Family members journey together into the Church

By Sean Gallagher

In the Church’s earliest days, the family was called the _eclesia_, the “little Church.” Spiritual writers through the ages have recognized that it is within the family that the seeds of faith are planted, bloomed and nurtured toward maturity.

That is still the case today as some of the archdiocese’s newest Catholics recognized God’s invitation to come into the full communion of the Church through their loved ones.

The following are the stories of people of all ages who became Catholic through the graces that came into their lives through their relatives. In the process, they learned that God was welcoming them into a larger family, his own family, a family of faith.

“I think it brings us closer”

When she married her husband, Kurt, 27 years ago, April Schmahl of Aurora began to move away from the Catholic faith in which she had been raised.

At different periods early on in their marriage, the couple belonged to Lutheran and Methodist congregations. Later, they simply stopped going to church altogether.

But a couple of years ago, April, a mother of nine children, noticed something was missing in her life. “I was unhappy,” she said. “I was looking for something that I just kind of lost contact with, I suppose you could say.”

She started going to Mass at St. Mary’s Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RITA) program, and in March, she and her younger brother, Noah, learned about the faith in a manner they excluded infants, who have no personal knowledge,” it added.

“One of the biggest regrets that we have with our children is that we did a lot of bouncing around to different Churches,” said Kurt, who was raised in the Lutheran faith. “They really didn’t have a foundation, I guess you could say.”

Kurt, April and their younger children started attending Mass together and appreciated the welcome they received from members of St. Mary Parish.

“We had such positive feedback, and a lot of people were always coming up and talking to us,” April said. “That was a great incentive for them.”

Starting last fall, Kurt, his 17-year-old daughter, Abby, and his 14-year-old daughter, Hannah, began their participation in St. Mary’s Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RITA) program, while his 11-year-old daughter, Molly, and his 6-year-old son, Noah, learned about the faith in a manner befitting their ages.

Hannah was so taken by the spiritual journey that she and her family had embarked on that she asked and received permission from her parents to complete eighth-grade at the parish’s school. She enrolled there a couple of weeks after the academic year began last fall.

Molly and Noah will be students at the school next year.

Hannah has come to value the role that the Catholic faith is now playing in the life of her family.

Father Christopher Craig, pastor of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Aurora, baptizes Molly Schmahl during the parish’s Easter Vigil on April 7. Molly’s parents, Kurt and April Schmahl, and her younger brother, Noah, look on. Kurt, Noah, and two of Molly’s older sisters were also received into the Church during the liturgy.

Welcome, new Catholics, pages 10-12.
ABORTION

continued from page 1

special counsel for the Thomas More Society, which filed friend-of-the-court briefs supporting the government in the partial-birth abortion case, said the ruling is welcome but would have little practical impact.

“First, it is apparent—and undisputed—that a physician who causes ‘fetal demise’ before beginning a partial-birth abortion is not subject to prosecution under the act. Moreover, causing fetal death generally involves little or no risk to the pregnant woman,” Linton said.

Further, he added, “it is questionable whether any physician who performs the procedure prohibited by the act could be successfully prosecuted as the [U.S.] district court judge in the Nebraska case, Richard Kopf, noted in his opinion striking down the act. That is because the government would have to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the physician had the intent, at the outset of the procedure, to perform a partial-birth abortion. Proof that a partial-birth abortion procedure was performed, in and of itself, would not suffice.”

Masci suggested, though, that the now reshaped abortion debate will affect the 2008 presidential election.

“It may be harder to triangulate on this issue,” he said. He noted how the 2004 candidates tried to appease both sides.

“President [George W.] Bush has said he’s against abortion, but that he recognized that Roe v. Wade is the law of the land, and [Sen.] John Kerry [D-Mass.] supported a woman’s right to an abortion, but said he believed that life begins at conception,” Masci said.

Masci said the high court’s decision “may make it hard for candidates to find some position on abortion that both appeals to the base—a Republican candidate may have to make a hard speech defining—against abortion but [meanwhile be] reaching out to voters in the center—and, likewise, Democrats can claim they have the same problem,” but in reverse.

Masci acknowledged that, “because of Roe, the court is the ultimate arbiter of what and cannot be restricted by legis-

latures. This decision shows the impor-

tance—and vindicates people on both sides—of this debate when a Supreme Court vacancy is created, how Justice [Samuel] Alito replaced Justice [Sandra Day] O’Connor [in the court majority] in a

decision. I think that, ultimately, is much more important.”

The Supreme Court, in its partial-birth ruling, acknowledged that “in some past decisions, the usual rules for constitutional review were disregarded as an unwarranted hostility to legislative efforts to respect unborn human life,” said an April 18 statement by Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

“We hope today’s decision marks the beginning of a new dialogue on abortion, in which fair-minded consideration will be given to the genuine interests of unborn children and their mothers, to the need for an ethically sound medical profession, and to society’s desperate need for a founda-

tion of respect for all human life,”

Cardinal Rigali added.

Other statements took less note of the legal dimension of the decision and looked toward its societal implications.

“The ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold the ban on partial-birth abortion should be applauded by all women and men of good will,” said Servants of the Gospel of Life Director Diane Carollo, director of the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry.

“It reaffirms the human dignity of the American people, who were put into temporary remission by the aberrant Roe v. Wade decision in 1973,” Sister Diane said. “Despite the attacks from the abortion industry and its leadership to promote legalized infan-

ticide, it is evident that the task of reversing Roe v. Wade is under way. It is inevitable.”

“Although the ‘right’ to abortion at other stages of pregnancy remains the law of the land, this recent decision will, I hope, move forward in our country discussion about just what is at stake in any abortion, namely, the destruction of a human life as well as the infliction of untold grief on the mother who comes to realize that she has allowed her child to be killed,” said an April 19 statement by Bishop Michael J. Sheehan of Colorado Springs, Colo.

“Hopefully, we are making a small step toward sanity and basic decency in this beloved nation of ours,” said an April 19 statement by Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York.

Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson of the Knights of Columbus said it was “a major milestone in the battle to end the destruction of innocent human life in America.”

The pro-life office directors of several New England dioceses were meeting in Brighton, Mass., when the decision was announced. They took note of the language in Justice Anthony Kennedy’s majority opinion. Pregnant women are referred to as “expectant mothers” and the unborn child called “life within the woman.” The decision also acknowledged the pain that women go through after an abortion.

“The Supreme Court has never spoken this way before,” said Marianne Lyster, director of the Archdiocese of Boston’s Pro-Life Office. “This has the potential to really refocus the entire debate.”

Wanted: Stories about mother’s influence on faith

Are you a mom who has advice or a story about the blessings and struggles of helping your children with their Catholic faith? Are you a son or daughter who has a poignant, touching or even humorous story about the way your mother tries or succeeded in passing along her faith to you?

The Criterion would like to hear your stories and possibly share them with our readers in the May issue before Mother’s Day.

Send your stories, memories and advice to assistant editor John Shaughnessy in care of The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Or send an e-mail to johnshaughnessy@archindy.org. Please include a phone number where you can be reached during the day. 

By: John Shaughnessy

The Criterion (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.

The Criterion • P.O. Box 1717 • Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717

Page 2 The Criterion Friday, April 27, 2007
Experts: Solution to campus violence much more than gun control

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The chorus of voices calling on Congress to act around the country to bring about better gun control following the campus massacre at Virginia Tech has already begun.

"For too long, Congress has stood idle while gun violence continues to take its toll," said Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y., in a statement. "The unfortunate situation in Virginia could have been avoided if congressional leaders stood up to the gun lobby."

But experts on U.S. Catholic campuses say many other factors played a role in the Virginia Tech tragedy and the solution to campus violence will involve much more than gun control.

Don Lindley, who teaches psychology, sociology and criminology courses at Jesuit-run Regis University in Denver, was a member of the Denver Police Department for 33 years. He endorses a two-pronged approach to the problem of campus violence.

First, those responsible for campus security must be "given the tools they need to do the job," including adequate training, decent pay and respect for their professionalism, he said. "And they must be armed."

Many in the academic community might find that unacceptable, he said. "But I find a great deal more unacceptable the many times people are killed or wounded by violent individuals on campus, he added. "And we know we have violent people on our campuses or with access to our campuses."

The second part of Lindley’s solution is for everyone on campus—and in society in general—to "take more time with people when someone is hurting."

"How long does it take to give someone a social stroke?" he asked. "And that might be all that someone needs."

In their 1995 document, "Contentious Realities of Culture: Violence A Catholic Framework for Action," the U.S. bishops also said: "no one response can solve the problems of gun violence."

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A two-pronged approach to the problem of campus violence

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“We have to address simultaneously declining family life and the increasing availability of deadly weapons, the lure of drugs and the slavery of addiction, the absence of real opportunity, budget cuts adversely affecting the poor, and the loss of moral values,” they said.

For some people, however, gun control is a personal cause. McCarthy, who is Catholic, has made it her signature issue since before her election to Congress in 1996.

Three years before she took office, her husband was killed and her son wounded by a shotgun’s rampage on a suburban New York commuter train.

