurrections, as expressions of the paschal mystery of our Lord being brought to completion in us.

As St. Augustine said, “With his Passion, the Lord passed from death to life, and thus he opened the way for us who believe in his resurrection also to pass from death to life.”

(Dominican Father Stephen D. Ryan teaches Scripture at the pontifical faculty at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.)
Creating a crucifix

At Easter, children can ponder the story behind the cross

By Janaan Manternach
Catholic News Service

A big wooden crucifix hangs on the center wall of the living room in Miguel’s home. His mother brought it with her from El Salvador when she came to the United States. It was made by his grandfather, an artisan who cuts crosses from local wood and decorates them with religious images and symbols.

For the first time since Miguel was 5, his family was planning to go back to El Salvador for Holy Week and Easter. Suddenly, Miguel found himself studying the crucifix because his grandfather had told him that during their visit he would help him make and decorate a cross.

Until then, Miguel hadn’t been all that interested in the crucifix. It was just part of the other paintings and photographs on the wall. Now, looking at it, he noticed that a man hangs limply on the cross. Three women are standing beneath the cross. Nails hold the man’s hands to the wood. His feet are crossed one over the other, and there are nails in them.

On the man’s head is a crown of thorns. But, mysteriously, one thorn is a huge lily. The man is clothed in a glorious flowing white gown. His arms are stretched upward, and the sky above him is a burst of color. Light is all around him. As his eyes moved to the left arm of the crucified man, Miguel noticed a table. On it is a loaf of bread and a cup. Around the table is a cross, he noticed a table. On it is a loaf of bread and a cup.

Miguel also felt that it would be different from his grandfather’s crucifix. But he wasn’t worried about that. Somehow, he knew that when he and his grandfather work on his cross, what he wants to say about Jesus will happen. The greatest surprise for Miguel in all this is that he found himself talking to Jesus—something he had never done before. In those feelings about Jesus will happen.

For the first time since Miguel was 5, Miguel is 10 now. All his life he has liked the way his grandfather shaped it. He knew that it is the man’s tomb, and he knew that when he and his grandfather told him that he would help him make one. Miguel also felt that it would be different from his grandfather’s crucifix. But he wasn’t worried about that. Somehow, he knew that when he and his grandfather work on his cross, what he wants to say about Jesus will happen.

The greatest surprise for Miguel in all this is that he found himself talking to Jesus—something he had never done before. It wasn’t praying the way he prays with his parents or during religion class or at Mass. It was like talking to a friend, someone who knows him, someone who understands. This, more than anything else, is what he wants people to feel when they ponder the story of Jesus that he will tell by creating a crucifix.
Through the paschal mystery, God ‘made all things new’

By Fr. Gerald O’Collins, S.J.

Some years ago, when ending a course on the Resurrection, the students joined me for a eucharistic liturgy. At the presentation of the gifts, they each brought to the altar a gift symbolizing the Easter mystery.

At the end of the line came two tall students, Mimi and Matthew. When they walked up with nothing in their hands, I wondered whether they would produce something from their pockets. Mimi stopped and then stepped out of her shoes. “They are brand-new shoes,” she told us. “The Resurrection lets us walk in new ways.”

Matthew turned toward the congregation and said, “As my Easter gift, I have a new song to teach you.”

Mimi and Matthew were right. The Resurrection does put new shoes on our feet and a new song in our mouths. By rising from the dead, Jesus empowers us to walk in new ways and to sing his new song of joy, “Alleluia!”

We often hear and sometimes use the term “paschal mystery”—the wonderful, life-giving reality of our redemption, which the divine love brought about through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. By calling this reality “paschal,” we recall the deliverance from the land of Egypt celebrated in the Jewish feast of Passover. In other words, the “paschal mystery” is the marvelous truth of our being saved from sin and evil, and set free to live new lives.

Through Good Friday and Easter Sunday, God has truly “made all things new” (Rv 21:5).

