A work of art, a work of God
Artist finds faith in sculpting statue of Blessed Mother Theodore Guérin

By Sean Gallagher

SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS—Who is the artist and who is the work of art?

That is a question at the heart of Teresa Clark’s journey of faith.

For a year now, she has been molding clay into a 6-foot likeness of Blessed Mother Theodore Guérin, the 19th century foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Yet during that same time, it would seem that Blessed Mother Theodore and God have both been redefashioning Clark.

Since her arrival in Terre Haute in the spring of 2005, Clark, who had attended a Mennoonline church as a young adult but had never been baptized, came to a deep appreciation of the Catholic faith that was the bedrock of Blessed Mother Theodore’s life.

This appreciation grew so much that Clark, 50, participated in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Terre Haute, then was baptized and received into the full communion of the Church at the Easter Vigil on April 15.

The next day, she attended Easter Sunday morning Mass with the Sisters of Providence. During that liturgy, she gazed at a portrait of Blessed Mother Theodore that hung in the church and thought about all that had happened to her.

“I was brought here, and I am creating her,” Clark said in an April 20 telephone interview. “But, in the process, Mother Theodore and God are creating me. That’s what I felt when I looked at her painting that day.”

Clark first learned of Blessed Mother Theodore and the Sisters of Providence in 2000.

There was a possibility that she might create a statue of Blessed Mother Theodore for a cemetery in Fort Wayne, where she lived at the time, so she came to Saint Mary-of-the-Woods to learn about her and the community she founded.

Clark spoke with Providence Sister Marie Kevin Tighe, the vice postulator of the canonization Cause of Blessed Mother Theodore, read some of the foundress’ writings and met several members of the community.

“I just greatly admired this woman and what she accomplished in her time,” Clark said during a March 30 interview with some of the boycott leaders.

She said the document would be made public soon, but refused to give details about the commission’s conclusions.

Cardinal Lozano was responding to questions in the wake of an interview by Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, retired archbishop of Milan, who said use of condoms can be the lesser evil in some situations.

Cardinal Lozano spoke in an interview on April 23 with the Rome newspaper La Repubblica. He was asked specifically about use of condoms by married couples seeking to prevent transmission of AIDS.

“It’s a very difficult and delicate theme that requires prudence,” Cardinal Lozano said.

“My council is studying this attentively with scientists and theologians expressly charged with preparing a document on the subject, which will be made public soon,” he said.

“You have to study this in detail. The Church teaches that contraceptive techniques, including condoms, are immoral because they close off the possibility of procreation.

Vatican preparing document on condom use and AIDS

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI has asked a commission of scientific and theological experts to prepare a document on condom use and AIDS prevention.

Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragan, head of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Ministry, said the document would focus, at least in part, on condom use by married couples infected.

He said the document would be made public soon, but refused to give details

Immigrant-rights groups divided over calls for May 1 boycotts

WASHINGTON (CNS)—After the coordinated April 10 National Day of Action for Immigrant Rights, the hundreds of organizations that pulled events together in 160 cities are looking to follow up with a second day of action on May 1.

But while there’s widespread agreement to do “something” that day, there’s less unanimity about what, and particularly about whether to support the call by some for boycotting school, work and/or the marketplace.

Supporters of a boycott say it would show the impact that immigrants, legal and illegal, and those who support them, have on the economy of the United States.

Activities planned in different cities range from prayer vigils to voter education projects, and cultural celebrations to marches.

In Mexico, a campaign has begun to boycott U.S. goods, services and companies as a reflection of the importance of Mexican consumers to the U.S. economy.

At an April 20 press conference in Washington, representatives of some of the major regional and national organizations behind the events said they agreed they would not call for people to boycott work or school that day, but neither would they necessarily criticize those who are encouraging a boycott.

Gustavo Torres, executive director of Casa of Maryland, said he met earlier that day with some of the boycott leaders.

“We agreed to disagree,” Torres said. “We agreed to respect each other and work together on the same goals.”

Several participants in the press conference said their organizations believe a boycott is a valid tool in the campaign for comprehensive immigration reform and that they might support an economic and employment boycott at some future point.

Cristina Lopez, deputy executive director of the Washington-based Center for Community Change, said while her group was not supporting a boycott, neither was the group specifically discouraging people from participating in it.

“We’re not going to tell you what to do,” she said, adding that the center was encouraging people to be sure they understand the

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potential ramifications of participating in a boycott, especially skipping work or school. “If we disagree on the how and when [of a boycott], we’re united in the strategy of seeking comprehensive immigration reform,” said Angelica Salas, executive director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles. She said she wasn’t even sure who was behind the calls for a boycott.

While plans publicized in some cities mentioned calls for a boycott, it was not clear where the idea originated.

In Los Angeles, Cardinal Roger M. Mahony earlier in the week issued a state-ment asking people not to skip school or work, but instead to participate in a Day of the Worker celebration in Los Angeles. May 1 is the feast day of St. Joseph the Worker. The cardinal also encouraged schools and workplaces to devote time to understand-ing the dignity of work, the value of education and the important role immi-grants play.

In San Diego, an after-work rally in Balboa Park scheduled on May 1 had the support of the Catholic diocese’s Office for Social Ministry. Linda Arendt told the San Diego Union-Tribune daily newspaper that skipping work or school might cause a backlash.

“The message would be one that immi-grants really don’t want to be part of America and that they are really doing is hurting the U.S., and that would be hurt-ing the movement,” the paper quoted Arendt as saying.

Meanwhile, smaller events focusing on immigration continued to be held around the country.

On April 23, events in San Francisco and Chicago featured Catholic religious leaders leading prayers and speeches. San Francisco Archbishop George H. Niederauer led a group estimated at 10,000

While calling for every effort to reduce the number of abortions, he said de-criminalizing the practice has had the positive effect of reducing the number of clandestine abortions.

Decriminalizing abortion does not repre-sent a “license to kill,” he said. He said it means the state does not feel it necessary to intervene in every possible case; instead, he said, the state tries to eliminate the causes of abortions and prevents them from being carried out after a certain point in pregnancy.

Cardinal Martini also said that while one must “do what is possible and reason-able to defend and save every human life,” there were complex and painful situations that require careful reflection and decisions on what is best for the person and what “concretely serves to protect or promote human life.”

“It is important to recognize that the con-tinuation of physical human life is not in itself the first and absolute principle. Above it stands human dignity, a dignity that in the Christian vision and that of many religions that marched from Dolores Park to the Federal Building. He read a joint statement by interfaith leaders calling for “a just path to lawful permanent residence and citizenship.”

He also said proposals in some of the pending legislation to criminalize being in the country illegally and to build a new wall along 700 miles of the Mexican border were “very shortsighted and even mean-spirited.”

At an interfaith prayer vigil in Chicago the same day, religious leaders prayed to heal the nation’s wounds over immigration issues. Father Claudio Diaz, director of the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago’s office of Hispanic ministry said, “We will see a mira-cle if we are together.”

On April 19, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious joined the hundreds of religious organizations nationwide that have issued calls for immigration legislation that deals with wide range of concerns.

“LCWR promotes legislation that includes family reunification, a path to

involves an openness to the eternal life that God promises to man,” he said.

Physical human life should be respected and defended, he added, “but it is not the supreme and absolute value.”

Cardinal Martini said he did not believe the principles of self-defense or “lesser evil” could be applied to cases of abortion, unless the mother’s life was actually threat-ened by carrying the pregnancy to term.

Even when a mother cannot care for a child, he said, there are other ways in mod-ern society for the child to be raised.

But in any case, I hold that respect is due to any person who, perhaps after much reflection and suffering, in these extreme cases follows their conscience, even if the person decides to do something that I cannot approve,” he said.