Josh Sugarmann, executive director of the Violence Policy Center in Washington, said tragedies such as the April 16 shootings at Virginia Tech “are the inevitable result of the ease with which the firepower necessary to slaughter dozens of innocents can be obtained.”

“We allow virtually anyone the means to turn almost any venue into a battlefield,” he added in a statement. “In the wake of these shootings, too many routinely search for any reason for the tragedy except for the most obvious—the easy access to increasingly lethal firearms that make mass killings possible.”

Although many Washington insiders see little chance that Congress will approve comprehensive gun control legislation before the 2008 elections, James Kelly, a professor of social work and director of the Grace Ann Gerbell Institute for Justice and Social Responsibility at Carlow University, a small Catholic liberal arts school in Pittsburgh, says the tragedy might serve to convince a wider segment of society that gun control is necessary.

“Gun violence in the urban centers of this country has been a problem for many years,” Kelly told Catholic News Service on April 18. “But, for most people, it has not risen to the level of social problem that requires a universal approach.”

“Because "any parent can identify with the parents of these [Virginia Tech] victims," now the group with a stake in the violence, "the new gun control laws are not working." Because "any parent can identify with the parents of these [Virginia Tech] victims," now the group with a stake in the violence, "the new gun control laws are not working."

Kelly said the shootings also might serve to shine a light on the increasing number of college students with mental health issues. He said he has seen a growing problem at Carlow and heard from colleagues that the same thing is happening on their campuses. Although many Washington insiders see little chance that Congress will approve comprehensive gun control legislation before the 2008 elections, a professor of social work and director of the Grace Ann Gerbell Institute for Justice and Social Responsibility at Carlow University, a small Catholic liberal arts school in Pittsburgh, says the tragedy might serve to convince a wider segment of society that gun control is necessary.

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Welcome! New Catholics Welcome!

That warm greeting demonstrates hospitality like no other word. In the third week of Easter, we continue to repeat that phrase to the nearly 1,100 neophytes and new Catholics who were initiated or received into the full communion of the Catholic Church during the celebration of the Easter mysteries at churches in the archdiocese.

Catechumens—people not yet baptized—were baptized, confirmed and received their first Communion at the Easter Vigil. Candidates, who were already baptized Christians, entered the full communion of the Church by making a profession of faith, being confirmed and receiving their first Communion. We are very happy to welcome them all to our family of faith.

As you’ll read in this week’s issue of The Criterion, faith and family are very important to many of our newest Church members. In fact, some of the archdiocese’s newest Catholics recognized God’s invitation to come into the full communion of the Church through loved ones. Now, as disciples of Christ, they join each of us who are called to proclaim and live the joyful Easter message.

As we walk together on life’s pilgrimage to the Father’s house, we encourage all people of faith to reflect on the words that Pope Benedict XVI delivered at his weekly audience on April 11, the first Wednesday after Easter.

“We, too, like Mary Magdalene and St. Thomas and other Apostles, are called to be witnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,” he said. “We can’t keep this great news to ourselves. We need to announce it to the whole world.”

— Mike Krokos

Building a culture of life

The Supreme Court has spoken. As people of faith who have been voices for the voiceless for the past 34 years, we can offer prayers of thanks that, finally, one nationwide restriction on abortion has cleared all its political and judicial hurdles.

On April 18, the nation’s highest court voted 5-4 to uphold the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act. The five justices who voted to uphold the ban were Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Anthony Kennedy, Samuel Alito, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas. Voting in the minority were Justices Stephen Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, David Souter and John Paul Stevens.

While we will no doubt hear some groups argue why this decision—in their opinion—is a travesty of justice, let’s remind them what this heinous procedure is.

In what the law calls partial-birth abortion, also referred to as an “intact dilation and extraction,” a live fetus is partially delivered and an incision is made at the base of the skull, through which the brain is removed, and then the unborn child’s dead body is delivered through the rest of the way.

Do opponents of the partial-birth abortion ban not comprehend how wrong this is?

As Catholics and Christians, we know life begins at conception. And our faith teaches us how it is paramount to protect all human life from conception to natural death. While we may be critical of President George W. Bush’s policies in other arenas, we applaud him for sticking to his principles where this issue is concerned. The president, who signed the ban into law in 2003, called partial-birth abortion an “abhorrent procedure” in an April 18 statement from the White House.

While praising the decision, Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, head of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, said, “The court’s decision does not affect the legal status of the great majority of abortions, and does not reverse past decisions claiming to find a right to abortion in the Constitution.

“However, it provides reasons for renewed hope and renewed effort on the part of pro-life Americans,” he said. Though we can rejoice in this victory, the fight to protect the unborn continues. May we indeed continue down this road of building a culture of life.

— Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/ Welcome, new Catholics

Rev. Msgr. Raymond T. Boder, Founding Editor, 1915 - 1994
Most Rev. Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B., Publisher
Greg A. Otolski, Associate Publisher
Mike Krokos, Editor
John F. Finke, Editor Emeritus

Letters to the Editor

Chaplains are important to military support network

As a recently retired 31-year Navy veteran, I found the letter in the April 13 issue of The Criterion very misunderstood and unfairly critical of the military and Catholic Church.

Military chaplains are a very important ministry in many religions, and are a critically important element of the support network to our military forces.

Whether you believe this is a just war or not, it is an exceedingly difficult situation for our deployed troops—many young men and women—far away from families and loved ones.

For many years, chaplains and other resources have helped our soldiers and sailors cope with these difficult circumstances, keeping their emotional and spiritual balance, better prepared to survive, avoid atrocities and return home to their families.

Just like infantry soldiers, sailors on ships, air crews and marines, chaplains do not set government policy. Our armed forces support national policy as established by our civilian leaders. Chaplains are there to support our troops.

To suggest chaplains should not support our troops is ignorant and shortsighted. In reality, this would lead to greater loss of life on both sides.

Similarly, deployment of chaplains is a function of the military committee, based upon mission needs. They are not sent by the Catholic Church.

I hope this will provide some comfort and inner peace to the letter writer about the role of chaplains in the military and the essential support they provide to our troops.

A visit with recently returned military veterans might be insightful as well.

Pete Lenzen, Bloomington

Chaplains help soldiers cope with real life problems

The April 13 letter to the editor about the alleged hypocrisy of Churches in support of military chaplains comes from a narrow point of view and is partially delivered and an incision is made at the base of the skull, through which the brain is removed, and then the unborn child’s dead body is delivered through the rest of the way.

— Mike Krokos

3,500 soldiers under my supervision, I can tell you that real life problems exist. Children were born, and parents died. Men were wounded, and without our overworked chaplain I don’t know how these men and women would have coped.

Orwell said, “Those who abjure violence can only do so because others are committing violence on their behalf.”

I simply ask that the letter writer find a little charity for his principles.

Col. (Ret.) Martin Weaver, Martinsville
We refer to the fourth Sunday of Lent as Good Shepherd Sunday. The Gospel features Jesus’ imagery of shepherding. It is instructive to think about shepherding in the Near East. The imagery Jesus used is helpful not only for us priests, the imagery easily translates for parenting and Christian leadership of any kind.

To this day, shepherds in the Near East live simply. They travel light, toting a bag made of animal skins in which they carry food—some bread, dried fruit, some olives and cheese.

And, as we remember from the story about David and Goliath, a shepherd carries a slingshot—for protection and for hunting, and it is useful for calling back stray sheep. A shepherd also carries a staff, the shepherd’s crook. With it, he can catch and pull back sheep that are beginning to stray. He can also lean on the staff as he makes his way through rough terrain.

In many countries, sheep are raised in order to be slaughtered for food. In the Near East, for the most part, sheep are raised mostly for wool, for the making of clothing and other materials of wool. And so, most of the sheep are with a shepherd for many years. Thus, they get to know the shepherd well and the shepherd knows his sheep; the sheep know the shepherd’s voice.

Because of the danger of the terrain, a shepherd walks out front and leads the sheep on their way to new pasture. Often, when necessary to ford a stream or some other treacherous spot, the sheep are reluctant to follow. In such cases, the shepherd will carry “medicine” for dores for their digestive system and thus the mother sheep and others follow. These details about shepherding in the Near East help to fill in our reflection about the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. (They also suggest features that might apply for parenting.)

Our closest contact with the Good Shepherd is in the Eucharist and Holy Communion. A favorite story exemplifies the treasure that is ours at every Mass.

A few years ago, a holy man of courageous faith died of cancer in Rome. Cardinal Francis Xavier Van Thuan had been imprisoned in North Vietnam for 13 years, nine years in solitary confinement.

After his release and exile from Vietnam, the cardinal had been asked often, “Were you able to celebrate Holy Mass [in prison]?” He said: “When I was arrested, I had to leave immediately from prison because I had a heart attack. The next day, I was permitted to write to my people in order to ask for the most necessary things like clothes, toothpaste and the like. I wrote: ‘Please send me a little wine as medicine for my stomach ache’.” His people understood.

“They sent me a small bottle of wine for a Mass with that label, “medicine for stomach ache.” They also sent some hosts, which they hid in a flashlight.

The police asked me. ‘You have stomach ache?’

“Yes.

‘Here’s some medicine for you.’

‘I will never be able to express my great joy! Every day, with three drops of wine and a drop of water in the palm of my hand, I would celebrate Mass. This was my altar, and this was my cathedral!’

