The power of a vision

Art with a Heart touches the lives of students, volunteers

By Sean Gallagher

A beautiful work of art is often born of the vision of a solitary artist. But once it is completed, the power of a masterpiece can grow as people behold it and are drawn into its beauty.

This is what has happened over the past five years with Art with a Heart, a visual arts education program created by Carol Conrad, a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. From 1995-2002, Conrad had given private art lessons through her Kaleidoscope of Art studio. But after experiencing success through nearly three decades of teaching, Conrad felt the need to show her gratitude.

“We just wanted to say, ‘Thank you, God. You’ve blessed us beyond our wildest imagination,’” she said. “We wanted to make sure to give back the gift that [God] gave us.”

And so Conrad, her daughter, Kellie, (at the time a middle school student) and a handful of volunteers put on a week-long camp in the summer of 2002 at St. Philip Neri School in Indianapolis that helped the students learn art skills and integrate them with a handful of volunteers put on a week-long camp in the summer of 2002 at St. Philip Neri School in Indianapolis that helped the students learn art skills and integrate them with a visual arts education program.

Witnesses testify about persecution of Iraqi Christians

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Members of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom heard testimony on July 25 from witnesses regarding the persecution of the ancient, non-Muslim minority religions in Iraq.

The witnesses mentioned their personal experiences as religious minorities as well as their professional experience working in Iraq.

Commission chair Michael Cromattie said in his opening statement that Iraq was added to the commission’s watch list this year for continued violations of religious freedom. He said the plight of Christian minorities in Iraq includes “the assassination of Christian religious leaders, the bombing and destruction of churches and violent threats intended to force Christians from their homes.”

More than 1.5 million refugees have fled religious persecution in Iraq since 2003, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Although Christians account for only 3 percent of the total Iraqi population, they make up 40 percent of the refugees now living in nearby countries, including Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Iran. Another 2 million people, many living in the northern Nineveh plain, are internally displaced.

U.S. Rep. Anna G. Eshoo, D-Calif., the only Assyrian-American serving in Congress, testified briefly before the commission that her grandparents had left what was then the Ottoman Empire in the early part of the 20th century to escape persecution.

She said she and 73 other members of the House of Representatives wrote to President George W. Bush in June to urge him to take seriously the message of Pope Benedict XVI regarding the Christian population in Iraq.

“As the pope laid out to the president in clear and unequivocal terms, we are witnessing the emergence of an Iraq that simply does not tolerate Christians and other religious minorities,” she said in her statement.

Commission members asked the witnesses about the cause of religious
this message to the youths: 
"If you look at the effort that God has put into this physical beauty, how much more beautiful is his intention for your people?" Hollowell says. "My goal is for the students to come back with a sense of their own wonderful gifts and the gifts all people have. Ultimately, we're trying to get them to realize they're an even more important part of God's creation."

Finding strength in weakness

The 24-hour, 1,100-mile trip from Indiana to Colorado had ended. The campsite had been set up in Rocky Mountain National Park. Liz Goad now had time to think about the first climb her group would be making the next morning: a climb to the top of Flattop Mountain, 12,500 feet high.

"It was gorgeous at the top," she says. "This was a big boost for me. You get more confidence in your abilities." The climb was still etched in her mind a few days later when an adult speaker at one of the campfire "reflection" sessions, talking about the theme, "When you're weak, you're strong." "I had a false sense of what being strong was," Liz says. "In the midst of your weaknesses, the strength you find to pull through is where your difference. I really had a big impact on me. It gives you a new outlook on life. When you understand your life a little more, you understand God. At least that's the way it works for me."

"Natural soul-searchers"

Nearly 2,000 youths have experienced the Summer Field Study program since Hollowell started it as a young science teacher at Roncalli. He has developed the trip for juniors and seniors in high school.

"They're natural soul-searchers at that age," says Hollowell, a father of 11. "They're poised to reflect on what the next part of their lives will be like." Hollowell, a graduate of Roncalli's Class of 2007, "I used to have a very serious fear of heights. It's a very serious hike!"

Luke Allard

As one of the young people who were making the journey to Colorado for a second year, Luke was among a group who was allowed to take an alternate side trip to Utah with adult leaders for a few days. Angel's Landing became their goal.

"At the very beginning of the hike, it says if you have a fear of heights, you shouldn't be doing this," says Luke, 18, a senior-to-be at Bishop Chatard High School. "I chose to go."