The Espresso interview was conducted as a dialogue between Cardinal Martini and Italian bioethicist Ignazio Marino. In it, the cardinal touched on a number of other issues:

• The cardinal said he agreed with Marino that it appeared that individual human life began sometime after the joining of sperm and egg. In particular, Cardinal Martini said he agreed that a new individual did not seem to be present in a fertilized egg before the male and female nuclei had combined to form the new embryo’s nuclei. That is an argument made by some scientis-ts who are promoting new, more sophisti-cated forms of artificial insemination.

• Cardinal Martini said a more precise understand-ing of when individual human life begins could help overcome the Church’s opposition to every form of artificial insemination.

• The cardinal said the implantation of frozen embryos, so-called embryonic adopt-ation, was preferable to simply letting the embryos perish—even when the mothers are single.

• On the question of allowing single peo-ple to adopt children, the cardinal said adoption by married couples was generally preferable, but that he would not want to extend adoption eligibility for singles. It’s a question of making the best choice for the child, he said.

Julia Madrigal from Chicago holds the Mexican flag during an interfaith vigil to pray for just immigration laws at Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine in Des Plaines, Ill., on April 23. The early earned legalization, worker protections and an effective border policy that is humane rather than punitive,” the state-ment said. ↑
Love of God, sacraments lead apologist Rosalind Moss to Catholic faith

By Mary Ann Wyand

Catholic Answers staff apologist Rosalind Moss reverently picked up the heavy metal crucifix and kissed the golden corpus.

Then the internationally known radio talk show host, author and motivational speaker from El Cajon, Calif., told 375 women attending the third annual Treasuring Womanhood conference on April 22 about her love for God and the sacraments of the Catholic Church.

During two presentations, she skillfully entertained and catechized the participants at “Journey in Trust, Called to Trust, Courage to Trust,” the archdiocesan women’s conference at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

With humorous anecdotes, Moss shared her life story of growing up Jewish in Brooklyn, N.Y., and becoming friends with 12 Jews for Jesus as a young adult in California, then joining an evangelical Christian denomination for 18 years before God called her to Catholicism.

She mixed Jewish beliefs from the Torah with other New Testament passages and Gospel teachings while weaving her story of conversion to the “one, true Church” that Christ founded more than 2,000 years ago.

“He was the first Jewish pope,” she said. “Don’t you forget that! The first pope was Jewish.”

Moss also talked at length about the Blessed Mother’s role in her life and the life of the Church.

“Mary was a Jewish mother,” Moss reminded the women, who laughed as she added, “and you know what that means. … Don’t ever be afraid to talk to people about Mary … She has a one-track mind—straight to Jesus. She’ll say, ‘Do I have someone for you?’”

Moss said she struggled with feelings of emptiness and loneliness throughout her life until she was introduced to Christianity in 1976 then joined the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil in 1995.

Her conversion to Christianity began with a religious flyer that jogged her with the message. “If being born hasn’t given you much satisfaction, try being born again.”

That message “shined right through my heart,” she said. “I had everything this world could offer, and when I came to California … I had a good salary, a great social life. I lacked nothing this world could give. I only had one problem, and I’d had it since I was about 10 years old, and that is that no matter what I had—love, money, success—by the world’s standards, no matter what, nothing and no one had ever filled the deep sense of emptiness, loneliness, meaninglessness and purposelessness that I lived with my entire life.”

Her friends told her that Christ died on the cross for all of our sins and that she could come to know Jesus as a friend. “I realized that night that God can become man,” Moss said. “It took a couple of months more for me to work through the pride and fear and whatever baggage I had, and give my life to God, which I did in 1976. I remember waking up the next morning, and for the first time in my life I said, ‘Good morning, Lord,’ and I knew he was God, and I knew I would never be alone again. The pain in my heart was gone.”

As an evangelical Christian, she had been taught that the Catholic Church was a cult. Her older brother, David Moss, shocked her when he joined the Catholic Church in 1979 in New York.

“I told my friends that ‘I thought he was Christian,’” she said, “‘but he’s Catholic.’”

In 1990, her brother gave her a copy of This Rock, a magazine published by Catholic Answers, a nonprofit organization, which helped open her eyes to the truths of the faith. She also reads books by former Presbyterian minister Scott Hahn, who joined the Church, and other Catholic authors for four and a half years.

“I knew that if I did not look into the Catholic Church,” she said, “I’d be turning away from God. It was the most agonizing journey of my life.”

She said Father James T. O’Connor’s book, The Hidden Manna—A Theology of the Eucharist, taught her about the sacraments, “the intimacy of total self-giving love that is unique to the Eucharist,” and that 2,000 years of Christ’s love is brought to the altar “through him, with him and in him” during Mass.

Now she teaches Catholics how to defend their faith and explain the grace of the sacraments to others as a full-time employee of Catholic Answers.

“Catholic apologetics doesn’t mean ‘I apologize for being Catholic,’” she said “It’s a reasoned explanation of the faith— not just what we believe, but why we believe what we believe. The answer to the world’s salvation is the Church that Christ established 2,000 years ago.”

(Next week: Catholic musician Annie Karto shares her faith journey.)
Editorial

The National Geographic code

Editor’s Note: The following editorial appeared in the April 13 issue of The Catholic Review, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

The release next month of The Da Vinci Code movie has already renewed the xenophobic trend of looking at the Catholic Church as a conspiratorial repository of cultural and religious secrets.

Now the National Geographic Society’s display of an ancient Coptic text, dubbed the “Gospel of Judas,” and the publicity generated to promote its television special have inflamed theorists eager to see the Church and Christianity in general thrown into doubt by the discovery of a new “gospel.”

The Gospel of Judas was discovered in the 1970s and has awaited its day in the publicity generated to promote its text, dubbed the “Gospel of Judas,” and as a repository of cultural and religious text.

The Criterion • Friday, April 28, 2006

Letters to the Editor

Circumventing the laws, pleading for amnesty is wrong

I say “Amem” to the April 21 letter to the editor in The Criterion concerning immigration and amnesty.

I am 72 years old and have felt that I have practiced the Catholic faith faithfully. I do not believe that my religion requires me to believe in breaking laws of the land that are reasonable. I have no problem with people being born to come to our country legally and becoming citizens.

There are ways to do so.

I do have problems with circumventing the laws and then pleading for amnesty and asking for special favors. (For example, if I am Spanish, teach me in Spanish if I wish, and teach me in German. Don’t teach me English and take away my heritage.)

Maybe we need immigration reform or review of the existing laws. I do not have an issue with the Church supporting these issues, but I do when I hear of Church leaders marching in protest for issues that openly support ignoring the law. (For example, amnesty for those that have openly disobeyed the law.)

I am a Catholic that has some different ideas than some of our leaders in the faith. I am not a blind follower.

Loren Richards, Rushville

Troops deserve prayers for their civic loyalty

I believe a letter writer in the April 21 issue of The Criterion has failed to consider an important reason in the argument that we should support our troops emotionally and spiritually, even if we disagree with war.

We, the people, elect our officials. These officials make the decision when to declare war, and the people, by proxy, send our troops to the battlefield.

Our troops act on our behalf, for our protection. We may disagree with our politicians, but that doesn’t make us any less responsible for the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety of the men and women that we, the people, send to conflict.

What? Because those same men and women, when they join the military, place their trust in “we, the people,” that we who voted for war, to cause that. Is that our oath, their promise, their commitment. They trust us not to betray.

Therefore, even if you write your elected officials every week asking them to end this conflict, certify, you still owe those troops your prayers and your thanks for their civic loyalty.

Lisa Rowes, Indianapolis

We are obligated to follow laws of our land

I read with interest the letter to the editor in the April 14 edition of The Criterion, and I couldn’t agree with the letter writer more.