‘It was true medicine for soul and body. Each time I celebrated Mass, I had the opportunity to extend my hands and nail myself to the cross with Jesus, to drink him with the bitter chalice.

‘Each day in reciting the words of consecration, I confirmed with all my heart and soul a new pact, an eternal pact between Jesus and me through his blood mixed with mine. Those were the most beautiful Masses of my life!’ (Van Thuan, Testimony of Hope, Pauline Books, 2000, p. 131).

In the dark of night, the cardinal would distribute Communion to the Catholics who were with him, and he made a tabernacle out of a discarded cigarette pack.

He said, “The Eucharist became for me and other Christians a hidden and encouraging presence in the midst of all our difficulties” (Ibid. p. 132).

“In this way, the darkness of the prison became a paschal light. … The prison was transformed into a school of catechesis. The Catholics bantized other prisoners and they convert in parradios of their compañeros” (Ibid. p. 133).

Tal vez estar en prisión puede hacer que uno aprecie más fácilmente el amor del Buen Pastor y la Eucaristía que representa su amor.

Existen otras formas de estar en prisión: la esclavidad del pecado; la escuridad de la enfermedad o del miedo; la profunda tristeza por la pérdida de un ser querido o la desilusión por la traición de alguien a quien queremos.

En este mundo real podemos encontrar al Buen Pastor, la luz pascaul de la esperanza en la oscuridad. La prisión se transformó en una escuela de catecismo. Los católicos bautizaban a otros presos y se convertían en padrinos de sus compañeros” (Ibid. p. 133).

Do you have an intention for Archbishop Buechlein’s prayer list? You may mail it to him at:
Archbishop Buechlein’s Prayer List
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
P.O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

Encontrando al Buen Pastor, la luz pascaul de la esperanza en la oscuridad. La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en abril

N os refirió al cuarto Domingo de Pascua como el Domingo del Buen Pastor. El Evangelio representa a Jesús como la imagen del pastor de ovejas. Resulta admirador piernar en el cuarto Domingo de Pascua en el Cercano Oriente. La imagen que Jesús utilizó es útil no solamente para nosotros los sacerdotes, sino para cualquier padre o madre, o para cualquier que desee reflexionar sobre la imagen de Jesús como el Buen Pastor. (También sugieren ciertos detalles sobre la imagen que podrían ser aplicables para padres y madres.)

Nos cuenta más cercano con el Buen Pastor sucede en la Eucaristía y en la Comunión. Esta historia seleccionada ejemplifica el tesoro que se nos entrega en cada misa.

Hace algunos años un hombre santo de fe valerosa murió de cáncer en Roma. El Cardenal Francis Xavier Van Thuan estuvo preso en Vietnam del Norte por 13 años, nueve de los cuales pasó en aislamiento.

Después de su liberación y exilio de Vietnam, se preguntaba con frecuencia al cardenal: “¿Podía celebrar la Santa Misa [en prisión]?”

Respondía: “Cuando me arrestaron tuve que irme inmediatamente con las manos vacías. Al día siguiente me permitieron escribirme a mi gente para pedir las cosas más esenciales, tales como ropa, pasta de dientes, entre otros. Escribí: ‘Por favor envíenme un poco de vino como medicina para mi dolor de estómago’.” Su gente entendió.

“Me enviaron una pequeña botella de vino para la Misa, con una etiqueta que decía ‘medicina para dolor de estómago’.” También me enviaron algunas hostias que escindieron en una linterna.

“La policía me preguntó: ‘Sufre de dolor de estómago?’

Sí.

‘Aquí tienes una medicina.’

‘Nunca podré preguntar si alguien está tan grande como eso?’ Todos los días celebraba la misa con tres gotas de vino y una gota de agua en la palma de mi mano. (Ese era mi altar y esa era mi catedral!)

‘Fue una verdadera medicina para el alma y para el cuerpo. Cada vez que celebraba la misa tenía la oportunidad de extender mis manos y clavarme a la cruz con Jesús para beber con él el caldo amargo.

‘Todos los días, al recitar las palabras de la consagración, confirmaba con todo mi corazón y con toda mi alma un nuevo pacto, un pacto eterno entre Jesús y yo por medio de su sangre mezclada con la mía. (Eran esas las misas más hermosas de mi vida!)’ (Van Thuan, Testimonio de Esperanza, Pauline Books, 2000, p. 131).

La escuridad de la noche el cardenal distribuyó la comunión a los católicos que se encontraban con él, hizo un santo con un paquete de cigarrillos de desecho.

Declara: “La eucaristía se convirtió para mí y para otros cristianos en una presencia oculta y alentadora en medio de todas nuestras dificultades.” (Ibid. p. 132).

‘De esta forma, la escuridad de la prisión se convirtió en la luz pascaul…’

¿Tiene una intención que desee incluir en la lista de oración del Arzobispo Buechlein? Puede enviar su correspondencia a:
Lista de oración del Arzobispo Buechlein
Arquidiócesis de Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
P.O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

Traducido por: Daniela Guanipa, Language Training Center, Indianapolis.

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en abril

Sacerdotes: (que ellos realicen sus promesas como sacerdotes con júbilo y fe y den ánimo a otros hombres para que contesten la llamada de Dios a la sacerdote)
Retreats and Programs

April 28
Indiana Convention Center, 100 S. Capitol Ave., Indianapolis. Ninth annual archdiocesan “Treasuring Womanhood” conference, “The Great Dignity, Potential and Responsibility of Women,” Teresa Tomero, Rosalind Moss, Manojit Murphy, Campbell and Franciscan Father Joseph Father Michael Mary McShane, presenters, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., $40 per person before April 21, includes lunch. Call for late reservations. Information and registration: 317-888-0873 or www.indiana women.org
Roncalli High School, 3300 Prague Road, Indianapolis. “Real Roncalli Revery,” annual dinner, 8:30 p.m. Information: 317-787-8227, ext. 230, or janne@indiana- napolis.edu
St. Joseph Parish, 1875 S. 700 W., North Vernon. Four Corners Craft and Garden, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

May 6
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Evensong: Scripture/Taït’s Music and Silence and Interfaith Prayer Service,” 4:30 p.m. Information: 317-545-6347 or e-mail center@oldburgos.org
May 10-31
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, convent, Oldenburg. “Praying with Mary, Our Mother,” 1:15-2:30 p.m. Information: 317-932-6607 or e-mail center@oldburgos.org
May 11-12
May 12
Christ the King Parish, 1827 Kessler Blvd., E. Drive, Indianapolis. Adult confirmation retreat, “The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church,” 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m., $20 per person, registration deadline May 1 Information: 317-253-2190, ext. 4.
May 13
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5535 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Mother’s Day Mass and Brunch,” Mass, 10 a.m., brunch, $15 per person. Information: 317-545-7681 or www.archindy.org/fatima
May 17
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5535 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Mary in My Life,” Father Jonathan Meyer, presenter, 8:30- 2:30 p.m. $15 per person. Information: 317-545- 7681 or www.archindy.org/fatima
May 18-20
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5535 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Tribal Weekend,”

Four diocesan priests will celebrate the 50th anniversary of their priestly ordinations this year
Msgr. Bernard Schmitz and Fathers Joseph Kern, Donald Schmidlin and Joseph Sheets were ordained to the priesthood on May 3, 1957.

Father Joseph Kern, sacramental minister of St. Margaret Mary Parish in Terre Haute and dean of the Terre Haute Deanery, will celebrate his 50th jubilee with a Mass at 3:30 p.m. on June 24 at St. Margaret Mary Church, 2405 S. Seventh St., in Terre Haute.

Retired Father Donald Schmidlin will celebrate his ordination anniversary with a Mass at 11:30 a.m. on May 6 at St. Matthew Church, 4100 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis. A luncheon and reception will follow the Mass. Reservations are required for the luncheon by calling St. Matthew Parish at 317-257-4297.

VIPS
Eugene and Evelyn (Kruer) Lilly, members of Holy Family Parish in New Albany, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 21 during a Mass at their home parish and a dinner with their immediate family. The couple was married on April 27, 1957, at St. John the Baptist Church in Starlight. They have six children: Amy Franklin, Pam Kraft, Jeff, Mark and six grandchildren.

John R. and Dolores A. Williams, members of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 4. The couple was married on May 4, 1957, at St. Martin de Porres Church, 1709 E. Harrison St., in Martinsville.

Msgr. Bernard Schmitz, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Morris County, was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Borromeo Parish in Milan and St. Pius X Parish in Ripley County, will celebrate the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination with a Mass at 10:30 a.m. on May 20 at St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 4773 E. Morris St., in Morrisville.

Retired Father Joseph Sheets will have two celebrations of his 50th jubilee. He will be the celebrant for a 5 p.m. Mass on April 28 at St. Ambrose Church, 525 S. Chestnut St., in Seymour.

Father Sheets will also be the celebrant at a Mass in his honor at 10:30 a.m. on May 6 at St. Martin of Tours Church, 1709 E. Harrison St., in Martinsville.