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"A view from God's altar"

But this wasn't all. The group was asked to share a moment from the trip when they were thankful for something that happened or sorry for something they wished they hadn't done. "I stood up and said 'I'm thankful people gave me a chance to be open,'" Liz Goad says. "It helped me strengthen bonds with friends I've lost. It really made me close myself, with God and the friends who were there."

"You're trying to get them to realize they're an even more important part of God's creation."
other academic disciplines. Now, five years later, the masterpiece of gratitude that sprang from the vision of one faith-filled woman has touched the lives of thousands of students and volunteers through six weeks of summer camps held at several schools (many of them Catholic) in Indianapolis as well as after-school programs that run during the academic year. Ciera Harris, who will be a seventh-grader at St. Lawrence School in Indianapolis, participated in an Art with a Heart camp at St. Philip Neri School in July. After reading a youth fiction book, she had to create a puppet that depicted one of the story’s characters. “It’s better than any other sit-down [activity],” Ciera said. “It makes you understand [the story] more, and you get to stretch out and know more about it by doing different crafts.”

A family affair expands Great artists often have apprentices at their side. One that has helped Conrad mix the pigments of prayer and a passion for art has been Kellie, a 2006 graduate of Cathedral High School who will be a sophomore at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind. “My mom has definitely been an outstanding role model for me. I look up to her probably more than anybody else,” Kellie said. “Pretty much everything she does is for other people.”

But from the start of Art with a Heart, Kellie has known that it takes a lot more than a love for art to make the program work. It also requires a lot of the gritty work of recruiting volunteers and seeking funding through grants. So, with the suggestion of her mother, Kellie helped establish Art with a Heart’s junior board.

This team of teenagers in turn inspired many more to volunteer in the program and so helped scores of at-risk grade school students learn many important life skills. Now that Kellie is in college, other young people are stepping up to help expand the impact of Art with a Heart. One of them is St. Lawrence parishioner Sarah Siette of Indianapolis. Although she’ll only be a sophomore at Bishop Chatard High School in the Indianapolis North Deanery, Sarah has already learned how to write convincing grant proposals.

Sarah has been taking art lessons from Conrad since she was in the fourth grade. But she has come to see that there is real creativity involved in doing the footwork of keeping a program like Art with a Heart going. “You have to figure out what you’re going to do in the project and what’s going to go into the project,” Sarah said. “And then you have to figure out how to say it so you’re explaining it [convincingly].”

She must have learned the art of securing grants well because, through her work, Art with a Heart received nearly $6,000 from the United Way to purchase books and art supplies for the young students who participate in their nearly $6,000 from the United Way to purchase books and art supplies for the young students who participate in their program work. It also requires a lot of the nitty gritty work of recruiting volunteers and seeking funding through grants.

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Letters to the Editor

Priest, youths embrace their faith through Homeland Mission effort

I am edited and blessed by the example of Father Jonathan Meyer, director of youth ministry in the archdiocese and Homeland Mission leader team, and the teens who gave a week of their summer vacation to serve the Indianapolis area’s poor and needy.

Our daughters have been fortunate to go the last three years to Homeland Mission, and they love it.

They have found joy with their leaders and peers assisting others in great need. What a positive way to channel the energies of a teenager!

In this environment, one can see that teens really can have a heart as big as Texas if challenged to move out of their comfort zone.

Father Meyer is a great leader for our youth. He has a wonderful ability to help our youths love God, the Church and sacraments, and embrace chastity as a way of life.

We’re all able to do all these things, he knows how to play, encourage healthy interaction and enjoy good, old-fashioned, clean fun.

Thank you, Father Meyer, Homeland Mission leaders, and youths.

May God bless all of you!

Pamela Proctor
Greenwood

Can a person be considered both Catholic and pro-choice?

I am writing in regard to the editorial titled “Abortion and Communion,” which appeared in the July 13 issue of TheCriterion.

Editor emeritus Jack Fink tells us that “the Church is the one founded by Christ, but that there are also elements of goodness and truth elsewhere, they decided to use that word "subsists" rather than "is." Catholics believe the fullness of the means of salvation is found only in the Catholic Church, but that sanctifying elements also exist in other faith communities, deriving their value, in some mysterious way, from the "fullness of grace and truth which has been entrusted to the Catholic Church," as the Second Vatican Council’s “Decree on Ecumenism” said.

Catholics do not believe that one ecclesial community is as good as another.

We think it is regrettable that the document had to get into the technical discussion of what a “Church” is. It declared that ecclesial communities are not real Churches in the sense that the Catholic Church uses the term. It said that a Church must preserve apostolic succession, the ordained priesthood and the Eucharist. It said that Orthodox Churches do have those elements but lack something because they are not in union with the pope.