To be sure, it is tempting to join the classical pessimist of the Scriptures, Qoheleth, who assures us “there is nothing new under the sun” (Eccl 1:9). As time goes by, our lives can look so gray, dull and unchangeable that we feel there can be nothing new for us under our sun. The reasonable thing is to join the three holy women who remember the huge stone locking Jesus’ body away in darkness and anxiously ask themselves, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?” ( Mk 16:3).

Any of us can feel so dead and locked up that any exit seems impossible. Who will solve my great problem? Exit seems impossible. Who will solve my great difficulty and roll away my persistent problem?

But death could not hold him. He returned, wonderfully transformed, from beyond the grave. He showed himself gloriously alive to those who had known him and seen him die. He met them in the old, familiar places, and talked with them about the work he wanted them to do. He taught them to trust him and believe in his presence, even when they no longer would see him visibly.

We too enjoy the promise: “I will be with you all days, even to the end of the world” (Mt 28:20).

Easter is the wonderful morning that will never end. The paschal mystery has everything to do with our lives, here and hereafter.

(Jesuit Father Gerald O’Collins teaches at the Gregorian University in Rome. His most recent books include Catholicism, published by Oxford University Press, and Easter Faith, published by Paulist Press. †)

Christianity is life-giving and liberating

By David Gibson

If you subtracted Easter from Christianity, you’d have an entirely different religion from the one the world has known for the past 2,000 years. The life, you might say, would go out of it.

I suppose that without Easter, Christianity still could have become a religion of wonderful teachings on how to live and the most amazing insights that could have sustained the test of time.

Still, without Easter, death, it seems, would have been the end of the road.

Without Easter, the tone of Christianity would have been so different, certainly less joyful.

With Easter factored in, Christianity is life-giving. Because the death and resurrection of Christ are liberating, Christianity represents much more than a body of teachings and insights.

Christianity is a religion about life in Christ—about Christ’s life in us.

Do we talk about Christ’s death and resurrection so often that we begin to take them for granted? Maybe the real risk isn’t so much of subtracting Easter from Christianity as virtually overlooking its significance.

With his death and resurrection, Christ’s life is shared; Christ’s life courses through our veins.

(David Gibson edits Faith Alive!) †

Discussion Point

Easter means Mass with family

This Week’s Question

Do you have memories of an Easter Sunday that you hope never to forget?

“My Nana would come from Ireland every year to spend Easter with us. When I was about 7 or 8, Nana brought my mother’s sister, her husband and five boys, ages 1 to 13. We had a wonderful Easter with all those people in our small house, and we took up a pew and a half in church.” (Roisin Viens, White River Junction, Vt.)

“In my country, Haiti... we cut the palm trees only for Palm Sunday... We can eat the inside of the tree, which we cook like a vegetable. Also, I had a daughter on Good Friday, and we got out of the hospital on Easter Sunday... so we named her Pascale.” (Yolanda Jean Jacques, Norwich, Conn.)

“My father-in-law’s birthday once fell on Easter so we celebrated with his whole family. We went to church together and did a group reading of the Gospel later. It was so neat to celebrate Easter and the birthday because my husband’s dad was such a wonderful example of a good father.” (Nancy Dewey, Moorehead, Minn.)

“The [Easter] Vigil when I became a Catholic a couple of years ago was one of the most exciting days in my whole life... I’m now on the RCIA team.” (Rob Rhinehart, Baltimore, Md.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: What do you think society most misunderstands about parenthood?

To respond for possible publication in an upcoming edition, send your response to cgrenne@catholicnews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †

Jesus in the Gospels: He was crucified


The evangelists don’t go into detail about the horrors of the Crucifixion. They say Jesus was crucified and died at about 3 o’clock, although John’s Gospel says that Pilate condemned Jesus to death at noon. The first three of Jesus’ last words show that he was still thinking of others: “Father, forgive them,” for they know not what they do.” He was asking forgiveness not only for the soldiers who had nailed him to the cross, but also for our sins for which he was dying. As Jesus hung on the cross, the mockery continued: “He saved others but can’t save himself.” Jesus was making a statement about his mother, Mary, symbolically with Mary as a symbol for the Church. If Jesus was just concerned about his own plight, he would have made arrangements for her at any time, not waiting until he was on the cross. Mary was given the responsibility of caring for her son Jesus. When you consider the cheers on the cross, the mockery, the jeering, and the death of Jesus, it is easy to see why Jesus’ death is called the greatest of all sacrificial deaths. For the Gospels report seven things that Jesus said while hanging on the cross. Mark’s Gospel says that it was 9 o’clock when Jesus said while hanging on the cross: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” How strong the temptation must have been for Jesus to yield to despair: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus prayed in the opening words of Psalm 22. How accurately the psalm described what he was feeling: “They have pierced my hands and my feet,” “They divide my garments among them.” He was crucified and he died at about 3 o’clock, although John’s Gospel says that Pilate condemned Jesus to death at noon. The first three of Jesus’ last words show that he was still thinking of others: “Father, forgive them,” for they know not what they do.” He was asking forgiveness not only for the soldiers who had nailed him to the cross, but also for our sins for which he was dying. 

“You today, you will be with me in Paradise,” he told one of the men dying with him. That is a gift to give to someone that it is never too late to repent. “Woman, behold your son,” he said to his mother. “Behold your brother John.” Jesus gave John to his mother, realizing Mary’s true devotion to our Lord. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus prayed in the opening words of Psalm 22. How accurately the psalm described what he was feeling: “They have pierced my hands and my feet,” “They divide my garments among them.” I thirst,” he said, still echoing Psalm 22: “My thirst is dried up like baked clay, my throat is parched.” He was asking forgiveness not only for the soldiers who had nailed him to the cross, but also for our sins for which he was dying. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Jesus prayed in the opening words of Psalm 22. How accurately the psalm described what he was feeling: “They have pierced my hands and my feet,” “They divide my garments among them.”

We shouldn’t be casual about “Casual”

Remember the annual Easter parade? Remember Easter hats? Remember the stores all at or—for that matter—remember dress up for Church? Those things seem quaint now. We live in an age of “Casual”—casual dress, casual ethics. If we got any more casual, we’d be dead. Which brings me to the point I’d like to make: I think it’s time to examine the not-so-casual influence of “casual” in our lives.

Easter is a good time to consider this because Easter is definitely not a casual occasion. Easter is one of the most significant days in the Christian year, the day on which our Lord rose from the dead, illustrating the divine glory in which we’re invited to share. That’s why we used to dress up for Easter. It still makes sense.

Anyway, Easter is a passionate time (no pun intended). Jesus was a radical, his message was revolutionary and the results of his life have influenced the world in a major way ever since. We should remember our intense beginnings and get over whatever apathy and indifference have crept into our lives—along with sloppy dressing.

I’m not, however, trying to say that we need to go back to how we used to dress in our childhood and continue wearing the same clothes during the teen years. When I was a child, we children were expected to go to church because the practice was part of being a normal family. I took this for granted.

However, children—especially teens—often challenge parents about Mass, per- haps preferring to do something else. Some youngsters—perhaps even some adults—might even postpone to Mass attendance with a “let’s get it over with” attitude.

Recently, I received an e-mail from a Florida friend, Jack, who shared an anec- dote about this very question, which I commend here:

Supposedly, someone who attended church regularly for decades finally questioned this practice with a letter to a newspaper editor. He suspected that he had heard at least 5,000 sermons, yet he could recall only one of them.

“I’m wasting my time and pastors are wasting theirs,” he wrote. This created a storm and the letters continued, including two articles in the church bulletin critical of the pastor. This letter writer had paid at least $2,000 meals, but, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single meal. The letters continued requesting that the strength needed to do my work. If my wife had not done this, I could have been dead long ago. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today.

This letter writer must have been apochryphal, but it is good, nonetheless. At least it urged me to ponder my own attendance at Mass.