Father Sheets has requested that no gifts be given to him for his jubilees. †
Sen. Patricia Miller, governor’s Healthier Indiana Plan, said that contains the primary components of the programs. Because bills including a tax increase must originate in the House rather than the Senate, Sen. Bill 503 was amended into House Bill 1678 and has entered conference committee negotiations. Rep. Charlie Brown (D-Gary), author of House Bill 1678, said, “We are very, very close to reaching a report all the conferees agree with and can sign. I’m very optimistic, overly optimistic. We all agree something needs to be done this year for the uninsured and for children in our state.” said Rep. Brown, who has become one of the lead negotiators of the Healthier Indiana Plan. “What we still need to decide on is the level and the kind of tax.” Rep. Brown said that lawmakers have narrowed the range of the debate on the cigarette tax from a 35-cent increase to a 44-cent increase. The increase would bring Indiana more in line with the $1 cigarette tax most other states across the country collect.

Another possible tax increase being considered is one that Rep. Brown said is “a relatively new tax called a bed tax for hospitals, which would raise millions of dollars.” Karla Steeger, executive director for Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation (ITPC), said almost all the major health organizations, including the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association, the Heart Association and ITPC, agree the cigarette tax should be raised by $1, not just raised to $1. The beauty of the governor’s four-point plan is that each component has a positive impact, Steeger said, “but by putting it all together, it has the opportunity to drastically impact and reduce tobacco use in Indiana as well as reduce other diseases across the board for Hoosiers.” Dan Gangler, co-convenor of the Hoosier Faith and Health Coalition, a group whose primary purpose is to help reduce tobacco use in Indiana, said his organization agrees with the major health organizations in raising the cigarette tax by $1 to bring Indiana’s total cigarette tax to more than $1.55 per pack.

Archdiocese Supports Priests Through Retirement

For many archdiocesan priests, retirement doesn’t necessarily mean the end of daily activity but rather a decrease in the regular workload. After retirement, priests can decide how active a life they want to lead and many opt to continue serving at the parish level in response to the shortage of priests. Whatever level of activity they choose, priests are assured of support from the archdiocese in their retirement, thanks to funding from the Legacy for Our Mission campaign.

One of those priests who remains active is Father Patrick Commons. He retired in 1993 after 42 years of service to the Church. For him, retirement meant trading the busy life of a pastor for assisting priests by presiding at Mass, administering the sacraments, anointing the housebound and performing other duties.

Today, at age 82, Father Commons remains active, continuing his ministry as a priest by offering daily Mass for the intentions sent him by the archdiocese. He stays in touch by driving to visit people and is now working to master the intricacies of his new laptop computer.

Father Commons is among 37 retired priests in the archdiocese. Several of them—including Father Commons—live at the St. Paul Hermitage in Beech Grove near the south side of Indianapolis, where residents can celebrate daily Mass and receive the sacraments. Since opening in 1960, St. Paul has provided care for approximately 1,000 religious people. It has always operated at full capacity and has a waiting list of three years. (One of its residents commented, “If heaven has a lobby, St. Paul Hermitage is it.”)

The decades leading up to Father Commons’ retirement were eventful ones indeed. For 14 years he was a missionary in India, where he was the only American among 29 priests from nine countries. Father Commons and his fellow clergy ministered to parishes ranging from 8,000 to 15,000 members. Twice a year, he would spend two months visiting villages to hear confession, preside at liturgies, meet with parish leaders and visit parishioners in their homes.

Father Commons was a member of the Society of the Divine Word until 1970, when he was incardinated into the archdiocese. He then served as pastor of more than a half-dozen parishes in southern Indiana.

How long does Father Commons plan to offer daily Mass? He will as long as he can, he said. “The priesthood is my life. Priests are married to the Church. The Church is my life.”

The archdiocese fulfills its ongoing commitment to its priests by providing them with financial and medical benefits, relieving them of worries about their later years. Thanks to funding assistance from the Legacy for Our Mission campaign, future priests can look forward to receiving assistance in their retirement. Father Commons is grateful to the ongoing support of the campaign in providing him assistance. “I’m getting more than enough support in my retirement. Certainly the archdiocese is taking good care of us.”

“T’m getting more than enough support in my retirement. Certainly the archdiocese is taking good care of us.”

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“We have found a marked decrease in
Archbishop: Catechists need strong faith, no fear proclaiming it

The award, presented by the catechetical directors, recognizes “outstanding national leadership in the field of catechesis ... [and] significant contributions to the mission of spreading the Gospel, including writing, publishing and teaching.”

Archbishop Wuerl was chairman of the editorial oversight board that developed the U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults. He is the author of many books, including The Catholic Way and The Gift of Faith, and was one of the authors of the best-selling The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults. He also writes a regular “Teaching of Christ” column for the Catholic Standard, Washington’s archdiocesan newspaper.

The archbishop also is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Catechesis and is chairman of the NCEA board of directors.

In his address to catechists, Archbishop Wuerl spoke in Baltimore to participants at the 104th annual NCEA convention held in conjunction with it. At the convention, he was awarded the 2007 Emmaus Award for Excellence in Catechesis.

“Catechists have a difficult job, he added, because they are teaching the faith in a culture that is “aggressively secular, to such an extent that the environment can be actually hostile to Christian faith.”

Archbishop Wuerl spoke in Baltimore to participants at the 104th annual NCEA convention and the 15th annual National Association of Parish Catechetical Directors convocation held in conjunction with it. At the convention, he was awarded the 2007 Emmaus Award for Excellence in Catechesis.

“A catechist is a good witness to the faith who not only teaches the faith, but is a living authentication of the faith. Our task is to bear witness to the person of Christ … to introduce someone to the faith.”

— Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl

Archbishop Wuerl said those who teach the Catholic faith must believe in the faith “because we know we are part of a continuity, part of a living reality, we can trace all the way back to Christ. We believe we belong to something that transcends time and space.

“We are witnesses to and we bring out the joy of personal authentication of the faith, but is a living spiritual—we find that among people today. “We must provide an invitation to those who are minimally connected to the Church,” Archbishop Wuerl said. “A sense that there is a hunger for God and a sense that there is a thirst for something spiritual—we find that among people today. The archbishop also urged catechists to involve all Catholics in their ministry. “The process of passing on the faith has to involve everyone in the parish, everyone in the [Catholic] community,” Archbishop Wuerl said. “Catechetical leaders have a very, very strong and privileged position in our evangelical efforts. You who are involved in the catechetical mission are engaged in something special.”
Kathy Mears gets excited just thinking about the archdiocese’s first-ever opportunity to showcase its education efforts and the city of Indianapolis to more than 10,000 people from across the country. That’s how many people are expected to arrive in Indianapolis when the archdiocese hosts the 2008 National Catholic Educational Association’s annual convention on March 25-28—an event that will include the involvement of Catholic school teachers and students from throughout central and southern Indiana.

To prepare for the event, a group of educators from the archdiocese recently attended this year’s convention in Baltimore—a group led by Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general of the archdiocese, and Annette “Mickey” Lentz, executive director for Catholic Education and Faith Formation. As an associate director of schools for the archdiocese, Mears will be among the leaders, under Lentz’s direction, who will plan the event at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. She recently answered questions regarding her thoughts and some of the archdiocese’s plans for the event. Here is an edited version of her responses.

How did Indianapolis earn the right to host next year’s convention?

Mears: “It has been a long process. Actually, we were scheduled to host in 2005, but when Indianapolis won the [right to host the] NCAA Women’s Final Four [in basketball], we gave it up to Philadelphia. At least 11 years ago, NCEA visited Indianapolis, after we offered to host and put forth a proposal. This is the first time that we are being given the opportunity.”

The archdiocese sent a contingent of people to this year’s convention in Baltimore. What did the group learn that will help you next year?

Mears: “We learned lots about organizing a convention, what perceptions folks have about Indianapolis—good and bad—and some things we would like to duplicate, things we would like to do differently and things we would not like to do at all. Many folks told us they had never been to Indianapolis and thought there would not be anything to do. They also thought it would be a blizzard.

“We had to emphasize we are totally connected from hotel to convention center, and that they did not have to go outside if they did not want [to]. We also stressed we have lots to do. We are hoping that the [Indiana] Pacers, White River Gardens, the Indianapolis Zoo, etc., will help us to make sure that we have great events at a very low or no cost to our delegates. We will also be looking at sponsors to help fund these events so the archdiocese does not incur costs.”

You’ve mentioned that the convention will allow the archdiocese to “showcase the great things that are happening in Catholic education in our own backyard.” What are some of the elements you hope to showcase?

Mears: “The results of Project EXCEED—our Teacher Advancement Program work, our work with the Hispanic population, our work with special-needs students, and our success in working with the Blue Ribbon Schools. We also have a new Urban School Consortium that is working to make sure that Catholic education has a place in our inner city. Our curriculum model is highly sought by others, and the work we are doing in this area will be shared.”

You also see the convention as a place to highlight success stories in Catholic education across the country. Share one or two success stories that stood out from the convention in Baltimore.

Mears: “Louisiana, specifically the Gulf Coast. Those schools are making a big difference and are growing stronger with the help of other Catholic schools from across the country. Priests, administrators and teachers from all over Louisiana thanked us—Indianapolis—for our help and talked of the difference that they are making because of our support.