I kept waiting for our bishops to come out in favor of obeying a duly constituted law of this country and, unfortunately, I am still waiting.

In recent issues of The Criterion, our own bishop mentioned the illegality, but dismissed it as irrelevant. I, too, went to Catholic schools, and was taught the same as the previous letter writer: It is a sin to break a valid, duly constituted law of our country.

What about those who are following the rules and are patiently waiting? What kind of message is being sent to them? Are we supposed to look to our clergy for help in learning what is right and what is wrong? What happened here?

Any reference to immigrants coming here before the implementation of our laws is immaterial to the argument. If this is no law, how can you break it?

If this were a Church law, would the reaction from our bishops be the same? This is my country and, for her problems and mistakes, there is no place better. Obviously, the illegals pouring across our borders feel this the same.

Are the clergy in Mexico doing anything to promote better living conditions there? Is the clergy here working with that job? Facilities across this country are being stretched to the limits and beyond with illegal demands and expectation, and we are being asked to foot the bill for this.

How can someone with no Social Security number, being paid under the table as many are, be able to pay federal taxes? Would they really want to?

People say the illegals pay taxes, but no one explains to me how this is being done and what taxes are really involved.

We either respect the laws of our country, or we pick and choose. If the latter, our bishops run the risk of getting the same response when they present a Church law with which we do not agree.

As Catholics, we have an obligation to follow the same.

Barbara L. Manesse, Vevay

Focus on important things at Sunday Mass

A letter writer says (letters to the editor) in the April 21 edition of The Criterion that people should dress appropriately for church.

When I am at church, I’m not people watching. I really do care if the guy in short pants and his wife is wearing nothing under her. I am there to celebrate Mass with my fellow believers, not to harp on their perceived attire shortcomings.

I would recommend that those that share the letter writer’s attitude look at some paintings of the Last Supper, including Da Vinci’s portrayal. Not only are Jesus and the Apostles not wearing shirts and pants, but there are no socks. That is why I believe a letter writer in the April 21 issue of The Criterion that people should dress appropriately for church.

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Our troops act on our behalf, for our protection. We may disagree with our politicians, but that doesn’t make us any less responsible for the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety of the men and women that we, the people, send to conflict.

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I read with interest the letter to the editor in the April 13 issue of The Catholic Review, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

The Church does have an end and is transformed into laughter.” —Pope Benedict XVI (cf. Rev 5:4f)

“The Book of Revelation’s vision of heaven expresses the profound greeting of the angels to the risen Lord, we can laugh and give thanks for their civic loyalty.

The lightness of Easter joy

Joy is a Christmas theme. It is the profound greeting of the angels to the shepherds, the announcement of glad tidings and hope for the future. Joy is also an Easter theme. It is the disciples’ experience of the risen Lord on the road to Emmaus, in the upper room and in Galilee.

And joy is what we will experience at Pentecost as the whole world is opened up by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the Church is born, in joyful hope and anticipation of the kingdom that is here now and yet to come.

Lord, save us from taking ourselves and our problems too seriously. Save us from the kind of heaviness that prevents us from loving others and serving you. Help us to open our eyes and to see Easter faith the wonders of your creation and the triumph of love over death.

As Pope Benedict tells us, through the eyes of Easter faith, “we actually do glimpse heaven, and we see God’s gentleness, which is neither indifference nor weakness but power of the highest order. It is in this way, and only thus, that we see the mysteries of creation and catch a little of the song of the angels—indeed, we can try to join with them somewhat in stilling the Alleluia of Easter Day. Since we see the Lamb laugh and give thanks!” —Amenn. Alleluia.

—Dan Conway (Daniel Conway is a member of the editorial board of Criterion Press Inc.)

The lightness of Easter joy

The Book of Revelation’s vision of heaven expresses the profound greeting of the angels to the risen Lord: The lamb who was slain lives.

What was the last time you experienced your Christian faith as something that eased the burdens of daily living? When was the last time you heard or read something about the Catholic Church that provoked light-hearted laughter? Was your celebration of Easter 2006 truly a time of joy—or was it simply one more thing you had to do before getting back to the dreaded business of every day?

We hope that this Easter season is a time of joy and laughter for all of us—individually, as families and parish communities, and as an archdiocesan and universal Church. There is too much heaviness in our lives. Too much grief and sorrow and anxiety. Too much bad news. Too much suffering. Sin. We need more laughter. More light-heartedness. More joy.

Especially during the past five years (ironically the first years of the hope-filled third millennium of Christianity), we have been burdened with lots of heavy stuff: Terrorism. Scandals. Financial burdens. The priest shortage. Problems with parish staffing. Divisions between red states and blue states. Culture wars. Immigration conflicts. Christianity vs. Islam vs. Judaism. The list goes on ... and on ... and on.

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En uno de mis mensajes durante Lent, I stressed the importance of formation in faith so that our diocesan and paro- chial communities of priests, religious and laity could fulfill their responsibilities as they assist us in the formation of our families. Our mission is to see that our children grow up to be lifelong disciples of Christ. Our Sunday homilies and catechetical sessions are very important in helping families to grow in faith. The Church is the school of Christ and we need to be life-long students of faith. We need to grow in our understanding of Catholic faith and morals. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is a valuable resource for this purpose. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is a comprehensive and authoritative presentation of Catholic faith and morals. It is intended to be used by all members of the Church, including the laity, religious, and priests. It is written in an accessible and reader-friendly manner. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is the official statement of the Church on matters of faith and morals. It is based on the teachings of the Church fathers and the Church councils. It is a valuable resource for all Catholics who wish to deepen their understanding of Catholic faith and morals.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is divided into four parts: Part I: The Fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Faith; Part II: Life in Christ; Part III: The Christian Mystery; Part IV: Christian Prayer. Each part is further divided into sections that cover specific topics. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is available in many languages and is widely used by Catholic catechists and religious education programs around the world. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is a valuable resource for all Catholics who wish to deepen their understanding of Catholic faith and morals.

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Regular Events

Daily events
- St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. Liturgy of the Hours, Mon.-Fri., noon-12:15 p.m. Information: 317-357-7482.
- Sacred Heart Church, 1530 Union St., Indianapolis. Liturgy of the Hours, Mon.-Fri., 6:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m. Information: 317-638-5551.
- Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. Perpetual adoration. Information: 317-888-2861.

Weekly events
- Sundays
  - St. Theresa Church, 520 S. Merrill St., Greenwood. Confessions, 7:30 a.m.-9 a.m. Information: 317-888-2861.
  - St. Joan of Arc Parish, 421 Central Ave., Indianapolis. Leave a telephone number to be contacted by a priest for a spiritual direction appointment. Prayer line: 317-767-9479.
  - St. Therese of the Infants Jesus (Little Flower) Church, 4270 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 6:30 a.m.-noon, 1-5 p.m. Information: 317-455-9007.

Events Calendar

April 28
- Marian College, St. Francis Hall Chapel, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Catholic Charismatic Renewal, prayer meet, 9 a.m.-noon. Information: 317-543-1783.

May 8

Events Calendar submissions should include a date, location, name of the event, contact information, time and a phone number for more information. All information must be received by 5 p.m. on Thursday one week in advance of our weekly edition.

Submissions will not be taken over the phone.

To submit an event, mail to: The Criterion, Events Calendar, PO. Box 1731, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

For more information about our Events Calendar policy, log on to www.criteriononline.com, click on the “Events” link, then on the link to our events policy.
Bullying seen as persistent problem; overweight children bear brunt

ATLANTA (CNS)—Bullying is such a serious issue that the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta issues a “child risk behavior” report. According to Lynee Lang, a school community health educator in St. Louis, to illustrate her point, she said 160,000 children stay home from school each day because they’re afraid of someone at their school.