That’s not the way most people usually think of a Church. We tend to define it as a body or organization of religious believers. We frequently are told that we are the Church, Vatican II liked to call the Church "the people of God."

Apparently, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith thought it necessary to define “Church” in this way, but it seems confusing to the average person and an unintentional insult to other faith communities that do not define the word the same way.

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Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be informed, relevant, well-expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous and respectful.

The editors reserve the right to select and edit the letters based on space limitations, personal sensitivities and content.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” TheCriterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717.

Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
The Eucharist transforms us into Christ (Twelfth in a series)

Pope Benedict XVI’s apostolic exhortation on the Eucharist is divided into three parts: “Eucaristía, un misterio que se ha de creer,” “Eucaristía, misterio que se ha de celebrar,” and “Eucaristía, misterio que se ha de vivir.”

For the last several weeks, I have considered the first two parts. This week, we begin Part III. We find that Sunday Mass is not just a parenthesis in life.

In this section, the Holy Father reminds us that when we receive the Eucharist, something radically important happens to us. Our reception of Communion is not to be taken casually. We may not be conscious of it, but we are transformed when we receive Christ in the Eucharist. We are transformed into Christ. How does this happen and what does it mean?

Pope Benedict writes: “The Lord, Jesus, who became for us the food of truth and love, speaks of the gift of his life and assures us ‘if anyone eats of this bread he will live forever’ (Jn 6:51). This ‘eternal life’ begins in us even now, thanks to the transformation effected in the gift of the Eucharist. ‘He who eats me will live because of me’ (Jn 6:57). These words of Jesus make us realize how the mystery ‘believed’ and ‘celebrated’ contains an innate power making it the principle of new life within us and the form of our Christian existence. ... It is not the eucharistic food that is changed into us, but, rather, we are mysteriously transformed by it. Christ nourishes us by uniting us to himself; ‘he draws us into himself’ (n. 70).

Because human existence is supernatural, the meaning of the transformation of us into Christ in the Eucharist is not easily understood in a world that believes only what it can see. Yet, this is the newness which Christ established in the Eucharist: “all that happens in the celebration and reception of the Eucharist is real; the unseen dynamic is supernaturally and profoundly real. Coming down to us through the ages, this is the newness of life that Christ gave us in his sacrificial death on the cross and resurrection.”

The Holy Father writes: “The Eucharist, since it embraces the concrete, everyday existence of the believer, makes possible day by day, the progressive transfiguration of all those called by grace to reflect the image of the Son of God (cf. Rom 8:29). There is nothing authentically human—our thoughts and affections, our words and deeds—that does not claim Christ’s mark. In the Eucharist the form it needs to be lived to the full. Here we can see the full human impact of the radical newness brought by Christ in the Eucharist: the worship of God in our lives cannot be relegated to something private and secondary. It tends by its nature to permeate every aspect of our existence. Worship pleasing to God thus becomes a new way of living our whole life, each particular moment of which is lifted up, since it is lived as part of a relationship with Christ and as an offering to God” (n. 71).

The pope teaches: “From the beginning, Christians were clearly conscious of this radical newness which the Eucharist brings to human life. The faithful immediately perceived the profound influence of the eucharistic celebration on their manner of life. St. Ignatius of Antioch expressed this truth when he called Christians ‘those who have attained new hope,’ and described them as ‘those living in accordance with the Lord’s day’ (This phrase of the great Antiochen martyr highlights the connection between the reality of the Eucharist and everyday Christian life)” (n. 72).

Recently, an informed Catholic layman told me that he wishes our homilists at Mass would dwell more often on the fact that what a Catholic does on Sunday has a connection with what happens during the rest of the week. He would like to be encouraged to see his work as part of his Christian stewardship.

Do you have an intention for a Pope Benedict’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

La Eucaristía nos transforma en Cristo

La eucaristía es un misterio que se ha de creer, que se ha de celebrar y que se ha de vivir. Para el Papa Benedicto XVI, el sábado es un día que debería ser de consagración personal para todos los fieles. El día es un momento para reflejarse en el misterio eucarístico y en la realidad eucarística y la vida cristiana en su cotidianidad.

El Papa Benedicto XVI nos enseña: “Esta novedad radical que la Eucaristía nos alinea unidos a él; ‘nos atrae hacia sí’” (n. 71).