True, sometimes my body is more in-the-moment than my mind or my spirit (espe- cially when not feeling well), and sometimes I so diligently pray for something spe- cific that I have trouble paying attention— or I am distracted for tri reasons.

However, I cannot recall any time I left church without feeling God’s presence, resolving a problem, being uplifted, resolving a problem, or being inspired to internal- ize the priest’s homily (Paul and I are blessed to have three excellent homilists at our parish, Father Tom Voze, as well as Father Tom Murphy and Father James Bonke.) I like to find an empty pew and just sit quietly, and I think about the events of the day. I often think about the sins of the world. I find that it helps me to focus on the things that I can change and what I must forgive and let go of. I find that it helps me to focus on the things that I can change and what I must forgive and let go of. It helps me to focus on the things that I can change and what I must forgive and let go of.

May Christ in the Eucharist help us fulfill these goals in all seasons of the year, not just during Lent and the beauti- ful Easter. 

Shirley Vogler Meister, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.†
**Feast of the Resurrection/Easter Sunday**

Msgr. Owen F. Campion

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**The Sunday Readings**

**Sunday, April 16, 2006**

- Acts of the Apostles 10:34a-37
- Colossians 3:1-4
- John 20:1-9

This weekend, the Church celebrates the greatest of its feasts, the Feast of the Resurrection of the Lord, on Easter Sunday.

It is the greatest of feasts because it rejoices in the fulfillment of human salvation, finalized and completed when the Lord Jesus rose from death to new earthly life after having been crucified.

On Holy Saturday, after dusk, the Church presents its splendid liturgy of the Easter Vigil.

These reflections, however, focus on the readings proclaimed at Masses during the day on Easter Sunday.

The first reading is from the Acts of the Apostles.

Speaking on behalf of all the Apostles, Peter gives a capitalized version of the life and mission of Jesus. It is more than a biography. It is a testament of God’s love for humankind, given in Jesus, and in the sacrifice of Jesus. It is an invitation to people to follow the Lord, and it is a reassurance to God that we are still in processes developed by Jesus.

For the second reading, the Church offers a passage from the Epistle to the Colossians.

The reading tells us, as it told its first audience, that we have been raised with Christ. We usually associate resurrection with death, but that resurrection is re-vivification after physical death. In the Pauline writings, resurrection also meant an event on earth while physical life is present. It is a resurrection over sin, voluntarily chosen by each disciple.

St. John’s Gospel supplies the last reading.

It is the familiar story of Mary Magdalene’s early morning visit to the tomb where Jesus had been buried after being crucified. She found the tomb empty. Immediately, she hurried to Peter and the other disciples to give them the news.

At once, Peter and the others went to the tomb and saw for themselves that it was empty. The disciple whom Jesus loved also saw the tomb. He was not bewildered. He knew that Jesus had risen.

**Reflection**

The readings for this feast, as well as the feast of Easter itself, are overwrought in the richness and depth and breadth of their message. Jesus is the Savor! He lives forever!

In the Acts of the Apostles, it is clear that Peter and the Apostles were exercising a role given to them earlier by Jesus, a commissioning by the Lord documented in John and the other Gospels.

Salvation in Jesus did not end when Jesus ascended. It lives in the Apostolic credentials of the Church.

Colossians, the second reading, calls us clearly and firmly to turn totally to Jesus. We must drown our sins, and in this we too rise, even now, and not only after physical death.

Sin is living death. If we do not repent, our sins are final. They doom us to death. Nothing good can ever come from sin, rejecting God.

Volumes have been written about these verses from the Fourth Gospel. Two figures are very important. The first is Mary Magdalene. The second is the Beloved Disciple, assumed to have been the Apostle John, although the Gospel never identifies this disciple by name.

Common between them is their unqualified love for Jesus. Mary of Magdala is an example for us all, although much recently centers on the fact of her gender. She had much to lose by paying attention to the corpse of a condemned traitor.

The Romans always were looking for conspiracies, and the Romans played for keeps. Yet, unknowing about what she would find, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb.

