Virginia Tech tragedy
Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo says shooting spree that left 33 dead is "tremendously sad," page 3.

Church fire ruled arson; outpouring of support continues

By Mary Ann Wyand

NEW CASTLE—St. Anne parishioners mourning the loss of their historic church were stunned to learn last week that the early morning fire on Holy Saturday, April 7, was caused by arson.

The April 11 statement released by the state fire marshal’s office, federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Indiana State Police, and New Castle police and fire departments did not comment on a possible motive for the crime, which is still under investigation.

An anonymous donor has given a $25,000 reward to Henry County Crime Stoppers for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the fire. Anyone with information should contact Henry County Crime Stoppers at 765-521-3777 or the New Castle Police Department at 765-829-4900.

Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general, said last week that, “As distressing as the
Parental choice provision passes Indiana Senate

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

Parental choice in education for low-income families is expected to expand statewide under an income tax credit provision which was amended into the budget bill and passed the Indiana Senate.

The purpose of the measure is to encourage charitable giving to expand funding for scholarship organizations across the state, especially in communities where educational choice opportunities are most needed.

Sen. Brent Steele (R- Bedford), who offered the tax credit provision, said the provision provides up to a 35 percent tax credit against state tax liabilities for contributions made to a non-profit Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO).

The SGO may use the funds raised under this program to pay tuition and other expenses for low-income students to attend an Indiana school of their parents’ choice. Students must qualify for free or reduced lunch in order to be eligible for the scholarships. Once a family qualifies, he or she may continue eligible for the scholarships. Once a student qualifies, he or she may continue eligible for the scholarships.

Sen. Steele said that even though parents have always had an opportunity to remove their children from a particular school system, with a partial scholarship, as a practical matter, they would have to come up with roughly 50 percent of the tuition, and also have to pay for books and transportation.

However, under his amendment, SGO scholarships can be used not only to cover tuition, but also to pay for books, transportation and even school uniforms—costs that will make school choice possible for families that aren’t able to cover costs beyond tuition.

Bob Hoy, executive director for the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust in Indianapolis, an SGO, said that since 1991 the organization has given almost $15 million to economically challenged families in Indiana. CHOICE is an acronym that stands for “Creating Hope and Opportunity in Children’s Education.”

More than 60 percent of the grants awarded to students in archdiocesan schools have been given to children in middle-income Catholic school families as well.

“Tuition is tied to enrollment. When enrollment increases in a Catholic school, tuition goes down. When tuition goes down, all Catholic school families benefit,” Glenn Tebbe, ICC executive director, said.

“This measure has great potential to not only provide and expand real school choice option for lower-income families, but could greatly benefit middle-income Catholic school families as well.”

Tuition is tied to enrollment. When enrollment increases in a Catholic school, tuition goes down,” Tebbe said. “When tuition goes down, all Catholic school families benefit.”

It is estimated that the tax credits will generate $14 million in scholarship money annually, which will be divided to lower-income families.

Statewide, more than 35 percent of children enrolled in public schools for the 2003-04 school year were eligible for the free or reduced lunch program.

Since the budget bill, House Bill 1001, was amended in the Senate, it will go back to the House for approval.

“Due to the large number of amendments to the budget bill while in the Senate, the bill will likely go to conference committee for differences to be worked out,” Tebbe said. “Our faith community can really have an impact on having this scholarship tax credit become law by contacting their state representative and state senator now and asking them to support the Scholarship Tax Credit provision in House Bill 1001.”

In October 2006, ICC issued a new statement on Parental Choice in Education. To view the statement, go to the ICC Web site at www.indiana.nasccd.org. Click the Resources button on the left to view the statement.

(Brigid Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion.)
Bishop: Shooting of Virginia Tech students ‘tremendously sad’

BLACKSBURG, Va. (CNS)—The April 16 shooting spree at Virginia Tech that left at least 33 people dead is “tremendously sad,” said Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo of Richmond.

In a phone interview just hours after the shootings, Teresa Volante, Catholic campus minister at Virginia Tech, said she had sent out an electronic notice that the Newman Center chapel was open for anyone who wanted to stop in and pray.

But she said the center, located just off the campus, was rather quiet at that time since the dormitories on campus were still locked down and the off-campus students had been instructed to stay away.

“I’m here for students to talk to,” she said.

Later in the afternoon, Debbie McClintock, a volunteer who came in to help, told Catholic News Service that people at the university to help there.

Father Rob Cole of Our Lady of Nazareth Church in Roanoke came in to celebrate the Mass since Father Arsenault was still busy ministering to victims and their families.

The university president, Charles Steger, called the shootings “a tragedy that we consider of monumental proportions.”

Bishop DiLorenzo, who celebrated a noon Mass for the victims on April 17 at the cathedral in Richmond, said his heart goes out to the parents and family members of the dead students.

“At this time, one cannot help but think of the endless years of commitment, of love and care these parents have invested in their children and then to have it all cut down by a bullet is tremendously sad,” he said.