Among the easiest targets for bullying are overweight and obese children—a group whose ranks are swelling as a result of America’s dietary habits, said Angela Sheer, a dietician who works with Lang at Barnes Jewish Christian HealthCare. The percentage of overweight children and youths ages 6-19 in the United States tripled from 5 percent to 15 percent between 1980 and 2000. Sheer said, and CDC figures indicate the current obesity rate at 17 percent of the students in that age group.

The average weight of a 10-year-old boy jumped nearly 11 pounds between 1963 and 2002, Sheer said, rising from 94.2 pounds to 85 pounds. “Out of a class of 25 kids, four or five would be obese,” Sheer told educators at the workshop. “Kids today consume 500 percent more calories from fast-food restaurants than they did in 1970, she added. “In policing bullying at recess—which Lang said was the most common time for bullying—she suggested the students report eating more green salad and 2 percent reported higher dairy intake, but 23 percent said they were walking more.

New Games, a concept developed more than 30 years ago, are noncompetitive, cooperative activities such as group singing and verbal rhyming contests that promote fun and have no winners or losers.

The nursing home was in a rural area. Few of its residents had any visitors at all, Father Marchionda was told. To get the residents to snap out of their lethargy, Father Marchionda said, “We embrace the challenge as a way of life.”

ATLANTA (CNS)—“Challenging times are here to stay,” Dominican Father James Marchionda told Catholic educators on April 21, but “challenging times do not define the Gospel. Challenging times do not define the Good News of Jesus Christ. Rather, Jesus Christ defines the challenge to us.”

Father Marchionda, a traveling priest who has recorded several collections of liturgical music, gave the keynote address on the closing day of the April 18-21 convention of the National Catholic Educational Association in Atlanta.

The priest’s address was titled “Charting the Future in Challenging Times.” It echoed the convention’s theme, “Charting the Future in Challenging Times.” One challenge for the convention itself this year was the fact that it had to be relocated from New Orleans after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina made the city untenable to host a gathering of the size of the NCEA. This year’s convention drew about 5,000 participants.

Challenges affect all areas of life, according to Father Marchionda.

“Challenging times are no longer the exception, they are the norm,” Father Marchionda said, citing corporate scandals, honesty in government, the clergy sex abuse scandal and the prosecution of war.

Still, “there is a power inside each one of us that is unexplainable by human standards,” he said.

“Spirituality is the most important part of our ministry,” he added. “What we need over and over again in the face of struggle, in the face of challenges, is to be transformed by God.”

“The challenges Jesus faced on Holy Thursday and Good Friday were handed to us,” Father Marchionda said. “We see that challenge is part of the program.” In doing that, he added, “we embrace the challenge as a way of life.”

Father Marchionda spoke of challenges he faced during something as simple as a singalong at a nursing home.

For every hour of TV watching, the prevalence of obesity went up 2 percent, according to a 20-year-old CDC study, Sheer said.

She noted how she and Lang got a grant from the General Mills Foundation to take a child wellness program into public schools in St. Louis County. After participating in the program, only 7 percent of the students reported eating more green salad and 2 percent reported higher dairy intake, but 23 percent said they were walking more.

In the face of struggle, in the face of challenges, is to be transformed by God. The blessing Father Marchionda received from the man, he added, was “one of the best blessings I ever received in my life.”

The priest’s address was titled “The Challenges Jesus faced on Holy Thursday and Good Friday were handed to us,” Father Marchionda said. “We see that challenge is part of the program.”

One challenge for the convention itself this year was the fact that it had to be relocated from New Orleans after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina made the city untenable to host a gathering of the size of the NCEA. This year’s convention drew about 5,000 participants.

Challenges affect all areas of life, according to Father Marchionda.

“Challenging times are no longer the exception, they are the norm,” Father Marchionda said, citing corporate scandals, honesty in government, the clergy sex abuse scandal and the prosecution of war.

Still, “there is a power inside each one of us that is unexplainable by human standards,” he said.

“Spirituality is the most important part of our ministry,” he added. “What we need over and over again in the face of struggle, in the face of challenges, is to be transformed by God.”

“The challenges Jesus faced on Holy Thursday and Good Friday were handed to us,” Father Marchionda said. “We see that challenge is part of the program.” In doing that, he added, “we embrace the challenge as a way of life.”

Father Marchionda spoke of challenges he faced during something as simple as a singalong at a nursing home.
Educators focus on keeping students safe on the Internet

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (CNS)—A generation ago, parents worried about their children getting in with the wrong crowd. Today, they worry that the wrong crowd is being invited into their children’s homes through the Internet. To combat the pervasive and sometimes dangerous impact of the Internet on today’s youths, educators across the country are being trained in schools and diocesan programs about how to keep students safe while they are online.

Linda Pacheco, assistant director of public programs for the Bristol County Sheriff’s Office in Massachusetts, recently gave a presentation to leaders in the Providence Diocese on the dangers of the Internet, especially threats linked to putting personal information on Web sites like www.myspace.com where users post online journals, photos, and thoughts and interests to share with others.

Pacheco said students rarely realize that the information they post and messages they send on the Internet can be accessed by millions of people. That false sense of security they post and messages they send on the Internet can be viewed by millions of people. That false sense of security allows some teenagers to believe that they can do and say anything they want without restrictions.

She also told them about a federally-funded Internet safety education program called i-SAFE America sponsored by a nonprofit group that educates parents and youths about Internet responsibility. All materials in the program are free, but users must be certified by the company, which provides free training.

Programs such as i-SAFE—www.safe.org—are essential, she noted, just as drivers’ education training is needed before teenagers can obtain a license.

She said cyberbullying is the latest emerging trend among Web users, citing a recent i-SAFE study that showed that 42 percent of young Internet users have been bullied online. Nearly 60 percent admit to saying hurtful things online, and the same percentage said that they have been hurt by something said about them on the Internet. Fifty-eight percent of those verbally abused online did not tell adults or parents, Pacheco said.

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Educators were advised to tell their students never to meet anyone in person that they first met online, and to be sure their students understand that people do not always tell the truth, that gossip can be hurtful and harmful, and that personal information is more than just a name and address. Students should also know to tell a parent or guardian if something on the Internet makes them feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.

The prevalence of sexual predators online has led law enforcement officials to start building their own networks aimed at catching them. But predators have also formed groups, she said, enabling them to work together to coordinate a meeting between a predator and a victim.

Myspace.com, which has more than 60 million members, recently announced that it has hired someone to oversee safety, education, privacy and law enforcement affairs.

In March, the FBI arrested two men in connection with separate sexual molestation charges involving two girls, ages 11 and 14, whom they allegedly met through the site.

The site forbids minors 13 and younger from joining and provides special protection for 14- and 15-year-olds, but children can lie about their ages to get around the restrictions.

Mary Kay Cullinan, diocesan director of the Office of Religious Education in Metuchen, N.J., said Internet safety is currently part of the religious education curriculum because it is a moral issue.

Catholic schools and religious education programs in the Metuchen Diocese are implementing NetSmartz, an Internet safety program, in all schools and parishes. The program—www.netsmartz.org—was created by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

As Cullinan put it, the program “talks to kids in their language about how to avoid all the bad things out there.” It combines an interactive CD with Web-based material to educate parents and children about dangers on the Internet.

During an April 5 Internet safety seminar for school principals, technology teachers and parish catechetical leaders in Metuchen, a Catholic high school teacher said the safety of students extends outside school walls.

Educators were advised to tell their students never to meet anyone in person that they first met online, and to be sure their students understand that people do not always tell the truth, that gossip can be hurtful and harmful, and that personal information is more than just a name and address. Students should also know to tell a parent or guardian if something on the Internet makes them feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.