Debido a que es algo sobrenatural, el significado de esta transformación de nosotros en Cristo durante la Eucaristía no es algo fácilmente comprensible en un mundo que cree únicamente en lo que puede ver. Sin embargo, es la novedad que Cristo establece en la Eucaristía: todo lo que sucede en la celebración y la recepción de la Eucaristía es real; la dinámica invisible es sobrenatural y profundamente real. Esto es la novedad de la vida que Cristo nos otorgó en su muerte inmolatoria en la cruz y en su resurrección, a la cual llega nuestra existencia desde épocas remotas.

El Santo Padre escribe: “La Eucaristía, al implicar la realidad humana concreta del creyente, hace posible, día a día, la transfiguración progresiva del hombre, llamado a ser por gracia imagen del Hijo de Dios (cf. Rm 8,29 ss). Todo lo que hay de auténtico en la persona— inclusiones, afectos, palabras y obras—encuentra en el sacramento de la Eucaristía la forma adecuada para ser vivido en plenitud. Aparece aquí todo el valor antropológico de la novedad radical traída por Cristo con la celebración de la Eucaristía, de la cual la vida sobrenatural no puede quedar relegada a un momento particular y privado, sino que, por su naturaleza, tiende a impregnar todos los aspectos de la realidad del individuo. El culto agradable a Dios se convierte así en un nuevo modo de vivir todas las circunstancias de nuestra vida con Cristo y como ofrenda a Dios” (n. 71).

El Papa nos enseña: “Esta novedad está compuesta en nuestro corazón y en nuestro mundo que ha estado presente en la conciencia cristiana desde el principio. Los fieles percibieron en ella un profundo sentido de la celebración eucarística. ‘Nosotros, en el Señor, celebraremos la Eucaristía, en la que Cristo estableció en la Eucaristía: el poder de vida’” (n. 72).

Recientemente, un laico católico bien informado me dijo que desea que nuestros sacerdotes en la Misa recuerden que el día santo es un día paradigmático para cada uno de nosotros. “Si[...],” señaló, “el santo día es un día que nos invita a vivir lo sobrenatural.”

La Eucaristía, como una realidad transformadora, es algo que debe ser vivido en nuestra vida cotidiana. “El domingo es un día de vida que está cumpliendo su misión”, dice el Papa Benedicto XVI. “No es una fecha que se celebra, sino que es el día en que el creyente se siente invitado a reflejarse en el misterio eucarístico y en su realidad.”

La Eucaristía nos transforma en Cristo. ¿Qué significa esto para nosotros? ¿Qué cambios nos trae esta novedad para nuestra vida diaria? ¿Cómo podemos vivir la Eucaristía como un momento significativo en nuestra vida? ¿Cómo podemos incorporar la novedad eucarística en nuestra vida cotidiana y en nuestras acciones y decisiones? ¿Cómo podemos llevar la Eucaristía de nuestra vida a la vida cristiana de todos los días? ¿Cómo podemos llevar la novedad eucarística a nuestras relaciones y actividades diarias?
Events Calendar

August 3
Holy Angels Church, 740 W. 29th St., Indianapolis. Lectures on the Lawn Series: “The Mass Getting Back to Basics,” 7:30 p.m., using a lawn chair and brown bag dinner, no charge.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 553 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Central Indiana, teaching, 7 p.m., followed by prayer, worship and Mass. Information: 317-592-1990. www.inholyspirit.org or e-mail news@saintmeinrad.edu

August 4
St. Joseph Parish, 2605 St. Joe Rd. W., Sellersburg. Parish yard sale, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Information: 812-246-2512.

August 4
Holy Name School, gymnasium, 89 N. 17th St., Beech Grove. Parish annual rummage sale, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454, ext. 2.

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, 2525 S. Emlen St., Fortville. Parish picnic, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., food, quail dinner, auction, country style chicken and noodles dinner. Information: 317-485-5110.

August 5
St. Boniface Parish, 15519 N. State Road 545, Falls. Parish picnic, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., food, quail dinner, auction, country style chicken and noodles dinner. Information: 317-557-5333.

St. Bernard Parish, 7600 Highway 337, Frenchtown. Parish picnic, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., country style chicken and noodles dinner, auction. Information: 317-837-3226.

St. Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. Harpsichord and vocal concert, 3 p.m., CDT. Information: 800-682-0988 or e-mail meforall@saintmeinrad.edu.

August 6
St. Francis Hospital, 811 S. Emerson Ave., Indianapolis.Helping Women with Cancer “Look Good, Feel Better.” noon-2 p.m., information: 317-789-6714 or www.SFStFrancis.org or contact@inholyspirit.org.