“The tragedy really hit home with me,” he said, because he learned of it at a chancery luncheon that included two women who have children studying at Virginia Tech. He said that fortunately their children were not harmed.

Emily Flach, a freshman business major who lives on campus, said, “People are just really shocked. It’s unbelievable that something like this happened.”

She told CNS at 3 p.m. on April 16 that many students had spent three hours at the hospital with those who were wounded before heading over to the university to help there.

She said the church would be open all afternoon, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed for adoration, followed by a special Mass in the evening.

Catholic Urban School Consortium members hosting information meetings

Following the motto of “Shaping spirits, minds and futures,” the six Indianapolis schools that form the Catholic Urban School Consortium will hold information meetings for prospective students and parents during May.

“We want to welcome potential students to the school, let them know about financial aid and how they’ll receive an excellent faith-based education,” says Heidi Nightingale, the director of Consortium marketing and special events. “Our goal is to let people know that Catholic education is affordable to everyone.”

Here is the schedule for the information meetings:

- Central Catholic School, 1155 E. Cameron St.—May 1, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Holy Angels Catholic School, 2822 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St.—May 2, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Holy Cross Central School, 125 N. Oriental St.—May 1, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- St. Andrew & St. Rita Catholic Academy, 4005 E. 38th St.—May 3, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- St. Anthony Catholic School, 349 N. Wabamun Ave.—May 20, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
- St. Philip Nerot School, 545 N. Eastern Ave.—May 2, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

(For more information about the Catholic Urban School Consortium, call 317-236-7324.)

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House

“Mother’s Day Mass and Brunch”
May 13, 2007

Bring the whole family to celebrate Mother’s Day together on the beautiful grounds of Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House! Make it a double celebration as May 13th is also the Feast Day of Our Lady of Fatima!

Mass will begin at 10:00 a.m. followed by a buffet-style brunch. After brunch, free to spend some time walking the grounds, taking family pictures or just enjoying the day!

Cost is $15 per person. Children age 5 and under are free.

When we held this event in 2006, we sold out quickly!

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Stewards of Easter joy

T he English writer C. S. Lewis described his conversion to Christianity as being “surprised by joy.” Lewis had a very particular understanding of joy, which he carefully distinguished from both happiness and pleasure.

Joy comes with the satisfaction of our deepest desires. Joy is what we long for always and rarely find. It is the experience of genuine unity and harmony with the world around us. It is the intimate connection with a person that makes us feel whole and complete as human beings.

The history of Christianity can be described his conversion to Christianity as being “surprised by joy.” Lewis had a very particular understanding of joy, which he carefully distinguished from both happiness and pleasure.

Joy comes with the satisfaction of our deepest desires. Joy is what we long for always and rarely find. It is the experience of genuine unity and harmony with the world around us. It is the intimate connection with a person that makes us feel whole and complete as human beings. We have experienced, in a provisional way, what it means to be fully lighted, to know lasting peace and to find true love. We are called to be stewards of the joy we have received in Christ—to nurture and develop it and to share it generously with others.

During this Easter season, let’s be joyful stewards of the gift of joy. Let’s celebrate the Lord’s Resurrection by being grateful, generous and responsible stewards of the mystery of God’s love, which has saved us and set us free—now and always and forever. Amen.

— Daniel Conway

Reflection/Sean Gallagher

Trying to make sense of Virginia Tech tragedy

How can we explain it? How do we begin to make sense of the death of 33 people on the Virginia Tech campus on Monday?

Though this massacre happened far away from our homes in central and southern Indiana, it still weighs greatly upon our hearts because the people who died are so much like our own loved ones, our family and friends. They passed on the street each day. They, like you and me, were all created in the image and likeness of God.

That is why, even though it seems futile, we trudge forward in the search for meaning in such great senselessness.

As we plod along in our quest, we enter into the heart of a dark mystery. It is the mystery of evil itself, something with which wise men and women have grappled in their hearts throughout human history. They have wrestled with this shadowy foe, but have not overcome it.

A well-known account of the struggle with the problem of evil is found in the Old Testament’s Book of Job.

There we find a man who, perhaps much like the people who died at Virginia Tech, had done nothing to deserve the hardships that came his way through the working of the evil.

His family was killed. He was stricken with disease. And his way of life was utterly ruined.

His friends sought to convince Job that he must have done something wrong for such a thing to happen to him. Job, however, would admit no wrongdoing.

He passionately sought from the Lord an answer for his sad situation.

Finally, God spoke to him: “Where were you when I founded the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding” (Job 38:4).

After hearing these and many similar questions, Job could muster only this feeble reply: “I was not on the job, nor dealing with great things that I do not understand; things too wonderful for me, which I cannot know” (Job 42:3).

There were two great mysteries—the mystery of evil and the mystery of divine Providence—and could find no answer, at least none that could give him comfort. Left to our own devices, we can do no better.

It gives me great comfort to know that God only allowed and did not cause the evil in Job’s life. We also can affirm that God, in his mystery of Providence, brought good out of it.