“\textit{We have a mission, a reason for being here. 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 perfect moment
Cardinal Ritter dedicates field to late coach, rallies to win game

By John Shaughnessy

The perfect moment.
For nearly all of us, there are special times in our lives when we desperately want our dreams to come true.

So it was for Paige McCracken and Andrew Salmon on the afternoon of April 10, a day when they hoped that everything would be perfect for a special tribute to a man who had touched not only their lives but so many others.

On that day, 20-year-old Paige McCracken walked toward the baseball diamond of Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis. As she looked toward the cloudless blue sky, Paige felt the sun and the slight breeze on her face, and she just knew this scene would bring great joy to her father, John McCracken.

After working most of his 56 years, McCracken was supposed to begin his dream job this spring—serving as the head coach of Ritter’s varsity baseball team, a job that would let him combine his love for baseball with his passion for making a difference in the lives of young people.

Yet everything changed when he died unexpectedly of a heart attack on Jan. 22.

As she looked toward the baseball field, Paige remembered one other constant in her father’s life: “He always said if he could change one life, he’d be happy.”

Andrew Salmon is among the countless people John McCracken met and changed. He was one of the nearly 3,500 people who attended McCracken’s viewing in the Ritter gymnasium in January.

Andrew is also a captain on the Ritter varsity baseball team, a 16-year-old junior who wrote an emotional tribute to McCracken when he learned his head coach had died.

Andrew began his tribute by recalling an unusual yet perfect moment with McCracken—a moment that came during Andrew’s first high school summer league:

“We were best friends. I was an only child. He taught me everything I know. He taught me how to play golf, and he taught me how to live life to the fullest.” —Paige McCracken on her late father’s influence

As she looked toward the baseball field, Paige acknowledged that the sudden deaths of her parents have challenged her faith.

“When we ask God to give us faith, he gives us challenges, too,” she said. “My faith has helped me through it. I’m not saying it isn’t hard to go to church, but I still do it. Faith was the cornerstone of my parents’ relationship. It’s what they based everything on for almost 30 years.”

And we were all together. We were all healthy.”

A month later, her mother, Laura, was diagnosed with cancer. Three months after the diagnosis, her mother died. Paige acknowledged that the sudden deaths of her parents have challenged her faith.

“We were best friends,” she said as she recalled her father.

“We were all together. We were all healthy.”

And we were all together. We were all healthy.”

When the Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School baseball field in Indianapolis was dedicated in honor of John McCracken on April 10, his daughter, Paige, recalled the impact that her father had on her and so many other people.

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Reflections on the Life and Times of Simon Guillaume Gabriel Bruté de Rémur
by Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.

Now available in booklet form

Archbishop Buechlein’s popular 2005 summer series of columns in The Criterion is now available in a convenient 5”x7” booklet form. The 52-page booklet contains 19 illustrations.

Learn about the early history of the Church in Indiana and about the state’s first bishop who was a physician, theologian, professor, college president, and pioneer. U.S. President John Quincy Adams once called Simon Bruté “the most learned man in America.” Bishop Bruté also served as the spiritual advisor to Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton, the first American saint who founded the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s and who is credited with bringing America’s parochial school system.

The perfect moment
Cardinal Ritter dedicates field to late coach, rallies to win game

By John Shaughnessy

The perfect moment.
For nearly all of us, there are special times in our lives when we hope that everything will be just as we dreamed.

We have that wish for births, engagements and weddings. Yet there are also moments from everyday life when we desperately want our dreams to come true.

So it was for Paige McCracken and Andrew Salmon on the afternoon of April 10, a day when they hoped that everything would be perfect for a special tribute to a man who had touched not only their lives but so many others.

On that day, 20-year-old Paige McCracken walked toward the baseball diamond of Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis. As she looked toward the cloudless blue sky, Paige felt the sun and the slight breeze on her face, and she just knew this scene would bring great joy to her father, John McCracken.

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Welcome, new Catholics...
Archbishop Buechlein visits St. Mary-of-the-Knobs School

The children in the first grade figured everyone needs a touch of sand and surf in April, so they invited Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein to their beach party celebration.

An air of excitement also filled the kindergarten classroom where the archbishop learned that two of the children long to be pope someday.

“Father John Geis growth in the community,” said principal Mary Ann Bennett.

During his visit, the archbishop toured each classroom at the southern Indiana school. He asked the students questions about their lives and encouraged them to ask him questions.

“The students see Archbishop Daniel as a spiritual leader and are anxious to meet him. Even though he is miles away from them, he is still loved,’ said Father John Geis, the parish’s pastor. “Even though he is miles away from them, he is still loved and special to the school, and they understand the significance of seeing him today.”

The day marked five years since St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Parish re-established its school in 2001. With a current enrollment of 170 students, the school ministers to children from preschool to fourth grade. The school plans to add a fifth-grade class for the 2006-07 academic year.

The vision of the school began slow and involved the people from the parish,” Father Geis said. “Through study and commitment, the school re-emerged into what continues to grow today. The success of the school comes from the entire parish family focusing not only on the school, but all the other ministries that make the Catholic identity of this community so strong.”

The archbishop’s visit concluded when he gave a blessing to the students and teachers in the gymnasium.

Worship and music director Marilyn Merkel led the children in singing several songs, ending with “This Little Light of Mine.”

“Strong parent and school connections are an extension of the family and visible in the love of Christ at our school,” Bennett said.

New Catholics

continued from page 11

St. John the Baptist, Starlight
Travis Mahan (candidate)

Seymour Deanery
St. Bartholomew, Columbus
Dominic Albrecht, Jackie Bolton, Javier Garcia, Nathan Hagerty, Ashley Huffman, Timothy Hudson, Dwayne Jones, Caelis King, Brad Manns, Jessica Martinez, Johnny Martinez, Sydni Mullins, Ufrady Olam, Lucas Orrison, Zach Schwa, Brian Simpson, Becky Smith, Isabel Uscainga, Casey Wheeler and Andy Zollman (catechumens); Sandy Allen, Scott Allman, Betty Cooley, Crystal Everett, Samantha Flores, Carlos Franco, Brian Hagerty, Terry Hall, Sandy Hembrick, Carl Tamborini, Elizabeth Nelson, Amy Niedbalski, Gina Orrison, Marilyn Stafford, Glen Vogel and Julie Wagner (candidates)

St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
Ray Mills, Jeremy Rollins and Kim Valner Shiels (catechumens); Mark Alexander, Pamela Dillow, Chad Ferman, Carrie Platt, Lisa Hobbs and John Senac (candidates)

Prince of Peace, Madison
Michael Elburg, Eric Graham, Julie Graham, Jennifer Harman, Brandon Heath, Mark Jones, Kelly Russell and William Russell (catechumens); David Carlow, Carol Eburg, Mark Elburg, Laura Gardner, Elizabeth George, Phoeandra Jones, Jodi Smith, Angela Thorpe and Rebecca Thorpe (candidates)

St. Mary, North Vernon
Deloris Everroad, Courtney Huckleberry, Rachael Shaw, Annie Wickens and Shane Wilson (catechumens); Jeremy Bower, Andrea Dorssett, Corie Edens, Sophie Edens, Amanda Goertz, David Kopitzke and Mandy Leahigh (candidates)

American Martyrs, Scottsburg
Carol Abney, Kathy Goines and Amanda Mundun (catechumens); Judy Lizbeny, Patricia Marcum and Kelly Shafer (candidates)

St. Ambrose, Seymour
Brea Street, Roy Cantrell II, Scott Ousley, Judith Pullins, Travis Thompson and Jennifer Vance (catechumens); Angela Gillaspay and Peggy Harper (candidates)

Tell City Deanery
St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad
Marissa Poole and Mary Russellburg (candidates)