The Beloved Disciple realized what had happened. The example for us is to trust in the Lord relentlessly. After all, we are limited as humans. We need Jesus. True commitment to Jesus brings wisdom and insight for living.

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**Church prefers godparent to be confirmation sponsor**

**Q** My grandson is preparing for confirmation and wanted his father to be his sponsor. The class was told that parents are not allowed to sponsor their children.

**A** It seems to remember confirmations when parents were not ruled out as sponsors.

What are the requirements for confirmation sponsors now? (Massachusetts)

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**My Journey to God**

**Losing Me**

By losing myself, I have found myself.

How can this be?

There was no purpose until my ego died.

The “One” found me.

What do you say? You speak in riddles.

There was no purpose until my ego died.

By losing myself, I have found myself.

"Reach out, I'm here, closer than you,
than me,

My way is narrow for those who seek.

Love grows anew.

"Listen with the ears of your heart.

"Don't look back when you fall.

He says, "Let go."

― sandy bierly

(Sandy Bierly is a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. She wrote this poem last year after visiting Medjugorje, and asking Mary and Jesus to bless her writing. She said her poems are a special grace from her pilgrimage.)

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**Question Corner/ Fr. John Dietzen**

**Church prefers godparent to be confirmation sponsor**

The Gospel of Mary is one of dozens of apocryphal books written before Christ or sometime in the early centuries of Christianity, but for one reason or another never admitted to the “canon” of Scripture.

Some apocrypha espoused or defended early heretical Christian factions, particularly the Gnostics. Others proposed to satisfy curiosity about particulars in the young life of Jesus or details of his death and resurrection, and his risen life on earth.

Some are more than a little bizarre. One, I seem to remember, for example, how the boy Jesus hit another boy and killed him then miraculously brought him back to life. Another narrative tells how Jesus once formed mud into a bird shape, brought it to life then had it fly away.

The Gospel of Mary is one of these, professing to fill in details that the authentic Gospel authors did not think relevant to the mission and message of Jesus. The work presents itself as a revelation given privately by Jesus to Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection, including descriptions of conversations between Jesus and the disciples.

The author and time of writing of the Gospel of Mary are lost in history, but it never has been considered a work that should be included in the New Testament. Only one copy of the text exists today, written in the Coptic language.

(Catholic Q & A: Answers to the Most Common Questions About Catholicism is a 530-page collection of columns by Father John Dietzen published by Crossroad Publishing Company in New York and available through bookstores for $17.95. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at Box 5515, Peoria, Ill. 61612 or by e-mail in care of jdietzen@aol.com.)

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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.

Regional reflections are also 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.

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Pope Benedict XVI will celebrate his 79th birthday on Easter at the Vatican.

The pope is expected to receive birthday greetings by mail and e-mail from Catholics around the world this weekend.

In his 1998 book titled Milestones, a collection of mem-

ories about the first 50 years of his life, the former Cardinal Joseph RATZINGER wrote that he was born in Marktl am Inn, Germany, on April 16, 1927, which was Holy Saturday that year, and was baptized that day in the newly blessed waters.

Last year, the former prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was elected the 255th pope on April 19—three days after his 78th birthday—and his inaugural Mass was held on April 24.

Three teenagers who are members of St. Benedict Parish in Terre Haute are among countless Catholics offering birthday
greetings for the pontiff.

The teens are active in the combined St. Ann, St. Benedict and Sacred Heart of Jesus youth group in Terre Haute.

Terre Haute North High School senior Mark Elliott, whose family has been members of St. Benedict Parish for five genera-
tions, said he would like to wish Pope Benedict a happy birthday and “God’s blessings today and always.”

If he could, Mark said, he would remind the pope that, “God has given you this day. Receive it with eagerness. Treat it kindly. Share it with joy.”

He also would tell the pontiff that, “God bless you at this happy time in his most gracious way, and send his gifts of love and joy to fill your heart today. You have such a special way of blessing others, shining for Jesus and being gracious. I pray the Lord sends all of that goodness into your life today, and I hope it’s only the beginning of another year filled with his blessings.”