Can we dare to believe that the same can be said about the evil that happened on the Virginia Tech campus?

Yes, we can dare to say, partly from what we can learn from Job, but more surely from the surpassing knowledge of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

Only Jesus can face the dark foe that is evil and be victorious.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (Jn 1:5).

Although found in the first chapter of John’s Gospel, these words were written in the light of the Resurrection. They are a cry of victory.

But in the mystery of our life of faith, even though Christ has won the victory for us, we are still called to pick up our crosses each day and follow him.

Even though we may be basking in the light of Easter, let us all this day spiritually take on the role of Simon of Cyrene and in prayer help the families of those who have died to carry their grievous cross.

They, like the Apostle Thomas who at first doubted the Resurrection, may find it hard to believe that God can bring good out of their suffering.

Let us, in their stead, dare to believe.

(Sean Gallagher is a reporter for The Criterion.)

Letters to the Editor

Graphic not a ‘Church fact’; president needs our prayers

In your Good Friday, April 6, issue of The Criterion, under Father Peter Daly’s column on page 4 is a graphic with the heading “Church Fact?”

How is the declining approval of President Bush a “Church Fact?”

In his Easter Square at the Mass in St. Peter’s on Sunday, the president needs our prayers.

Maureen Williamson, Carmel, Ind.

Graphic was inappropriate in publication, reader says

I have been a faithful reader of The Criterion for the past 15 years. I have read every word of every article and believe that I have a pretty good idea of what to expect every week.

In the April 6 issue, I was shocked to see a picture of President Bush on page 4 in conjunction with the “Declining Approval” graphic under the heading “Church Facts.” I feel this was entirely inappropriate for this publication for several reasons.

First, I believe it to be very disrespectful to our president to refer to him by his last name only. Second, I still do not understand what this has to do with “Church Facts.”

If this was a survey related to our Church and those that attend regularly, I doubt the results would be the same.

In the future, please show a little more respect to our president and discretion in what to publish. Joe Bean, Clarksville

(Editor’s Note: We’ve received several queries about the page 4 graphic in the April 6 issue concerning President Bush’s declining approval ratings. Though there is no full graphic, it was accurate in its representation of its compiled statistics, we did our readers a disservice by using a standing header titled “Church Facts” that we occasionally ran graphics that on that page. That header should not have been included with the graphic. The Opinion page is a place for opinions, and we occasionally ran graphics that to show how people feel about newsworthy things. In this case though, we misrepresented what was meant to be a bi-weekly poll fact, not a Church fact. We apologize for the misrepresentation.)

How about a little block in the paper reminding people to pray for the president, who has an unbelievably difficult job and who is getting almost no support from anyone?

Maureen Williamson, Carmel, Ind.
We build our trust in God by faithful prayer

Cada año, mientras impongo el santo templo, nos dirigimos a Dios con nuestra oración y dedicación. Este acto es un oportuno para nuestros fieles. Este año, y en esta época, nos invito a confeccionar nuestra confianza en Dios. Amen.

La madruga de la mañana, en la que el sol está a punto de salir, es un momento perfecto para comenzar el día con la oración. Durante esta hora, podemos sentirnos más cerca de Dios y conectar con el Espíritu Santo. La oración nos permite establecer una conexión profunda con Dios, que nos permite sentir su presencia en nuestro día a día.

En el mundo moderno, con sus constantes distracciones y comodidades, es más importante que nunca construir nuestra confianza en Dios. Como dijo el santo padre Saint John Vianney, "Un hombre mayor que visitaba la iglesia parroquial de Ars todos los días, lloviera, tronara o relampagueara. Un día, el curé le preguntó: 'Usted viene aquí todos los días. ¿Qué le sucede?' El hombre le respondió: 'Nada. Veo a Jesús. Él me mira a mí. Nos queremos.'"

El santo curé de Ars nos enseña la importancia de construir nuestra confianza en Dios. Aunque el mundo exterior puede ser complicado, debemos recordar que Dios siempre está con nosotros, esperando que le hagamos una ofrenda de amor y servicio.

Como dice el Papa Benedicto XVI, "Deus Caritas Est" ("God is love"). Somos llamados a amar y servir a nuestro prójimo, a respetarlo y hacerlo sentir bienvenido en nuestra iglesia. El Papa Benedicto nos invitó a construir nuestra confianza en Dios mediante la oración y el servicio.


Pero, ¿qué sentido tiene dudar de la bondad de Dios? La bondad de Dios es lo que nos permite construir nuestra confianza en él. Si nos preguntamos si Dios es bondadoso, esto significa que no tenemos confianza en él. Pero si confiamos en él, podemos sentirnos más seguros de su presencia en nuestra vida.

La oración es un momento precioso que nos permite conectar con Dios. Esta es una oportunidad única que tenemos en la vida moderna. La oración es un acto de amor y de confianza en Dios. Cuando nos dedicamos a la oración, estamos decidiendo construir nuestra confianza en Dios y acreditar su presencia en nuestra vida.