St. Paul, Tell City
Kelsie Blasi, Kaylee Brown, Lee Annol Holtzman and Laura Richey (catechumens); Logan Faust, Alan Hess, Jerri Lynn Kuster, Catherine Luecke, Michelle Riley and Dolly Smith (candidates)

Terre Haute Deanery
Annunciation, Brazil
Danielle Bryan, Heather Bryan, John Bryan and Jacob Goodpastor (catechumens)

Sacred Heart, Clinton
Michael Chanev, Laurie Harmon, Jessica Hughes, Melinda Hughes, Robin Lindsey, Julie Padish, Dean Stillwell and Zack Weatherly (catechumens); Terry Henry, Larry McLaughlin, Heather Norman and Linda Sue Wilson (candidates)

St. Paul the Apostle, Greensville
Amy Barger, Benjamin Horvath and Sandra Rossok (catechumens); Amy Koester (candidate)

St. Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods
Susan Atkinson, Sara Little and Lauren Sullivan (catechumens); Leslynn Ellinwood and Carolyn Quellet (candidates)

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute
Michael Loweo (candidate); Ammanda Barnhart and Ashley Lowe (candidates)

St. Ann, Terre Haute
Thomas McCullough (catechumen)

St. Benedict, Terre Haute

St. Joseph University, Terre Haute
Jeff Archer, Ashley Clay, Zachary Crichlow, Eian Luken, Erin Luken, Ethan Luken, Jeremiah Luken, Cody Mattox, Michelle Mathews and Ozzman Oznoff (catechumens); Nicholas Lawson and Cameron Quinn (candidates)

St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute
Teresa Clark, Kristina Hiatt, Nicholas Hiatt and Kelly Schwenk (catechumens); Myron Hiatt and Charles Williams (candidates)

St. Patrick, Terre Haute
Derick Bryan, Bryan Fair, Monica Ford, Heather Lee, Luke McDonald, Amanda Sanders and Billie Williams (catechumens); Bill Baker, Ben Chastain, Chris Conner, Autumn Dillman, Kathy Eastham, Larry Fleschner, Aaryn Fuller, Jennifer Hawkins, Scott Hawkins, Mary Ann Owens and Rowdy Williams (candidates)

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TRI-COUNTY ASPHALT

— Father John Geis
Volunteers enable works of charity and justice

By Scott Rutan

More than 100,000 people know a garbage heap near Manila in the Philippines as their backyard. This “city” is named Payatas—the “Promised Land.” Most of its residents pick through the trash for a living, looking for something that might be resold for a few pennies.

One day in 2000, part of the garbage pile gave way and caused an avalanche. The religious community that works there reported that hundreds of Filipino people died that day.

When he read about this tragedy, Father Jim Hewes, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Clyde, N.Y., and St. Patrick Parish in Savannah, N.Y., was devastated. He couldn’t believe that so little was being done to help the residents of Payatas.

After much searching, Father Hewes discovered the help that was coming from Canada. Catholic Social Services of Edmonton, Alberta, through the work of its vice president, Marc Barylo, was financially supporting the Religious of the Virgin Mary Mother Social Apostolate Center in the Philippines.

He asked Barylo what he could do to help. They came up with a plan to buy a water truck to provide clean water to the people living at the dump. It would be owned and operated by the religious community and the people of Payatas.

“It could be a way we could answer Christ’s call: ‘When I was thirsty, you gave me a drink,’ ” Father Hewes said. At the same time, it could “empower the residents to overcome at least some hardships.”

Father Hewes took the plans for this humanitarian relief project to his upstate New York parishes.

“Instead of getting people genuinely involved in [supporting] social justice issues,” he said, “I believe you first need a compelling story and the witness of people who believe in the cause.”

The parishioners heard the story of Payatas and came to know the suffering there through Barylo’s eyewitness accounts. They knew that the water truck would help local people live at the garbage dump.

The second step that moves parishioners toward works of charity and justice is a growth in understanding that “their being called to move beyond their own parish boundaries,” Father Hewes said. “They need to see that they are a part of a greater picture.”

“Our Novena Fund,” money set aside specifically for charitable works, got us off on the right foot,” he said. “We also got some neighboring parishes involved” in the fundraiser.

In addition, a young, musical couple in the parish, Nancy and John Bryan, offered their skills and experience in the professional recording industry. They produced a CD titled “Songs for the Promised Land” that is now being sold to raise funds.

To date, the tireless work of Father Hewes, the Bryans and countless parishioners is paying off. They are almost finished paying for a third water truck for the people of Payatas.

“Each truck supplies clean drinking water for about 3,500 people daily,” Father Hewes said. “That may not seem like a lot compared to the total population of Payatas, but I figure it’s like that parable of the boy who threw some starfish back into the sea after hundreds were stranded by the low tide. When his father pointed out that this seemed rather pointless, what with so many stranded on the sand, the boy countered that it wasn’t pointless to the ones he tossed back in the water.”

Father Hewes and his parishioners heard a compelling story of need and saw that they could do something about it. They were able to see beyond their own community’s walls and got others involved in helping with this humanitarian cause.

Because of their concern for the poor and their willingness to build a long-term relationship with a community of impoverished Filipino people, Father Hewes and his parishioners are encountering the Promised Land, not only at a trash heap in the Philippines, but also in themselves.

(Scott Rutan is the coordinator of adult and family faith formation at St. Patrick Parish in Victor, N.Y. For information about how to help the poor in the U.S. and abroad, contact the archdiocesan Catholic Charities Office at 317-236-1500 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1500, or the archdiocesan Mission Office at 317-236-1485 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1485).†

Charitable work leads to social change

By Fr. Herbert Weber

Social justice claims a remarkable place in the teachings of the Church. Many papal encyclicals, including Pope Benedict XVI’s recent “God Is Love” (“Deus Caritas Est”), note that social justice projects are essential task of the Church. Nonetheless, people often shy away from helping the poor.

Simply put, social justice picks up where charity leaves off. Justice is the other way—besides hands-on service—for a parish to help the poor and suffering.

Most parishioners are quick to provide food for the hungry or funds for the St. Vincent de Paul conference to do its ministry. But justice focuses on why there is hunger or poverty and what needs to be changed to ameliorate the situation.

Churches need to be involved in justice as well as charity because both deal with the needs of people.

“Gaudium et Spes” (“The Church in the Modern World”) from Vatican II begins: “The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well.”†

Justice work begins with studying the documents of the Church and understanding the scope of social problems. People who start with a simple form of outreach often become more deeply involved in systemic change once they discover the depth of the problems.

Charitable outreach leads to social change. As the spirit of justice grows, people discover a better sense of God’s purpose and design for humanity, namely God’s desire that people live in peace and with respect for the dignity of all.

(Father Herbert Weber is the founding pastor of Blessed John XXIII Parish in Perrysburg, Ohio.)†
**Beginning a new series about St. Paul**

When I began my series of columns, "Jesus in the Gospels," in the Jan. 14, 2005, issue of **The Criterion,** I had no idea that it would take me 64 columns to "try to help you know Jesus as one of the greatest human beings of all another," as I expressed my purpose in the first column. As a follow-up to those columns, it seems appropriate to move on to St. Paul. I promise, though, to do it in fewer than 64 columns.

Because Paul was so prolific, I don't think it is appropriate to deny that than Paul himself. In fact, he undoubtedly very much a project object such as, idea an, only could he do that.

Regardless, no other early Christian was the most important as was Paul in the formation of Christian theology. His letters make up nearly one-third of the New Testament, and more than half of the Acts of the Apostles concerns his conversion and subsequent missionary journeys.

Christendom needed someone like Paul. As we saw in my columns about the Gospels, the Apostles were unlearned men, slow to realize who Jesus was. Most of that changed with the advent of the Holy Spirit on them at Pentecost, but nothing in the Acts of the Apostles tells us why Paul suddenly became a first-rate intellectual or great theologians.