Mark said the tri-parish youth group, coordinated by longtime youth minister Janet Roth of Terre Haute, has “done many [Church and community service] projects... like food baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas for the less fortunate around Terre Haute.”

Terre Haute North senior and St. Benedict parishioner Anna Ciarletto said “the best thing I could offer him was to stay involved in my Church, stay com-
mitt ed with my youth group and continue helping others.”

St. Benedict parishioner Jenny Joy, a sophmore at Terre Haute North High School, said when youths donate their time and talents to help others “it’s also a gift to God.”

If she could, Jenny said, she would give Pope Benedict the gift of knowledge to help him with all his responsibilities as the spiritual leader of the international Roman Catholic Church.

“It was hard replacing Pope John Paul II,” she said, “and he’s doing a great job. I hope he will have many more years.”

(William H. Sadlier Inc., the oldest family-
owned publishing company in America, is sponsoring free electronic birthday cards for Pope Benedict XVI. The birthday greet-
ing project is endorsed by the National Catholic Educational Association and National Conference for Catechetical Leadership. To send an electronic birthday card to the pope, log on to Sadlier’s Web site at www.sadlierweb.com.†)
The enormous disaster wrought by Hurricane Katrina in late August last year inspired a massive response by archdiocesan Catholics.

In the weeks after the hurricane, nearly $1 million was contributed to what became the Archdiocese of Indianapolis Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund. The fund’s money was given through second collections taken up in archdiocesan parishes and via individual donations. Most of the funds contributed were unrestricted. But more than $54,000 was dedicated to the relief of those displaced by Katrina who resettled in the archdiocese.

As of March 28, only slightly more than $52,000 of the nearly $1 million contributed remained in the fund. David Siler, executive director of the archdiocese’s Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries, called the building of the Katrina Fund a “bright spot” for him.

He witnessed the great influx of contributions and helped determine how they were dispersed. “To see such good come out of this tragic situation has been pretty inspiring,” he said. “It just shows us the hearts of Catholics. When the need is known, people will respond.”

Shortly after the donations started pouring in, Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein established an ad hoc committee to recommend to him how the funds should be dispersed.

Large portions of the Katrina Fund were distributed last fall. More than $615,000 from the fund was given to the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Two gifts of $25,000 each were given to the Catholic Church Extension Society and Catholic Charities of Jackson, Miss.

Support was also given from the Katrina Fund to relief trips sponsored by archdiocesan groups.

Valerie Sperka, development specialist for Catholic Charities Indianapolis and a member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, recently spoke with The Criterion while she was a chaperone on a relief trip to the Gulf Coast during the first week of April. It was sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry and supported financially by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund.

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“I'd like to see it continue for as long as necessary,” Siler said. “But why can’t you say that to somebody whose home just got flattened last night by a tornado? It’s as devastating to them as anything that’s happened in New Orleans.”

But whether it is coming to the aid of those affected by Hurricane Katrina or those struck by disasters closer to home, Father Ian is convinced that Catholics in central and southern Indiana are driven by their faith to respond. “A spirit of mission to go out and help others must be a part of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis’ blood,” he said, “because we haven’t seen other dioceses in the United States have an outreach like there seems to pervade [there].”

“Obviously, the scale of this hurricane was unbelievable and unprecedented,” Siler said. “But you can’t say that to somebody whose home just got flattened last night by a tornado.”

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MARCH 28. BLESSED VISIONS OF THE LORD</p>
Pastoral Associate

St. Monica, a large, diverse, active parish on the north west side of Indianapolis, seeks a Pastoral Associate for Adult Faith Formation. The primary function of this position is to coordinate the major adult formation opportunities in the parish and to offer general pastoral care as needed. This person will coordinate the following parish ministries:

Adult Faith Formation
Small Church Communities
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Applicant must exhibit a strong Catholic identity, be able to work well with staff and volunteers. The person should have good communication and organizational skills and be supportive of a strong adult spiritual formation methodology.