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Catholic-Protestant dialogue to focus on Mary, Mother of God

By John Shaughnessy

It would be easy for John Kopchik and the Rev. Sally Brower to focus on the differences between Catholics and Protestants—especially concerning the place of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in their faiths.

Yet when Brower and Kopchik each share a story about the difference that Mary has made in their lives, they both do so with a touch of reverence and awe.

Brower’s defining story comes from her experience in healing ministry when she was part of a service for mothers whose babies had died.

“I was with a young mother who had recently miscarried,” recalls Brower, an assisting pastor of an Episcopal congregation. “We went into the sanctuary, just the two of us, and kneeled at the altar rail. She had written a letter to her baby that she placed on the altar. I learned about Mary as an intercessor. I knew Mary would be able to relate to the pain of the mother.

“As soon as we stopped praying, the first person who came to the young mother was her 3-year-old son. He said, ‘The man went behind the altar.’ His mother said the priest goes behind the altar, but the boy said that’s what he meant. The boy looked all around the altar for the man. We didn’t see anything, but the belief was the boy had seen an angel. Of course, Mary is the queen of angels. We believe she was present when she was called that day.”

Kopchik saw another indication of Mary’s influence in an unexpected setting.

“Mary shows up in some very unlikely places,” says Kopchik, a Catholic businessman. “I was on Wall Street, and I was talking to one of the biggest bond traders on Wall Street. I asked him if he wanted to get lunch. He said, ‘Usually, I just walk around and pray in the rosary. It settles me down, centers me during a hectic day and lets me think about things that are really important.’

“He was a very big fan of Wall Street. I asked him if he knew him, who loved him, but he also believes they share an incredible respect for her.

He refers to a quote about Mary and Jesus from the book The Lord by Msgr. Romano Guardini: ‘To get a full understanding of the tree as it is, we must look to the earth where its roots are.’

Kopchik says, “If you love and believe that Jesus is the central means of our salvation, you have to ask who knew him, who loved him best. It was Mary.”

‘Mary, Mother of God: A Catholic-Protestant Conversation’

Where: Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1,402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove

When: May 5, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

What: Designed for both Catholics and Protestants, the event is billed as a conversation between Catholic and Protestant speakers that will offer a spiritual journey to explore and reaffirm the common beliefs on the role of Mary within the Christian faith.

Who: The main speakers are John Kopchik, a Catholic businessman from Oregon, and the Rev. Sally Brower, an assisting pastor for an Episcopal congregation in North Carolina.

Cost: $50, includes lunch, coffee and refreshments.

Registration or more information: Call 317-788-7581.

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Offers of aid to St. Anne Parish cross diocesan, ecumenical lines

As I can—just stand and look at it—and that helps it to become a reality.

Sister Shirley and the parishioners will be up to it, but

words to the Philippians that, “I have strength for everything through him who empowers me” (Phil 4:13).

The church was consumed by fire a few hours later.

They still are up there is sliding off hourly and … can cause a

The windstorm on Wednesday evening of last week blew

“The windstorm on Wednesday evening of last week blew

The people, at least for another
give to each other when they were in need.

Some of them have come from Catholics who know

offers of aid have poured in to the Connersville Deanery

Offer of a fire victim was not the only

Fire

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Q: What have been the most difficult challenges for you as a bishop?

A: The ordeal of sexual abuse among clergy was certainly an unexpected one. Presiding at the funeral of nine priests in one year, 2005, was quite sad. I worry about many of our priests who carry the burden of multiple parishes and assignments. Increasing the number of our seminarians is a challenge in our culture. Providing most often through the priests, deacons, religious and the laity.

Q: After 20 years as a bishop, you know the priorities that matter the most to you in leading the archdiocese. What are those priorities, and what do you hope your legacy as archbishop will be?

A: My legacy is not really mine to determine so I don’t think in those terms. I guess that judgment will be determined by future history under God’s Providence. It is very hard work to maintain many of our Catholic schools. Having to eliminate many positions at the Catholic Center for financial reasons was not only difficult for me but for many others. I want to pursue with even greater creativity and enthusiasm in those terms. I guess that judgment will be determined by future history under God’s Providence. I am concerned about securing and maintaining fine Catholic schools and religious formation for the future. I am planning for St. Theodore’s intercession for this. I want to pursue with even greater creativity and resources the finding of more vocations to the priesthood for the good of the Church and to provide for our hard-working priests. I pray for the help of our founding bishop, Simon Bruté, in this endeavor. He started with virtually no resources. As we look toward the celebration of the 175th anniversary of the founding of our local Church in 2009, I pray that the faith and holiness of our people will have deepened even more. That is an intangible and largely depends on the help of the Holy Spirit.

Q: When you have previously recalled your installation as the bishop of Memphis in 1987, you said that one of the ordeals of the bishops came up to you and said “There are more directions on the back of a soup can than how to be a bishop.” After 20 years as a bishop, what advice would you give to someone becoming a bishop in today’s Church?