More than 10,000 people are expected for the convention in Indianapolis. What are some of the plans for them while they are here?

Mears: “Baltimore had a sports theme, see CONVENTION, page 12...
Welcome new Catholics

W...e welcome the new Catholics who have become full participants in the Church since last Easter. Most of the people listed here received their initiation sacraments at the Easter Vigil in the Cathedral of Christ the King. The names listed were provided by religious education leaders in local parishes. The 460 new converts listed are people who have never been baptized and who within the past year—baptized, confirmed and received their first Eucharist. The 990 listed were baptized in other Christian traditions and were received into the full communion of the Catholic Church with a profession of faith. Most people are listed in the parishes where they received their religious formation and the sacraments of initiation.†

Batesville Deaconry
St. Mary's, the Immaculate Conception, Batesville, Our Lady of the Assumption, Batesville, Sacred Heart, Batesville, St. Gregory the Great, Batesville, St. John the Baptist, Batesville, St. Mary the Virgin, Batesville, St. Patrick, Batesville, St. Paul, Batesville, St. Paul the Apostle, Batesville, St. Stephen, Batesville, St. Teresa of the Andes, Batesville

St. Mary's, the Immaculate Conception, Father Larry Mooney, St. Mary's, the Immaculate Conception, Father John Schmitt, St. Mary's, the Immaculate Conception, Father Robert Schmitt, St. Mary's, the Immaculate Conception, Father Thomas Schmitt, St. Mary's, the Immaculate Conception, Father Thomas Schmitt

Bassett, Office of the Bishop, Father Daniel Biddle, Father Daniel Biddle

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CATHOLICS
continued from page 11

Seymour Deaney
St. Bartholomew, Columbus
James Atner, Michael Butler, Lonnie Fischer, Kathryn Glover, Matt Harden, Randy Hineltick, Kathryn Kime, Rebecca Kime, Christin Montgomery, Michael Ratcliff, James Ross, Amy Sackman, Leroy Stewart, Amandu Wheeler, Angela Wheeler, Kaylee Wheeler and Morgan Wheeler (catechumens); Todd Andersen, Rachel Hart, Matt Bush, Cristina Cardoso, Evan Dewar, Melissa Dewar, Dana Downey, Robert Gilliland, Betty Green, Tommy Green, Don Henderson, Angela Huebel, Linda Huff, Sanni Kugeleben, Amelia Manville, Michael Marciano, Michael Richardson, Matthew Sackman. Cynthia Schneider, Kimberly Tyler and Brenda Williams (candidates)
Holy Trinity, Indianapolis
Rikki Holmes and Jane Petro (candidates)
St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
Mandy Hurle and Max Moulton (catechumens)
Prince of Peace, Madison
Antonio George, Lily George, Mikayla George and Jim Sturgeon (candidates); Christina Abbott, Paul Barringer, Matt Bosma, Michael Caldwell, Tiffany Featherstone, Michael George, Ted Klopfenstein, Padgett Taylor, Julie Truax, Carl Woodfill and Jan Woodfill (candidates)

St. Mary, North Vernon
Nathan Jarrell (catechumen); Brian Belding, Mona Bowerly, Leslee Brown and Mike Hackett (candidates)
St. Joseph, Jennings County
Isaiah Hensley (catechumen); Gwendolyn Gregory (candidate)
American Martyrs, Scottsburg
Kara Carlton (catechumen)
St. Ambrose, Seymour
Giovanni Baron, Julio Domingues Monjaras, Ray de Miguel Peta and Vor Mota Salas (catechumens); Hector Astudillo, Andrew Couch, Mark Garrett, Kimberly Harper, Connie Hiatt, Stephen Hiatt, Rosalba Ortega, Kathleen Ross and Ignacio Vazquez (candidates)
Tell City Deaney
St. Paul, Tell City
Casey Evans, Amanda Howe and Jeremy Noble (catechumens); Julie Hedinger, Cynthia Malone, Matthew Ramsey, Forrest Sandage and Tommey Sue Russell (candidates)

Terre Haute Deaney
Annunciation, Brazil
Michael Buell (catechumen); James White (candidate)
Sacred Heart, Clinton
Jon Bonomo, Jessica Bush, Christina Chase, Mary Inman and Dannie Perry (catechumens); Gynnehd Lindsay (candidate)
St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle
Drew Hutcheson, Lisa Hutcheson and Don Pearson (catechumens); Cory Hutcheson (candidate)

Conrad Weidman, Mary Blane (catechumens); Cheyenne Brannon and Mandy Loftus (candidates)
Eccles, Donna Gamble and Charlie Roach (candidates); Alex Duncan, Ben Duncan, Polyanna Duncan, Isaac Eccles, Donna Gamble and Charlie Roach (candidates); Cheyenne Brannon and Mandy Loftus (candidates)

and although I would love it and it seems a natural for Indianapolis, we don’t want to repeat that. We are thinking of

where Challenge Meets Opportunity.’ We will utilize it to

thrive” where Challenge Meets Opportunity.” We will utilize it to

further develop the convention program and events.”

Challenges as opportunities. Our theme is ‘Crossroads:

Project EXCEED and our new

thereafter. We also want to show the country how we work effectively with the business community and develop partnerships with them, especially for Project EXCEED and our new

The Criterion, Friday, April 27, 2007

349 North Warman Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46222-4145 317-636-3739 • Grades PK-6th • May 20, 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.
Central Catholic School 1155 East Cameron St., Indianapolis, IN 46203-5216 317-783-7759 • Grades PK-8th • May 1, 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.; 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
Holy Angels Catholic School 2822 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St., Indianapolis, IN 46208-5098 317-926-5211 • Grades PK-6th • May 1, 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.; 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
Holy Cross Central School 125 North Oriental St. Indianapolis, IN 46202-3886 317-638-9068 • Grades PK-8th • May 1, 6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.
St. Andrew & St. Rita Catholic Academy 4050 East 38th St., Indianapolis, IN 46218-1444 317-494-6305 • Grades 9-8th • May 3, 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.; 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
St. Phillip Neri School 545 Eastern Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46201 317-636-0134 • Grades PK-8th • May 2, 6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Consortium Schools Information Days
Come visit the Archdiocese of Indianapolis downtown Catholic schools and learn more about the advantage of having your child receive an excellent faith-based education.

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Please call for a family tour if you are unable to attend scheduled days.
Faith Alive!

Justice is foundation for peaceful, prosperous society

By Fr. John W. Crossin, O.S.F.S.

The Church promotes social justice by living it.

Members of Annunciation Parish in Washington, D.C., where I celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays, have a deep sensitivity to social justice issues. In February, young adult parishioners sponsored a dinner at the parish hall. The beneficiary was the parish’s social concerns committee. This committee receives regular requests for help from local social service agencies.

The social concerns committee also sponsors a parish apartment. It provides transitional housing for people in need without embarrasing them.

Just before Lent this year, the parish initiated its participation in the Archbishop’s Appeal. Msgr. James Montgomery, former pastor of Annunciation Parish, helped start this archdiocesan appeal three decades ago.

The appeal, which is conducted in every parish, supports a host of justice concerns throughout the archdiocese. Typically, though the parish is small by suburban standards, the participation is twice the average rate.

Recently, I spoke to a group of candidates for baptism and confirmation. While discussing the Ten Commandments, I reminded the candidates and their sponsors in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adult program of our obligations toward social justice.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church’s discussion of the Seventh Commandment recalls many particulars of this teaching. But the discussion only scratches the surface of the last century of Catholic social teaching.

The local, national and international Church is committed to social justice.

Education for justice is one important thread in all Catholic educational efforts. Of course, the best teaching is by example.

When we teach formally, we can readily explain that Jesus had a special concern for those who were poor and in need. We can see his concern particularly in Luke’s Gospel.

A concern for justice and mercy is a constant in Christian history. Love for the poor must always be present.

Sometimes we differ over the best means for achieving this end.

Nonetheless, this commitment on the Church’s part extends from Paul’s collection for the Church in Jerusalem to the present moment.

If we are committed to work for justice, we are urged to build coalitions with fellow Christians. We can have more impact when we work together for the common good. There is, as the old saying goes, “strength in numbers.”

Working together, of course, involves building relationships. A priest friend recently sponsored a “no agenda dinner” for local Christian clergy from the Churches in his area. His purpose was to get to know his colleagues, and many Protestant ministers came to the dinner. From such friend to friend informal conversations, common work for justice can arise in a community.

Christian at the local level do a great deal of collaborative work. Food banks and shelters for the homeless are often the joint effort of local parishes and congregations.

When a community lives this social teaching, then it can speak credibly in local, state, national and international arenas.

Local social justice representatives from the Archdiocese of Washington’s 216 parishes speak to legislators, mayors and the governor regularly about their concerns for people in need of assistance. Immigrants, the poor, the unborn and others are the focus of these face-to-face social justice efforts.

On the national level, a new ecumenical group, Christian Churches Together, includes the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The 36 members of Christian Churches Together represent 100 million Christians.

A high priority for the group is concern for the poor—especially children. This group is committed strongly and publicly to promoting this very important aspect of social justice.