Paul was his preaching and his letters explain the mystical body of Christ and include such basic doctrines as the divine plan of God the Father through his Son's incarnation, death and resurrection. He is the bridge between the teachings of the Holy Spirit and the writings of those first-century great intellectuals or great theologians.

Paul's preaching and his letters teach us about grace, faith, free will and love.

But do we really know Paul? We bear fragments of his letters during Mass on weekends, but we really need to know more about the man—why he wrote those letters and under what circumstances.

As I write this series, I hope you will put yourself mentally in the first century. That first thing that will require is slowing down. In today's society with the communication and ease of travel, we tend to forget how different it was in Paul's time. When he traveled, he would usually average about 20 miles a day, depending upon the weather. During parts of the year there were snowstorms. Sometimes he might not have been able to travel at all. He had to decide whether to walk or go by ship. Ships didn't sail during the winter, so he had to plan where he would spend that time. It was dangerous to travel the roads alone because of the threat of bandits, so he had to wait to join a caravan that was going where he wanted to go.

We will start next week with what we know about his life before his conversion. 

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**Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes**

**Graduating from promise to fulfillment in life**

May is the month of Mary, moms and graduates. They're all celebrated with great joy and honored for their accomplishment. For some, not much can change in a day can be a scary event as well.

Now, I'm referring to "legitimate" graduations here, not the circumcisions in the locker room, diploma parties or Brownie fly-ups we all love to attend. I do include graduation from elementary to middle school, or middle to high school, in the scary group.

That is because, unfortunately, we live in a time in a great pressure is put on the young to achieve at an early age. They're sent to preschool when they are too young to read in kindergarten and inundated constantly with information, just because technology permits. Even their "leisure" time is overused.

Sometimes this is done for the convenience of parents who work, and sometimes because parents understandably want their children to succeed in an ever more complicated world. Adult expectations are increasingly placed upon kids, with the result that adult behavior such as sleeping, eating and sleeping earlier and earlier in kids' lives.

Pressure to gain academic success is not only "good" expectation laid on children either. It's often accompanied by the social need to "fit in" with their peer pressure to conform and behaving in what they perceive as adult ways. They drink alcohol, do drugs or have sex, not because they're truly anxious to do these things, but because they think it's expected of them. The media are certainly complicit in making them think so, too.

So, it's no wonder that children graduating from one educational stage to the next may be apprehensive about the new situation. And, of course, the same is true at levels of higher learning. Going from high school to college is a major change, requiring more personal responsibility and focus on study, not to mention the additional expenditure of time and effort it takes for some students to hold jobs and support themselves financially.

It seems to me we all need help graduates fulfill the promise they represent. Those of us who've been there, done that, have a responsibility to share our experience, point out potential pitfalls we learned the hard way, and help others avoid similar problems.

But the news isn't all bad. There are many ways to help young people deal with the stress of graduation. For example, the National Center for Education Statistics reports that 85 percent of high school seniors reported that they read for pleasure in their last school year.

As I write this series, I hope you will put yourself mentally in the first century. That first thing that will require is slowing down. In today's society with the communication and ease of travel, we tend to forget how different it was in Paul's time. When he traveled, he would usually average about 20 miles a day, depending upon the weather. During parts of the year there were snowstorms. Sometimes he might not have been able to travel at all. He had to decide whether to walk or go by ship. Ships didn't sail during the winter, so he had to plan where he would spend that time. It was dangerous to travel the roads alone because of the threat of bandits, so he had to wait to join a caravan that was going where he wanted to go.

We will start next week with what we know about his life before his conversion. 

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**Faith-based travel abroad is a growing trend**

Earlier this year, the CBS "Early Show" featured a report acknowledging "how the trend of faith-based travel is beginning to take note of the major role of faith in family travel." Even the daily newspaper USA Today published a story about this. I did not see these reports much about them from Kevin Wright, a seasoned professional travel manager with whom I have chatted off and on via e-mail to better understand this subject.

Wright works for Globus and Cosmos in Littleton, Colo., a company that has 75 years of experience. It is one of the top-selling companies for this type of travel. In fact, Wright is in Europe as I write this column today.

Before leaving, he shared how more than 600,000 Americans travel annually for religious reasons or on pilgrimages. He noted that 500,000 travel to more than 400,000 churches in the United States have travel programs.

Faith-based travel programs have more than 300 destination possibilities to more than 65 countries, including 12 faith-based trips for Catholics, the Biblical lands and North America. Readers can obtain more information by calling toll free 1-800-797-8793 or by visiting www.globusjourneys.com/thought.

Wright is also the author of three travel books: "Cathedral Study Guide" (through Liguori Publications, www.liguori.org), which also carries similar books by other Catholic authors. Wright said that although the national secular media is noticing the growing popularity of faith-based travel, Catholic/Christian publications have not yet picked up on this I find that strange.

However, I am aware of parishes in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles that have faith-inspired mini-tours or more extensive trips.

Perhaps I’ll be able to join one sometime.

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

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**Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher**

**May the Bible a bedtime storybook**

On the evening of Holy Saturday, the bedtime routine of my two sons remained the same as it always has been. First, the baths, the putting on of pajamas, the brushing of teeth and the prayers.

The last step involved telling a story to our oldest son, Michael, as he lay in bed.

However, on Holy Saturday evening, the story I told him was special. That night I told him a story about Jesus' resurrection.

This happened right around the same time that churches across the archdiocese were filled with the light of candles held by worshippers who listened to the **Exsultet,** that beautiful chant that announces the good news of Christ's rising from the dead.

And so, in our own small way, my family celebrated the feast of our Lord.

In the fading glow of our daylight-savings-time extended evening, I sat on Michael's bed and told him a story of the stories of Jesus' burial and how the women discovered the empty tomb three days later.

Michael's eyes lighted up and a smile crossed across his face when, with enthusiasm, I told him how on the third day he was rolled back, how the disciples rejoiced when they saw the risen Lord, and how the disciples who walked this road to Emmaus rushed back to Jerusalem when they realized that he had been with them all along the way.

I didn't have a Bible in front of me. And I hadn't memorized a particular transmission.

Having heard them so many times before over Mass years, I was recalling them from memory or picking up on this. I had told Michael as I told him about the story of that first Easter.

As I write this series, my son has asked me several times to tell him the stories again. I happily agreed on each occasion.

All of this reminded me of Moses' words to the Israelites recounted in the book of Deuteronomy.

"These words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (Deut 6:6-7).

I hope and pray that the story of the resurrection will be upon Michael's heart as he grows up and that it will be a part of him in every moment of the day. I hope he is able to maintain in some way the child-like wonder on his face that night when, as he grows up, he hears again the story of Jesus' resurrection.

With the grace of God, I will do what I can to make that so. I will try to help him understand that there is no reason why there is not a story-book that tells about the ways that God has loved us and shown himself to us. And whether it is a story from the Bible or something else, I will do my best to make sure he knows that God loves us and that he should never doubt that.

Whether you know it consciously or not, those stories are an integral part of your Catholic identity.

So share these stories, in your own words, with your children. Tell them to your children or grandchildren with pride. And watch with satisfaction as their eyes are trained on you, as they wait to hear the next turn in the story.

You’ll be helping them to grow in their faith. And your faith will grow as well.
**My Journey to God**

*They’re Plowing the Garden*

"Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?’ She thought it was the gardener …" (John 20:15)

They’re plowing the garden! Mom’s comment at breakfast echoed the story of creation. We are given a beautiful metaphor, a vision of potential, a beginning of something wonderful. We need a seed planted, a foundation of hope, a reminder of the beauty of life and the promise of eternal life.