A master’s degree in theology, religious studies or a related field is preferred. Five years experience in pastoral work is desired. This is a full-time position with flexible work hours. Salary will be commensurate with experience and full archdiocesan benefits are provided. Please send resume to:

Dede Swinehart
St. Monica Parish
6131 N. Michigan Rd.
Indianapolis, IN 46226
317-507-6330
Dede@stmonicaint.org

Deadline is May 1, 2006.

Catechetical Associate for Evangelization and Adult Formation

The Diocese of Joliet, Illinois, is seeking a Catechetical Associate. The position provides service and direction for parish leadership in matters of adult faith formation, with a particular attention to evangelization, parish renewal and the implementation of the National Directory for Catechesis.

This is an exempt full-time position with benefits. Office hours to be maintained with some flexibility. Night and weekend work as necessary.

A job description and application are available at www.waldioceseofjoliet.org.

For questions, please contact:
Michael A. Svach
St. Charles Center
402 S. Independence Blvd.
Romeoville, IL 60446
815-834-1077
msvach@dioceseofjoliet.org

Director of Liturgical Music Ministries

St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, Indiana is currently seeking a full-time Director of Liturgical Music Ministries. This position is responsible for effective preparation, coordination, performance and leadership of music within the liturgical celebrations of the parish.

This position requires:
• at least 3 years experience as a pastoral musician—preferably in a music director role
• proficiency in keyboard accompaniment (both piano and organ)
• strong knowledge of Roman Catholic liturgy

An important part of the Director’s role is to personally accompany and/or direct various music groups in the parish, in addition to handling recruitment, formation and supervision of all music ministers. The successful candidate will have strong organizational and collaborative skills. A formal degree in music is highly desirable.

Send resume by 4/19/06 to:
St. Pius X Parish
c/o Search Committee – Music Ministries
7200 Sarto Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46240
Email: jkirkhoff@spxparish.org

Positions Available

Catholic High School Principal

Lima Central Catholic, a 382 students (grades 9-12) school, invites qualified applicants for principal position, beginning July 1, 2006.

Major responsibilities include:
• Administering day-to-day school operation, management of resources, including revenue, expenditures, facilities, equipment and all programs
• Educational and fiscal leader – ensuring the highest quality educational and faith development experience for students
• Generating strategic and operating plans in collaboration with staff, board and families
• Serving as lead Development Officer for the school that seeks to raise operating and endowment funds for fiscal viability

Interested applicants must be practicing Roman Catholics, hold valid Ohio Principal license and have taught for at least three years.

For more information, visit the school’s web site at www.lcschoo.org.

Please send resume, including a email address and phone numbers, cover letter of interest, contact information for three references, transcripts and licenses to:
Theodore J. Wallace, President
The Parents Group Consultants
143 Woodbury Drive, Dayton, Ohio 45414
317-907-4592
Twolace@parentsourgroup.org

An aggressive compensation package is included. Application deadline is April 20, 2006.
The St. Francis Cardiac & Vascular Care Center is the only full-service heart facility on Indy’s south side.

If you are experiencing chest pain, seek immediate help from the right hospital. St. Francis is the only hospital on the south side that offers comprehensive surgical and medical cardiac and vascular care, and is the first Indianapolis-area hospital accredited as a Chest Pain Center. Continuing a 20-year tradition of making every second count with complete, compassionate care.

Don’t take chances with chest pain.
Or where you treat it.

St. Francis is the only area hospital to earn 2004 awards from both HealthGrades and Solucient, or to receive both the 2004 and 2005 HealthGrades Distinguished Hospital Awards for Clinical Excellence.

The St. Francis Cardiac & Vascular Care Center has received 5 stars from HealthGrades for its work with heart attacks for 5 years in a row. They also ranked St. Francis in the Top 10 in Indiana for Cardiac Surgery and Cardiac Intervention.

Solucient has named St. Francis one of the Top 100 hospitals in the country.

heart.StFrancisHospitals.org

ST. FRANCIS
leading the way CARDIAC & VASCULAR CARE CENTER