A: Pray and believe in the sacramental grace of the Office. The fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders makes all the difference. For the rest, rely on the goodness of the priests and good people who will assist you in serving as pastor, priest and teacher in the person of Christ.

Q: Although you’ve experienced many blessings and crosses over the past two decades as a bishop, what do you look forward to in the years to come? Any thoughts on what may happen when you turn 75 in 2013 and are asked to submit your resignation to the Holy Father?

A: I count on God’s continuing grace as I grow in age and tenure here in the archdiocese. I really don’t think much about sending my letter of resignation to the Holy Father at age 75. God has not let me down in the past and present, so I am confident that his Providence will care for me in my evening years.

With God’s blessing and the help of good priests and people, I don’t plan to carry on my ministry “by looking in the rear-view mirror,” as the saying goes. I look forward to our celebration of our 175th anniversary in 2009.
Bishop says World Youth Day will be ‘an enormous grace’

Baltimore (CNS)—Auxiliary Bishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney, Australia, said he feels hosting World Youth Day 2008 will be “an enormous grace” for his country and added that the event is the biggest “single thing you can do to encourage our youth.”

The bishop, who is chief organizer of the July 15-20 international event next year, made the comments on April 10 to a group at the National Catholic Educational Association convention at the Baltimore Convention Center.

At the final Mass at World Youth Day 2005 in Cologne, Germany, Pope Benedict XVI announced to the crowd that the 2008 gathering would take place in Sydney. Since then, the country has been planning for the big event.

Bishop Fisher said he has “really been praying about” the theme: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses.”

“The Holy Spirit will fill you; you will be witnesses of God, experience the power of the Holy Spirit, and have a moving and witness of our faith, and many young people think Australia is like the end of the earth,” said Bishop Fisher jokingly.

He said the goals of World Youth Day 2008 will be to enable youths to be witnesses of God, experience the power of the Holy Spirit, and have a moving and sanctifying pilgrimage in faith.

As part of the preparation plans, a Web site has been launched to encourage and answer participants’ questions. Among its many links is one for an “e-pilgrimage.”

The site—www.wyd2008.org—offers preparatory materials for parishes, schools and individuals planning to join in World Youth Day as well as an opportunity for those who cannot travel to Australia to share in the preparations.

Anyone who registers for the e-pilgrimage online will receive material that includes advice on traveling and staying in Australia, prayers, testimonialns from young people and general information. A DVD and downloadable posters also have been created.

“There is a sense of ownership” for the youths of Australia about World Youth Day, said Bishop Fisher. “When the World Youth Day cross arrives, the excitement will build and build.”

The cross is traveling with pilgrims through Africa and Oceania, and will arrive in Australia in July 2008. The bishop encouraged the audience to bring their youths before the event to experience the cultures of Australia and New Zealand.

The Days in the Diocese will be held on July 10-14, giving young people an opportunity to live with an Australian family as they travel and explore the country.

The opening Mass will be celebrated by Cardinal George Pell of Sydney. The papal welcome will be held on the afternoon of July 17. The pope is to ride into Sydney on a boat in full view of the hundreds of thousands of young people standing on the shore to greet him. It will be Pope Benedict’s first papal visit to Australia.

Reconciliation will be offered all week along with eucharistic adoration and a vocation expo.

A pilgrimage to Royal Randwick Racecourse, the site of the closing Mass, will take place on July 19, followed by an evening vigil. During the vigil, young Catholics will come forward to be confirmed by the pope. On July 20, the pope will celebrate the final Mass.

“I hope that they may walk away with a great sense of God’s power within them,” said Bishop Fisher. “The Church was started by... young people and they did great things. I think God can do that again.”

Father Jonathan Meyer, right, archdiocesan director of youth and young adult ministry, leads young people from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis through the streets of Neuss, Germany, in August 2005 as part of their World Youth Day pilgrimage.
Working for justice requires making changes

By Fr. Herbert Weber

I sat in this audience as a dynamic speaker addressed members of our parish on the problem of world hunger. Her presentation was clear on how the resources of the world are not being distributed justly among countries. Afterward, she accepted questions from the audience. After a few comments, a successful young businessman raised his hand. He said he was moved by the seriousness of world hunger and asked if he could write a check for the woman’s anti-hunger organization.

The speaker shocked the man when she said, “I don’t want a check. Sometimes writing a check or giving money makes people think they’ve done enough. Instead, I want you to leave here disturbed!”

The man was embarrassed and a bit miffed by her response. Her point, however, was clear. The injustice of world hunger has to make people uncomfortable before real changes can take place.

Working for justice is always about making changes. People usually acknowledge that changes have to take place in systems, organizations, governments or society in general. What they do not always admit is that change also has to take place within each person.

Such changes are challenging and therefore often avoided.

Those who gladly give to the St. Vincent de Paul Society or the local soup kitchen sometimes balk at working with issues that sound political or disruptive. Most people don’t want to see themselves as activists, agitators or instigators.