Internationally, the papal visits of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI have promoted justice and equity among groups and nations. Papal visits stress human rights and in particular freedom of religion. They point out that justice is the foundation for a peaceful, prosperous society.

Often, a key foundation for seeking justice is reconciliation among groups that harbor hostility for each other due to past wrongs. When a group acknowledges the truth about past events, it can move into a more just future. We see this in the efforts of the Truth Commission in South Africa.

However, acknowledging this truth can be difficult because it involves taking responsibility for wrongs done in the distant or recent past.

Whether personally or communally, it is easier for us to blame someone else or some other group for causing problems than to take responsibility for them ourselves.

In our pride, we think we cannot be mistaken or cannot do evil. This is the attitude of personal infallibility. “I” or “we” can never be wrong. This attitude encourages our victims to seek revenge.

Refusal to accept responsibility for past wrongs prolongs conflict. Acknowl- edging the truth of the past helps make a more just and peaceful future possible.

Our ability to acknowledge the truth and seek forgiveness can encourage others to forgive. This is true in personal, communal, international and religious affairs.

Truth is the foundation for justice.

Ultimately, we need humility to acknowledge the truth. We pray to Jesus for this virtue because he “humbled himself for our salvation” (Phil 2:8).

(Oblate Father John W. Crossin is executive director of the Washington Theological Consortium.)

Discussion Point

Church promotes social justice

This Week’s Question

Describe an activity by your diocese or a group of parishes that promotes Church teachings on social justice.

“We have dinner for the homeless in the area once a week. Also, our parish has started a shelf ministry for the sick and for invalids. We crochet or knit shawls and [pin on] a medal or a cross. ... The shawls are meant for people to wrap around themselves and feel that others are praying for them.” (Rosemary Silay, West View, Pa.)

“We visit the homebound and sick, [and] give spiritual support to those in hospital, to the bereaved and those in jail. We’re trying to develop the outreach to those in jail so that we’re not just supporting them spiritually while they’re there, but do follow-up after they are released. This may include food, clothes, housing and help finding a safe environment to help them form new relationships.” (Deacon Arnold Gustafson, Keene, N.H.)

“We’ve had two days centered on social justice for all the Catholic schoolteachers in the diocese. One [program] centered on the practical side of where to volunteer in the diocese and how to live out principles of social justice. The other ... was more spiritual. The priest explained that if we understand the Gospel and teachings of Jesus, we can better pass on that teaching.” (Barbara Raman, Worcester, Mass.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: What might a godparent do over time on behalf of a godchild’s life of faith?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to csgreen@catholicnews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100.
Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Pain, anguish lead to new life

I ordinarily shy away from broad generalizations regarding gender. Not all "men are Marsers," nor that "women are Jupiterians,"
but I do acknowledge that there are some behaviors that are more prominent in one gender than the other. One that I and other men have experienced is that when things are wrong, we try to make them right, whereas women seem to brood.

One interesting thing about this trait is that it's present even in men who, like my father, have a mechanical bone in their bodies.

I've been thinking about this tendency because in about a week, my wife, Cindy, will give birth to our third child. When she goes into labor, I will be by her side to give her emotional support, I will help her breath in rhythm. But I can do nothing to take away her pain.

The pain of childbirth is all in her for me, but much more so for Cindy, is that, God willing, the pain will bring about an unspeakable joy when our baby has been born.

In some mysterious way, God has allowed that the cure knowledge of childbirth comes about through the process itself.

But our first parents also played a part in bringing about this reality for we read in the Bible that the pain of giving birth is a result of original sin, the sinning of Adam and Eve, God said to Eve, "I will intensify the pangs of your childbearing, in pain shall you bring forth children" (Gen 3:16).

Yet this is thankfully not the end of the story. It's also the start of something good for us to recall Jesus' words to his disciples on the night before he died: "In my Father's house there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there now to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14)."

The introduction of pain into childbirth in the beginning was an effect of sin. But Jesus spoke of that same pain to point to our redemption.

But first our parents also played a part in bringing about this reality for we read in the Bible that the pain of giving birth is a result of original sin, the sinning of Adam and Eve, God said to Eve, "I will intensify the pangs of your childbearing, in pain shall you bring forth children" (Gen 3:16).

Yet this is thankfully not the end of the story. It's also the start of something good for us to recall Jesus' words to his disciples on the night before he died: "In my Father's house there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there now to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14)."

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The introduction of pain into childbirth in the beginning was an effect of sin. But Jesus spoke of that same pain to point to our redemption.
The Acts of the Apostles supplies the first reading for the fourth Sunday of Easter. This reading gives a glimpse into the "modus vivendi," or way of living, of St. Paul as he moved across Asia Minor in his proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus. Evidently, St. Paul was foremost concerned with the need for direction. His first. It is not surprising. After all, he was of Jewish descent and background, and he was well-educated in the Jewish culture and religion of the time.

Quite likely, he would have been more comfortable and also more likely to be heard in synagogues. It is also clear that he was not always met with universal acceptance, although it would not be accurate to say that he attracted no converts from among the Jews whom he met. He drew many Jews into the ranks of Christians. He also attracted Gentiles. However, these details are only secondary to the story. The point of this reading is that the word of God, pronounced by Jesus, continued to be spoken and received long after the Ascension.

Moreover, it was proclaimed by an Apostle and by Barnabas, a disciple of an Apostle. Salvation went on and goes on. Through the Apostles, Jesus still spoke. The Book of Revelation furnishes the next reading. It is very symbolic, but its meaning is clear. Among those saved by Jesus are people from every nation. Their number is by universal acceptance, although it would not be believed by the people. Salvation is evidence that Jesus is God, the Son of God, the eternal Father. The risen Jesus is totally unique among humans. As God, Jesus is the bearer of life, truth, peace and joy. There is no substitute for the word. The second point is that Jesus lives—literally—and that in the sublime act of Resurrection is evidence that Jesus is God, the Son of God, the eternal Father. The risen Jesus is totally unique among humans. As God, Jesus is the bearer of life, truth, peace and joy. There is no substitute for the word. The second point is that Jesus lives—literally—and that in the sublime act of Resurrection is evidence that Jesus is God, the Son of God, the eternal Father. The risen Jesus is totally unique among humans. As God, Jesus is the bearer of life, truth, peace and joy. There is no substitute for the word.

With the readings this weekend, and those of the preceding weeks of Easter, the Church essentially makes two points. The first point is that Jesus lives—literally—and that in the sublime act of Resurrection is evidence that Jesus is God, the Son of God, the eternal Father. The risen Jesus is totally unique among humans. As God, Jesus is the bearer of life, truth, peace and joy. There is no substitute for the word. The second point is that Jesus lives—literally—and that in the sublime act of Resurrection is evidence that Jesus is God, the Son of God, the eternal Father. The risen Jesus is totally unique among humans. As God, Jesus is the bearer of life, truth, peace and joy. There is no substitute for the word.

Reflection This weekend, the Church calls us to celebrate the Resurrection once again. It begins the fourth week of proclaiming the excited news that it first pronounced at Easter: Jesus lives! With the readings this weekend, and those of the preceding weeks of Easter, the Church essentially makes two points. The first point is that Jesus lives—literally—and that in the sublime act of Resurrection is evidence that Jesus is God, the Son of God, the eternal Father. The risen Jesus is totally unique among humans. As God, Jesus is the bearer of life, truth, peace and joy. There is no substitute for the word.

The Good Shepherd leads them. He rescues them from the heat of the day and the driedness of earthly life. St. John’s Gospel provides the last reading. This Gospel reading, which is read immediately after the passage from Acts, also presents Jesus as the Good Shepherd. For an audience overwhelmingly agrarian, as was the audience to which Jesus preached, imagery built on sheep herding and shepherds was very familiar and well-understood by the people. This reading states that the sheep know the shepherd. In turn, the shepherd knows them. It implies a relationship of closeness and trust. Moving beyond the symbolism, the readings say that this shepherd gives eternal life. Possessing this life, the sheep will never perish. Furthermore, no one can snatch them away from the shepherd. The reason is that they belong to the shepherd because of the will of the Father. In a very different sense, the smithy of purgation, of cleansing, has been prepared to make the sheep pure. It is also clear that he was not always met with universal acceptance, although it would not be believed by the people. Salvation is evidence that Jesus is God, the Son of God, the eternal Father. The risen Jesus is totally unique among humans. As God, Jesus is the bearer of life, truth, peace and joy. There is no substitute for the word. The second point is that Jesus lives—literally—and that in the sublime act of Resurrection is evidence that Jesus is God, the Son of God, the eternal Father. The risen Jesus is totally unique among humans. As God, Jesus is the bearer of life, truth, peace and joy. There is no substitute for the word.

My Journey to God

Virginia Tech Tragedy

What is this? That enter's us
Where youthful hopes and dreams
Begin? The anguished wails
To heaven raise
As Rachel for her children
Cries.

No easy words.
No black, no white.
The answer's hid
In Thy sight.

Love's lack begets
Atrocity.

By Linda Abner

Catechism describes purgatory as process of spiritual cleansing

I was brought up Catholic and was taught that purgatory is a fearful place, accepting some great sins.