In Scripture, the image of a garden symbolizes an intimate relationship with God. The story of our relationship with God begins and ends with life. The garden of Eden begins in the Book of Genesis with the story of creation. We are given a beautiful image of our God, betrayer of His promises, and the hope of His salvation.

*Jim Welter is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. This reflection was originally written for the St. Monica Parish e-mail Scripture ministry, which sends a reading in the liturgy.*

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**Daily Readings**

**Monday, May 1**

Joseph the Worker

Acts 6:8-15

Psalm 119:23-24, 26-27, 29-30

John 6:22-29

**Tuesday, May 2**

Athanasius, bishop and doctor of the Church

Acts 7:51-8:1a

Psalm 31:3cd-4, 6ab, 7a, 18, 21ab

John 6:30-35

**Wednesday, May 3**

Philip and James, Apostles

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Psalm 19:2-5

John 14:6-14

**Thursday, May 4**

Acts 8:26-40

Psalm 66:8-9, 16-17, 20

John 6:44-51

**Friday, May 5**

Acts 9:1-20

Psalm 117:1-2

John 6:52-59

**Saturday, May 6**

Acts 9:31-42

Psalm 116:12-17

John 6:60-69

**Sunday, May 7**

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:8-12

Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 29

1 John 3:1-2

John 10:11-18

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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, PO Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org

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**Saturday, May 6**

Acts 9:31-42

Psalm 116:12-17

John 6:60-69

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**Third Sunday of Easter/Msgr. Owen F. Campion**

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 30, 2006


• Acts 7:51-60

• Luke 24:35-48

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The Acts of the Apostles provides this Easter season weekend with its first biblical reading from the liturgy. Acts is an excellent source of information for those who are new to the faith. It begins in the Book of Genesis with the story of creation. Here, in this reading, he preaches, on behalf of the other Apostles, and pronounces the basic message about Jesus. Jesus was the gift, and servant, of the “God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.” In other words, Peter says that Jesus was from the flesh and blood, from the bones and skin, of the first Christians believed. By ancient Hebrew law, a woman was spiritually “unclean” for seven days after the birth of a boy and 40 days after the birth of a girl. (See Leviticus, Chapter 12.) The uncleanness was removed by an appropriate rite of purification. The purification of Mary after the birth of Jesus is still celebrated as part of the feast of the Presentation on Feb. 2. In Christian form, the ceremony assumed more the theme of thanksgiving for a safe birth, and for the health of the mother and child.

One reason the blessing after childbirth is not presently widespread is that most of its features, prayers and blessings are now already implied or included in the baptismal ceremony itself. The Catholic Book of Blessings (p. 236) includes a blessing for mothers who were unable to be at their children’s baptisms, enabling them to “benefit from the blessing that in the rite of baptism prompts the mother and child and all present to thank God for the gift of the newborn child.”

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**Question Corner/ Fr. John Dietzen**

Those who faithfully seek God will see him in heaven

Q I am a very elderly grandmother. My 3-year-old child died, the first child among our family members are there, will those who died in earlier years still be the same age? 

Those who faithfully seek God will see him in heaven. Their age will be transformed into a different age, a spiritual age. It will be a form of age that we cannot comprehend. We can only ask the question: “Will those who died very old be that age in heaven?”

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**The Criterion Friday, April 28, 2006**
John and Paige McCracken share a moment after a round of golf, the game that created another special bond between father and daughter.
MINNEAPOLIS (CNS)—Can you name the patron saint of gardeners? If you guessed St. Francis of Assisi, whose statue adorns the secluded corners of many gardens, you’d be mistaken. As you begin to till your soil for spring planting, consider saying a prayer to an Irish-born monk from the seventh century, St. Fiacre. Raised in an Irish monastery, Fiacre learned the healing properties of herbs, and participated in planting and harvesting crops. At that time, monasteries were repositories of knowledge and learning. So many local people came to him for healing, however, that soon his little garden was not enough. So he asked the bishop for more land. Bishop Faro, who later became a saint himself, told Fiacre he could have as much land as he could till in one day. For a full day, legend says, the monk dragged his spade along the ground, miraculously causing trees to topple and bushes to be uprooted. The bishop proclaimed this a miracle.

The monk grew food to feed the poor and herbs to cure the sick. He also had the gift of healing by laying his hands on a person. Word of his tilling miracle and healing abilities spread quickly, and pilgrims began to flock to Fiacre’s hospice for healing, food and spiritual counsel, according to stories about the saint. After his death in 670, the hospice continued to attract visitors. Eventually, it developed into the village of Saint-Fiacre. People still visit the French shrine, and his relics at Meaux are said to have healing powers. Legend has it that in the 17th century his shrine was famous for many miraculous cures. The story of St. Fiacre is not without its dark side. One story says that a woman accused him of sorcery when she saw his miraculous tilling of the field and that Bishop Faro banished her. Fiacre then excluded all women from his monastery and even his chapel. Although it was common practice to exclude women from monasteries, Fiacre’s misogynistic reputation remains.

In art and sculptures, Fiacre is always shown with a spade in one hand. People in the United States do not celebrate the monk’s feast day—which the Catholic Encyclopedia identifies as Aug. 30, although some sources identify it as Sept. 1—but statues of him can be found in many gardens and museums.†
Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to include date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests are listed elsewhere in this issue. The Mass of Christian burial is celebrated for priests only 10 days after the day of death. Rest in peace.


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There were all these things I wasn’t dealt with because I could see in my life that example of her life. It just became clearer and that something was nudging me this way,” she said. “It’s been a very great grace for me.”

I feel [God] gave me this ability so I can be able to touch others through my art. I feel [her] spirit ... is on these grounds still. I feel the impact on her life will touch others in a positive way. “I feel that it’s been a grace to be here,” she said. “And to honor that grace, I’d like to be able to touch others through my art. I feel [God] gave me this ability so I would like to use it in his way, in using his will.”

While Clark believes that Blessed Mother Theodore was a woman of faith—one kind of spirituality, Clark said. “Using your hands to create someone, an individual ... something that was interceding.”

“I think it’s been a grace to be here,” said Sister Marie Kevin, who has been a member of the Sisters of Providence for 64 years, said she has gained a greater appreciation of her community’s foundress through Clark’s artistry. “I’ve looked at pictures of Mother Theodore all my life,” she said. “But I’d never had the same feeling as I do when I look at the statue because it’s more than a physical likeness. The statue exudes the spirituality of Mother Theodore, which is strength and peace and trust in God.”

Clark’s time working on the statue and in RCIA has helped her understand her journey of faith that she described as “the most profound experience I’ve had, bearing the burden of my children. I feel a lot of what holds people back in faith are the little walls that they put up themselves,” Clark said. “God is always around you. You just somehow don’t respond or relate or see.”

“I feel that I’m still knocking down those walls. I just started feeling a peace in my life that I hadn’t felt in a very, very long time.” For her own part, Sister Marie Kevin said that her relationship with Clark has been a “quiet influence” over the past year, helping her come to a renewed appreciation of her faith. “I think it’s been a very great grace for me!” Sister Marie Kevin said in an April 12 telephone interview. “It’s made me examine my prayer life and my whole relationship with God as I see her relationship deepening.”

Clark will soon complete her clay statue of Blessed Mother Theodore. After officials from the National Shrine approve it, a fiberglass mold of it will then be made and sent to a sculptor in Ohio. He will follow Clark’s work minutely as he makes the final limestone version. Clark hopes that the image of Blessed Mother Theodore that has had such a deep impact on her life will touch others in a positive way.

“I feel that it’s been a grace to be here,” she said. “And to honor that grace, I’d like to be able to touch others through my art. I feel [God] gave me this ability so I would like to use it in his way, in using his will.”

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