The Catholic Church has an incredibly rich collection of justice documents and writings from both the popes and the local church. And the first thing Bush did as president was ban partial-birth abortion.” (Elizabeth Landmesser, Canyon, Texas)

Promote justice by helping others

This Week’s Question

What have you done as an individual or as a family to promote social justice?

“We have 12 kids and 15 grandchildren. Since Hurricane Katrina, we have lots of people coming to our church to ask for help. We took in a family when their car broke down and they got them into contact with others who would help them. We try to teach our kids that if they don’t feel threatened, they should help.” (Diane Stewart, Hurley, Miss.)

“We’ve walked down in [Washington] D.C. on the mall for Right to Life. We took our kids and their friends when President Bush came into office because my husband wanted the children to see the peaceful transfer of power. And the first thing Bush did as president [was] ban partial-birth abortion.” (Elizabeth Landmesser, Canyon, Texas)

Discussion Point

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: Do you have a vocation? What are you called by God to be and to do?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to cgreene@catholicnews.com or write to FaithAlive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100.

Why Catholics should know the Old Testament

(First in a series of columns)

My wife, Marie, and I enjoy watching Jeopardy! together. I can’t help noticing that when the Old Testament is shown up, it’s often the last category chosen by the contestants. Although the Bible continues to be a best-seller, it’s not the one they reach for first.

I thought, therefore, that perhaps I should write a series of columns about the Bible. Not the whole Bible, but the Old Testament, probably less familiar to most about the Bible. Not the whole Bible, but the only certain thing in life is change, and the much about the natural law anymore, but overhead flying south, and the woodpeckers cold weather. The Canadian geese honk seeing around here despite the unseasonably are but a few of the signs of spring we’re every morning.

One day a visitor to the Old Testament begins with creation, naturally. Then it continues with the story of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and the stories of Noah and the flood. Unlike fundamentalists, Catholics do not believe that all of these stories should be taken literally. We do not believe, for example, that Adam and Eve is only 6,000 years old. We believe that these stories are true from a theological or spiritual point of view, but not necessarily historic.

Firm historical traditions begin with the forging of Israel into an identifiable people, an event that authors of the Old Testament place around 1250 B.C. Traditions about the earlier patriarchal period starting around 1850 B.C., through Israel’s sojourn in Egypt, the period of the Exodus and early settlement in the Holy Land, are sketchy since there were few means of preserving historical facts.

The writing of the various books of the Old Testament probably began during the time of Israel’s monarchy, around 1000 B.C., and they concluded in the century before the birth of Christ.

After the Jews were defeated and taken to Babylon in 586 B.C., it became important to write down their history, and many biblical experts believe that it was during that period that the various books were first collected, perhaps by the scribe Ezra.

Coryn Dewes

Go and Make Disciples/John Valenti

Outreach to Inactive Catholics

“Pray for those alienated from the Church!”

With these words, I began my witness talk and mission appeal in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. March 6 happened to be the day when the Phoenix sexual abuse story was at the height of public outcry.

It was particularly difficult because I was representing the home missionary diocese where Cardinal Bernard Law was ordained a priest. No amount of past goodness was going to sway public opinion. I did, however, offer a story about the infamous Boston native, Paul Revere, who was a silversmith by trade.

Some children were watching him one day in his shop, and asked why he had used a furnace.

“To purify the silver,” he replied.

“Oh, no,” said Revere, “You have to watch it carefully so it doesn’t burn away.”

“Then it’s been perished. “How do you know when it’s done?”

Paul Revere replied, “That’s easy! When I can see it melting in it.”

God will never let his Church be destroyed, but, as the story illustrates, we must undergo a purifying phase—a loving hand until we can see the very face of Christ reflected in everything we do.

Many of those who feel excommunicated, in pain or unable to resolve their distress, feelings of guilt or fear remain separated from our Catholic Church. As the story illustrates, we must be a loving hand in a state of banishment and self-imposed exile.

How can we help alleviate this heavy often discourage the caring make-up on for a spiritual life lost or practically nonexistent? How can we be part of the solution? That is a question for us.

Bishop Gerald P. Kicanas of Tucson, Ariz., asked disillusioned Catholics in his diocese to look at their faith in another way. Bishop Kicanas decided to make alienated Catholics the focus of Lent this past year, and was shocked to find that he could develop a fellowship to “come home.”

“People’s alienation from the Church is something that I have lived through, but they need an invitation. Different groups out there are angry for personal reasons, moral reasons, political reasons. There is a priority in participating in the life of the Church,” Bishop Kicanas said. “The Lord is inviting people to come—two-o-one can call them by name—the more personal the better. You want to invite them home.”

As a parish family, we are responsible to witness our love and concern for fostering an atmosphere of belonging so that no one should feel alienated from the parish community. Through liturgy, catechesis, evangelization and socialization, the spiritual identity will be developed and supported and enriched.

As Catholics, we are dedicated to cultivating the caring spirit of Christ among everyone age group and every definition of family structure within our parish. We are the family of faith! There are several archdiocesan parsley institutions where Catholics Returning Home programs exist. For more information contact one of these parsley:


St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, 317-882-0724.