Now I read books that “reveal” purgatory as a beautiful place.

Who do we believe—the saints’ version of “fire and gnashing of teeth” or the messages some have from Jesus in our time? (Illinois)

Any who tries to digest all the private apparitions and revelations that Catholic visionaries have received about purgatory over the centuries is bound to be confused. If they hope one’s spiritual life, fine. But the visions should never be mistaken for official Church teachings. For example, the hoary pictures some have painted of torture, pain and scourging God, which made purgatory kind of a mini-hell, may literally scare the devil out of someone, but reveals nothing irreverent to the doctrine of purgatory.

At least two things are clear in Catholic tradition about purgatory. First, there is some condition or circumstance at the time of death by which temporal punishment remaining for sins committed during life is satisfied. By our prayers and good works on earth, we can assist those who are in “purgatory.” This is simply an application of our belief in the communion of saints, which unites all who are joined in Christ, whether on earth or in eternity. Second, it is equally clear that Church councils, the magistrature and other sources of Catholic belief have no intention to answer details about purgatory—whether it is a state or condition on earth or in a “place” or whether “time” is involved or not.

Since the world after death would not seem to have hours or days or locations in our sense of those words, it seems unlikely that purgatory involves time or place as we usually think of them. Keeping one of his addresses on life after death during the summer of 1999, Pope John Paul II explained that purgatory is not a “place” but a “condition” of purification for the saved whereby God “frees them from their imperfections.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks cautiously on the subject, calling purgatory not a location but a process of purification, of cleansing.

That pretty much summarizes what is authentic Catholic doctrine about purgatory. As I said, private revelations may be spiritually helpful for some people. But even the most well-known seers, Father Groeschel wrote, to whom some persons give almost reverence, are cautious and not allow oneself to panic over their visions. As I said, private revelations may be spiritually helpful for some people. But even the most well-known seers, Father Groeschel wrote, to whom some persons give almost reverence, are cautious and not allow oneself to panic over their visions.

Reports based on their visions regarding the time of the death of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for example, vary from 21 years after the death of Christ (Mother Mary of Agreda) to a year and a half (St. Elizabeth of Schoenau) and elsewhere in between.

St. Catherine Labouré, who originated the Miraculous Medal, when confronted with the error of some of her visions, admitted she just got some of the facts of the revelation wrong.

“This admission of simply getting it wrong on the part of this simple visionary is something that we should never forget,” Father Groeschel explained in his book. When confronted with the error of some of her visions, admitted she just got some of the facts of the revelation wrong.

Thus, when it comes to any private visions or heavenly messages, it’s wise to be cautious and not allow oneself to panic about these revelations.

(A free brochure answering questions that Catholics ask about Mary, the mother of Jesus, is available by sending a stamped, 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 jjdietz@ilstu.edu)
The Criterion  Friday, April 27, 2007

Ministry programs support separated and divorced Catholics

By Mary Ann Wyand

Like spring, life after divorce is a process of renewal and rebirth, Marilyn Hess explained, and the Church is offering several opportunities for separated and divorced Catholics to work through their grief and grow in faith during May, June and July.

“They were going through divorce are grieving but may not realize it,” said Hess, who is associate director of the archdiocesan Office of Family Ministries. “The loss of a spouse, whether through death or divorce, requires time to grieve, she said, as well as help finding ways to sort through hurt feelings and shattered dreams.

“The process of divorce is traumatic for families,” Hess said. “There are feelings of loss on a lot of different levels. There are also grief issues around spirituality and how one belongs to the Church as a divorced Catholic. It’s not a sin to be divorced. It is a time when people have questions about their faith and need safe places to be able to ask them and to explore their feelings.”

She said divorce ministry programs presented by dioceses, parishes and Catholic organizations offer new beginnings for people whose lives have drastically changed. Catholic organizations offer new programs for men and women sponsored by the St. Bartholomew Parish Nurse Program, as well as the Terre Haute Deaconry Pastoral Center in Terre Haute.

She said two divorce ministry programs begin in May at St. Bartholomew Parish, 1306 27th St., in Columbus and St. Barnabas Parish, 8300 Ralha Road, in Indianapolis.

“Divorce Care,” an eight-week program for men and women sponsored by the St. Bartholomew Parish Nurse Program, is scheduled from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. on Mondays from May 7 through July 2 in Classroom 3 on the lower level of the church. For more information, call Rebecca Sullivan, parish nurse coordinator, at 812-379-9353, ext. 333.

“Divorce and Beyond,” a six-week program for men and women in the mourning stage of divorce, will be offered by the Office of Family Ministries at St. Barnabas Parish from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. on Thursdays from May 24 through July 5. For more information, call 317-236-1556 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1586.

“Water in the Desert,” a three-day international conference sponsored by the North American Conference of Separated and Divorced Catholics, is scheduled from July 5 through July 7 at the University of Notre Dame in northern Indiana.

Conference workshops include “Hope and Healing,” “Spiritual Development,” “Forgiveness,” “Helping Children Cope with Divorce,” “Living Joyfully,” “How to Choose Healthy Relationship Partners,” “The Annulment Process” and “Remarriage.” For registration information, call the University of Notre Dame’s Center for Continuing Education at 574-631-6691 or e-mail ccce@nd.edu.

“It’s important for people who are going through divorce to know where they can get help,” Hess said.

“The divorce affects family—gives them hope.”

None of us is an island,” she said, “and we can’t pretend to go through life by ourselves. Sometimes it takes the hard things to make us realize that we need other people. It’s OK to be in pain, . . . and it’s good for us to be here to feel the support and the love of each other.”

To begin healing, she said, “the first thing you have to do is own your feelings.”

“Going through divorce, and listening to their experiences and how they have moved forward—gives them hope.”

Hess said divorce ministry programs were held at the Oldenburg Franciscan Center in Oldenburg, St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis and St. Malachi Parish in Brownsburg earlier this year.

An eight-week “Divorce and Beyond” program started in July at the Terre Haute Deaconry Pastoral Center in Terre Haute.


“People probably are the most compassionate people around,” Sister Mildred said, because of pain experienced by separation and divorce.

“None of us is an island,” she said, “and we can’t pretend to go through life by ourselves. Sometimes it takes the hard things to make us realize that we need other people. It’s OK to be in pain, . . . and it’s good for us to be here to feel the support and the love of each other.”

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We can because we are a 100% volunteer organization.
Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; see the save-to-date list at the end of "The Criterion." Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.


SOMES, Charles J., 60, St. Pau X, Indianapolis, April 15. Husband of Louise Somes. Father of Elizabeth and Dean Somes. Son of Marian Somes.

SPURLOCK, Osmo D., 89, St. Thomas Aquinas, Indianapolis, April 15. Husband of Louise Somes. Father of Elizabeth and Dean Somes. Son of Marian Somes.


Providence Sister Dorothy Karier was a teacher and principal

Providence Sister Dorothy Karier, also known as Sister Mary Evelyn, died on April 13 at Mother Theodore Hall at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 85. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on April 17 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse. Burial followed at the sisters’ cemetery.

The former Dorothy Mary Karier was born on May 27, 1921, in Chicago. She entered the congregation of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods on Jan. 5, 1939, professed first vows on Aug. 15, 1941, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1947.

Sister Dorothy ministered at Catholic schools and parishes staffed by the Sisters of Providence in Indiana, Illinois, Massachusetts, Texas, Iowa and California.

During her 68 years as a Sister of Providence, she served as a teacher and principal for 39 years. From 1983-96, she worked in parish ministry. In the archdiocese, Sister Dorothy taught at the former St. Catherine School in Indianapolis from 1945-47. Sister Dorothy returned to the motherhouse in 1996 and served as a member of the residential services staff. In 2001, she began her prayer ministry there.

Surviving are two sisters, Providence Sister Joan Karier of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and Rosemary Hyland of Westchester, Ill., as well as several nieces and nephews.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876.

Holy Cross Brother Nivard Meichtry taught at Cathedral High School

Holy Cross Brother Nivard Meichtry died on March 9 at Dujarie House in Notre Dame, Ind. He was 92 and was the second-ranking member of the Brothers of Holy Cross South-West Province.

A memorial service was celebrated on March 12 at the chapel at Holy Cross Village at the University of Notre Dame.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on March 15 at the congregation’s Vincent Peau Residence in Austin, Texas. Burial followed at Assumption Cemetery in Austin.

The former Rudolph Meichtry was born on Nov. 27, 1914, in Winslow, Ill. He entered the novitiate of the Congregation of the Brothers of Holy Cross on Aug. 15, 1934, made his first profession of vows on Aug. 16, 1935, and made his final profession of vows on Aug. 16, 1938.

Brother Meichtry taught mathematics and science classes and also served as athletic director at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis from 1945-51. He ministered at Notre Dame High School in Shereman Oaks, Calif., for 49 years as principal, athletic director, physics teacher, alumni and development director, and plant manager.

Brother Nivard loved sports so much that he would climb light poles along the gridiron sidelines to photograph high school football games. In 2005, Brother Nivard retired and moved to Holy Cross House at Notre Dame, where he enjoyed watching Fighting Irish football and basketball games.