John Valenti is the associate director of Evangelization and Faith Formation for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. E-mail him at jvalenti@archindy.org.
Third Sunday of Easter/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 22, 2007

Revelation 5:11-14
John 21:1-19

Again this weekend, the Church presents as its first reading for the liturgy in the Easter season a passage from the Acts of the Apostles.

The mere construction of Acts is a lesson. Actually, it is a continuation of St. Luke’s Gospel. Its underlying lesson is that the salvation achieved by the Lord Jesus did not end with the Ascension.

The presence of Jesus in the world did not end with the Ascension. The Resurrection, then, is the fulfillment of the divine promise—indeed, the essence of the entire Christian message. It is the realization of the promise which Jesus made to his apostles before his death: “And I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Mt 28:20). It is the fulfillment of the promise which has been made to all of God’s people through the ages. It is the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament which tell of a Messiah—of a Lord who will rule with equity and justice, and who will be called the Son of Man. It is the fulfillment of the promise which has been made to all of God’s people through the ages.

Yet Revelation is clear. Revelation is a sublime revelation. Again and again, it refers to Jesus as the unassailable Lamb of God, the title used by John the Baptist for the Lord. It is an overpowering reference to the fact that Christians stand with one foot on earth and the other in heaven because they stand in and with Christ, Son of God and son of Mary, a woman. St. John’s Gospel supplies the last reading.

It is a Resurrection Narrative. It is wondrous and consoling. Jesus, risen from death, appears to the Apostles as, without lack, they are fishing on the Sea of Galilee.

At dawn, recalling the title of the Resurrection, Jesus comes into their midst. He tells them exactly where to cast their nets. They obey him and pull in their nets with a huge catch.

The Beloved Disciple recognizes Jesus, but Peter is central to the story. He rushes to Jesus. Then, during a meal, Jesus asks Peter if Peter really loves Jesus. It is a question put to Peter three times with three affirmative responses.

In ancient Jewish symbolism, three represented what was complete, final and absolute. To each answer, Jesus commissions to Peter to love the Good Shepherd’s flock.

Reflection

It would be difficult indeed to find three readings from the New Testament that individually are so beautiful and so expressive, and that together teach such a marvelous lesson.

Setting the stage is the reading from Revelation. Disciples indeed do live with one foot on earth but the other in heaven, and nowhere else is this reality better seen than in the Eucharist.

The very combination of Acts with Luke’s Gospel reminds us that the salvation accomplished by Christ still lives. It was with the early Christians in the Apocalypse. It is with us still in the Apocalypse’s successors and in the Church.

The trial before the Sanhedrin reminds us that Peter’s fervor beside the sea, as Peter saw Jesus risen from the dead, never ended. After the betrayal, forgiven by Christ, Peter is worthy in his faith and love. We can rely upon his testimony and his guidance.

My Journey to God

Mother of Sorrows

Sheltered in the shadows, Aware of every blow, Mother bent with sorrow, Your quiet strength will show.

The road to Bethlehem Will never seem as far As paths to Calvary That never saw a star.

There on earth’s high altar His precious blood will flow And mingle with your tears Shed silently below.

You stand beneath the Cross, Man’s cruelty complete. One tender task remains— With tears you wash his feet.

By Dorothy M. Colgan

(Dorothy M. Colgan is a member of St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad. A crucifix hangs before a mural depicting the Resurrection in the sanctuary at St. Timothy Parish in Meun, Ariz.)

Daily Readings

Monday, April 23
George, martyr
Adalbert, bishop and martyr
Acts 6:8-15
Psalm 119:23-24, 26-27, 29-30
John 6:22-29

Tuesday, April 24
Fidelis of Sigmaringen, priest and martyr
Acts 7:51-8:1a
Psalm 31:3cd-4, 6ab, 7b, 8a, 17, 21ab
John 6:30-35

Wednesday, April 25
Mark, evangelist
1 Peter 5:3b-14
Psalm 89:2-3, 6-7, 16-17
Mark 16:15-20

Thursday, April 26
Acts 8:26-40
Psalm 66:8-9, 16-17, 20
John 6:44-51

Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

Icon of eye symbolizes God’s presence and providential care

Q I have a holy water font from my mother’s belongings, which I know is at least 100 years old. It has the image of an eye on the front of the bowl. What does that mean? I have seen the same image in Masonic buildings. Usually there isn’t any connection, is there? (Missouri)

A You have also seen “the eye” on our dollar bill with words from the Roman poet Virgil, “He has favored our undertakings,” and “A New Order of the Ages.” The image, with the same words, is on the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States.

From ancient times, sight has been considered the most important of the senses and is connected with light—physical and intellectual as well as spiritual. As such, it is featured in the iconography of many spiritual traditions.

The eye appears frequently in Christian symbolism, often on the wings of what are in Christian lore the supreme choir of angels—the cherubim and seraphim—to indicate their angelic wisdom.

More often, the eye appears alone, perhaps surrounded by sunbeams inside a triangle, as a sign of the Blessed Trinity and of God’s presence and providential care wherever we are. This would explain its meaning on your holy water font.

In Freemasonry, the sense is somewhat the same. The sign appears over the master’s chair in Masonic lodges to remind members that “The Great Master Builder of All the Worlds” knows all human knowledge and secrets.

It was President Franklin D. Roosevelt, one of several presidents who were Masons, who ordered the eye icon to be included on the dollar bill in 1938.

Q I always thought that Communion in the hand began after the Second Vatican Council. Our pastor, however, said recently that the custom started centuries ago. Is that correct? (Ohio)

A Receiving Holy Communion in the hand goes back to earliest Christian centuries. For centuries, it was the only way that Christians received the Eucharist. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (died 386 A.D.), for example, many of whose catechism instructions we still have, instructs newly baptized Christians to stretch out both hands to make “the left hand a throne for the right hand, which receives the King.”

Only after about a thousand years, in fact, during the late Middle Ages, generally in the 16th and 17th centuries, was the change introduced to receive on the tongue. By this time, the practice of receiving Communion infrequently, perhaps once a year or less, had become well accepted. Communion by anyone but the priest was so rare that some missals of the period did not even mention Communion for lay people.

In response to certain related heresies of the time, the Church gradually introduced several liturgical changes to emphasize the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Receiving Communion only on the tongue was one of them. The elevation of the consecrated bread and wine after the consecration was another.

Our assumption that Communion in the hand is something new is an interesting illustration that we humans tend to think that what we have experienced in our lifetime is the way things “always” were. A lot of significant history happened before we came along.

(A free brochure answering questions that Catholics ask about receiving the Holy Eucharist is available by sending a self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 3315, Peoria, IL 61612. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address or by e-mail in care of jdietzen@sted.com.)

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the My Journey to God column. Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, P.O. Box 17, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to criterion@cghindy.org.

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The Criterion Friday, April 20, 2007
Battista. Grandfather of two.


BATTISTA, Larry Sr. Martin and Richard Able. Donald, Dr. David, Dr. Kenneth, Patricia Schmalz, Marianne, Indianapolis, April 5. Mother of ABLE, Rita Helen (Meyer), 83,

CRITERION priests serving our archdiocese

Obituaries of archdiocesan

Please submit in writing to our

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The Criterion   Friday, April 20, 2007

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Franciscan Sister Mary Grace Plumb served as a teacher and sacristan

Franciscan Sister Mary Grace Plumb was a member of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis of Oldenburg, died on March 20 in St. Louis. She was 77 and would have celebrated her jubilee as a Franciscan in July. The Mass of Christian Burial was held at 10 a.m. Saturday at the motherhouse chapel in Oldenburg. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery there. The former Geneva Ann Plumb was born on April 6, 1929, in Middletown, Ohio. She entered the Oldenburg Franciscan community on Sept. 8, 1947, and professed her first vows on Aug. 12, 1953. Sister Mary Grace taught at Catholic grade schools for 58 years and also served as a parish sacristan.

In the archdiocese, she served as a teacher and sacristan at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis, St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis and St. Mary of the Eucharistic Conception Parish in Aurora. She also served as a teacher and sacristan at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Evansville, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, as well as at Catholic schools in St. Louis for the last 45 years. Surviving are two brothers, Joseph and Anthony Plumb of Middletown, Ohio, as well as many nieces and nephews. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of St. Francis, P.O. Box 100, Oldenburg, IN 47036.

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On birthday, pope thanks Church family for affection, prayers

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—At a Mass marking his 80th birthday, Pope Benedict XVI thanked the Church for surrounding him with affection “like a true family” and for supporting him with prayers.

“Over and over, I recognize with joy how great is the number of people who sustain me with their prayers, who with their faith and love help me carry out my ministry, and who are indulgent with my weakness,” he said on April 15.

The Mass opened two days of celebrations commemorating the pope’s April 16 birthday and the second anniversary of his election on April 19. The festivities featured a Vatican concert, dozens of written testimonials and a giant birthday cake in the shape of the Vatican.

Some 50,000 people, including German pilgrims wearing traditional dress, jammed into St. Peter’s Square for the liturgy. The altar area was surrounded by thousands of flowers—yellow and white, the colors of the Vatican.

In his sermon, the pope appeared a little reticent about being the focus of the Mass, saying the liturgy should not be the place “to speak about oneself.” But he added that one’s personal life can also offer lessons about God’s mercy.

The pope said he always felt he was given a special gift by being born on Holy Saturday, at “the beginning of Easter.” In a sense, he said, he was born into his personal family and the larger family of the Church on the same day.

He said his family helped lead him to God, and he expressed his gratitude to his own father, mother, sister and brother. The only surviving member of his immediate family, Msgr. Georg Ratzinger, sat near the papal altar.

Pope Benedict XVI leaves in his popemobile at the end of a Mass marking his 80th birthday in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on April 15. Pope Benedict thanked the Church for surrounding him with affection “like a true family” and for supporting him with prayers.