His sense of humor was well-known. After deciding to leave a boring presentation, Brother Nivard prayed aloud, “Our Lord, I am not worthy to listen to this talk.”

Father Nivard also was proud of his Swiss ancestry. He is survived by 34 mem-
bers of the Meichtry family.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Brothers of Holy Cross, Holy Cross House, P.O. Box 1044, Notre Dame, Ind. 46556.
For information about rates for classified advertising, call (317) 256-1572.

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Executive Director

St. Vincent De Paul Society of St. Joseph County, IN: 100 S. Main St., South Bend, IN

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St. Vincent de Paul Society
Attn: Executive Committee
408 Armorel Trail
South Bend, IN 46628-1302
or StVincent@kconvine.com

Music Director

Vibrant, growing parish community on northeast side of Indianapolis with over 1000 families is looking for a Music Director on either a part time or full time basis. Candidate will possess faith-filled energy and a comprehensive working knowledge of Roman Catholic Liturgy. Responsibilities include: plan music for Sunday liturgies, plus holy days and other special services; direct weekly adult choir rehearsal; train volunteer cantors; recruit and retain existing volunteer members; attend liturgy and staff meetings. Church uses Glory and Praise hymnal, 2nd edition, but welcomes creativity within Catholic liturgical guidelines. Strong keyboard skills with vocal ability required, degree in music and experience preferred, but not essential. Please send resume to:

St. Simon the Apostle
Attn: Liturgy Committee
55 Oaklandon Road
Indianapolis, IN 46256

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The person in this position performs and coordina...
Susie Percell

Although not a blood relation, Susie had known La Barbara, a lifelong Catholic, all her life.

“She was family,” Susie said.

When her family went to the funeral at St. Joseph Church in Shelbyville, Susie was struck by the rituals that honored La Barbara’s life and death.

“I don’t know exactly what happened,” Susie said, “but I can’t even explain what happened. I just had a feeling come all over me, and I was crying so hard.”

After that, she began learning about the Catholic faith by reading material on the Internet and watching the Eternal Word Television Network.

Susie and Brian eventually started going to Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Church. And going to church has always been close. The spiritual journey they took together only made that bond stronger.

“It’s just brought us closer,” Katie said. “I feel like she could be my real mom.”

Sue especially appreciates the special role her grandson played in bringing her and her daughter-in-law to church.

“I think that’s a special thing because through him we were able to grow,” she said. “He’d come home and tell us what he learned, and what he did in church. It just made us want to go with him.”

Eric is expected to be baptized when he is in the first grade.

Sharing in Christ’s suffering

On July 20, 2005, mother and daughter Debbie and Michelle Williams of New Albany entered into a trial that brought them to their knees.

On that day, Debbie’s husband, William, fell in a work-related accident into a vat of oil that was heated to 180 degrees. After spending 10 to 12 minutes in the vat and finally being rescued, he had severe burns over more than 90 percent of his body.

Debbie and Michelle were told by doctors at the University of Louisville Hospital that their husband and father would probably not survive.

But survive he did. He was discharged two days before Christmas.

During this long ordeal, a priest chaplain at the hospital provided spiritual support to Debbie and Michelle, who were not active in any faith tradition at the time.

“(He) prayed with us and helped us through that spell, and just let us know that we had a miracle,” Debbie said.

The trial of William’s accident and long recovery planted a desire in Debbie and Michelle to draw closer to God.

They eventually came to Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany and participated in its RCIA program that began last fall.

“We felt really welcomed,” Michelle said, “and everything that we learned was so interesting, and every day you learned something new.”

Learning more about the Catholic faith together strengthened the bond between the mother and daughter.

“It has brought us a lot closer together,” Michelle said. “We kind of became best friends [through this].”

Debbie was especially drawn to the presence of Christ in the Eucharist and its connection to his suffering and death.

“He is uniting with you,” Debbie said.

“‘We know what he suffered because we suffered also.’”

By Mary Ann Wyand

On May 1, the feast of St. Joseph the Worker and also Labor Day in many countries, Hispanics and representatives of Catholic and Protestant Churches will peacefully march in downtown Indianapolis.

The rally is intended to inform people about justice issues.

“Justice for Immigrants: A Journey of Hope” national conviction on April 17-19 in Washington, D.C., which was organized to offer hope and promote justice issues.

“Undocumented immigrants are not seen as immigrants.

The march begins at 6 p.m. at St. Mary Church, 317 N. New Jersey St., then proceeds west on Vermont Street to Alabama Street, south to Ohio Street, west to Capitol Avenue, south to Market Street and east to Monument Circle.

Five speakers will discuss immigration rights and abuses experienced by undocumented immigrants during a short bilingual rally at Monument Circle, which begins about 7:15 p.m.

According to government estimates, about 12 million undocumented immigrants live and work in the U.S. and 3 million more are temporary workers. The rally is intended to inform people about human rights, justice issues and legislative concerns related to immigration laws.

Father Tom represented the Archdiocese of Indianapolis at the national convocation on April 17-19 in Washington, D.C., where he offered hope and promote justice issues.

“Undocumented immigrants are not seen as immigrants.”

May 1 march seeks to educate about justice for immigrants

Pastoral Associate

Seeking an experienced professional prepared to take on increasing responsibility for administration and pastoral care of a small, urban, multicultural parish with a resident priest: administration and supervision; coordinate volunteers for ministries and fund raisers, liturgy planning and preaching; evangelization; total parish catechesis for children and adults; bi-lingual with experience in Hispanic ministry a plus; MS in related field or comparable experience. Salary and benefits package designed for a professional.

Send resume to:

Nativity Catholic Church
3635 Pollack Ave.
Evansville, IN 47714
www.nativitycatholicchurch.com
hhuykendall@evansville-diocese.org

Custodial Staff

St. Francis and Clare Church in Greenwood, IN is seeking a full-time Custodian to begin immediately. Duties include ongoing cleaning of Parish Center and Assisi Center, some facility setup, hauling and moving of equipment.

Requirements include a high school diploma (or its equivalent) and at least one year of custodial experience. Applicants should be self-starters and be able to work well with others.

Applicants should be able to lift, carry and push at least 75 lbs.

Please send resume to the address below or call for an applicant form.

Jackie Buchanan
St. Francis and Clare Church
5901 Olive Branch Road
Greenwood, IN 46143
Phone: (317) 850-4673
Equal Opportunity Employer

Youth Minister

St. Gertrude’s Church, a suburban Cincinnati parish of 2000 families staffed by the Dominican Friars, is seeking a full time youth minister to further the development of a dynamic, comprehensive youth ministry. Applicant must be a practicing Catholic with a strong grounding in the Catholic faith and good communication, leadership and organizational skills. Applicants are required to have a BA in Theology/Religious Studies or a related field and at least three years of pastoral experience. Competitive salary commensurate with education and experience.

Send resume with references to:

Search Committee
St. Gertrude Catholic Parish
7630 Shawnee Run Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45243-3009
Fax: (513) 527-3971
Parish website: www.stgertrude.org

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sins, from eternal happiness,” the new document said. Parents in particular can experience grief and feelings of guilt when they doubt their unburied children are with God, it said. The Church’s hope for these infants’ salvation reflects a growing awareness of God’s mercy, the commission said. But the issue is not simple because appreciation for divine mercy must be reconciled with fundamental Church teachings about original sin and about the necessity of baptism for salvation, it said.

The document traced the development of Church thinking about the fate of unbaptized children, noting that there is “no explicit answer” from Scripture or tradition.

In the fifth century, St. Augustine concluded that infants who die without baptism were consigned to hell. By the 13th century, theologians referred to the “limbo of infants” as a place where unbaptized babies were deprived of the vision of God, but did not suffer because they did not know what they were deprived of.

Through the centuries, popes and Church councils were careful not to define limbo as a doctrine of the faith and to leave the question open. That was important in allowing development of the teaching, the theological commission said.

A key question taken up by the document was the Church’s teaching that baptism is necessary for salvation. That teaching needs interpretation in view of the fact that “infants... do not place any personal obstacle in the way of redemptive grace,” it said.

In this and other situations, the need for the sacrament of baptism is not absolute and is secondary to God’s desire for the salvation of every person, it said.

“God can therefore give the grace of baptism without the sacrament being conferred, and this fact should particularly be recalled when the conferring of baptism would be impossible,” it said.

“This does not deny that all salvation comes through Christ and in some way through the Church, it said, but it requires a more careful understanding of how this may work.

The document outlined several ways by which unbaptized babies might be united to Christ:

• A “saving conformity to Christ in his own death” by infants who themselves suffer and die.

• A solidarity with Christ among infant victims of violence, born and unborn, who—like the holy innocents killed by King Herod—are endangered by the “fear or selfishness of others.”

• God may simply give the gift of salvation to unbaptized infants, corresponding to his sacramental gift of salvation to the baptized.

IMMIGRANTS

In their statement, Indiana’s bishops explained by the introduction in 1970 of a funeral rite for unbaptized infants whose parents intended to present them for baptism, it said.

The commission said the new theological approach to the question of unbaptized babies should not be used to “negate the necessity of baptism, nor to delay the conferral of the sacrament.”