August 7

St. Joseph Parish, 2605 St. Joe Rd. W., Sellersburg, RCIA, “Handing on the Faith.” 7:30 p.m. Information: 812-246-3999 or e-mail michaelafarm@seidata.com

M.K.V’s and Divine Mercy Center, Rexville, located on 925 South, a mile east of 52nd St., are 12 miles south of Vevay, Indiana. Confession, 1 a.m., followed by holy hour. Mass, 2 p.m., groups of 10 pray the new Marian Way. 1 p.m., Father Eimer Brinkman, Celebrant. Information: 812-689-3551.

August 8
St. Ažhariuss the Great Byzantine Church, St. Mary Hall, 1117 Blaine Ave., Indianapolis. Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Central Indiana, healing service, 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-952-1992, www.inholyspirit.org or e-mail social@inholyspirit.org.

August 9-12

August 11
East Central High School, 1 Trojan Lane, St. Leon. One-day conference, “Walking on Water,” Father Gregory Bramlage, O.S.B., 9 a.m.-3 p.m., $35 per person, $30 meal plan. Information: 812-623-8007 or e-mail Mary.Haliman@stleo.org.

August 12

August 13
St. Mary Parish, 2500 St. Mary’s Drive, Lenawee. Parish picnic, dinner, booths, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 812-952-2083.

Lectures

August 3
Rachel’s Compassion, charitable spiritual support group for Catholic women struggling with the aftermath of abortion, call for location, schedule and to join the support group. All calls are confidential. Information: 317-831-2892, 317-236-1521, 382-5983, ext. 1596, or e-mail drand@archindy.org

August 4
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 553 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Pre Cana Conference” for engaged couples, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Information: 317-545-7681, 317-236-1596 or 382-5983, ext. 1596.

August 10-12
St. Meinrad Archabbey Church, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. “An Introduction to the Devout Life: St. Francis de Sales,” Benedictine Father Adrian Burke, presenter. Information: 812-357-6611 or e-mail mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu.

August 11
East Central High School, 1 Trojan Lane, St. Leon. “Walking on Water” conference, Father Gregory Bramlage, presenter, 9 a.m.-10 a.m., $5 admission. Information: 812-623-8007 or e-mail mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu.
Catholics in China provide food, prayers for flood victims

HONG KONG (CNS)—Although severe floods have curtailed Church activities and damaged century-old church buildings in various parts of China, Catholics are offering assistance to those affected by the disaster.

A priest, who works in the northern part of Anhui province, told the Asian Church news agency UCA News on July 25 that because government relief aid has not reached the region the Church has tried to help Catholic and non-Catholic victims of the flooding.

The priest, who requested anonymity and is part of the unregistered Catholic community, said he has organized Catholic to help drain flooded fields. His parish bought 310 pounds of sweet corn seeds to distribute to poor farming families.

He noted that, while the floodwaters gradually have subsided, farmers were still unable to plant crops because of the uncertain weather. Planting beyond the end of July would jeopardize the autumn harvest “and their livelihood,” he added.

He said many people, especially the elderly, are unable to attend Mass. Many of his 2,000 parishioners have been trapped in their houses by floodwaters, he said. As a result, some have resorted to organizing small prayer gatherings in their homes, added the priest.

Heavy rains have devastated nearly half of the country with floods, landslides and mudflows, killing more than 650 people since the rainy season began in May, reported Xinhua News Agency on July 29.

More than 3 million people in Henan, Anhui and Jiangsu provinces have been evacuated because of flooding from the swollen Huai River, said the reports.

Since 2005, northern Anhui has suffered floods and other natural disasters annually. The priest said he feared that this would force as many as 100,000 rural people to leave the farming province for the cities in search of jobs.

The populous Chongqing municipality, in southwestern China, also has been hit badly by weeks of torrential rains, which triggered mudslides, landslides and heavy flooding.

Liu Yi, editor of the Chongqing Diocese’s Light and Salt quarterly, told UCA News that some parishes have suspended religious activities due to safety concerns because churches have been flooded and badly damaged.

However, Liu said that as of July 25 “most parishes have resumed normal religious life and Catholics have been praying for the victims.”

With support from Caritas Germany, the Catholic-run Jinde Charities donated rice worth $112,270 to 14,642 victims in Chongqing. Caritas Germany is the German affiliate of Caritas Internationalis, an umbrella organization of Catholic aid agencies.

No liturgical transfer for St. Patrick’s Day 2008 is foreseen in U.S.

WASHINGTON (CNS)—In contrast to the decision of the Irish bishops’ conference to request Vatican permission to move the liturgical celebration of St. Patrick’s Day in 2008 to avoid a conflict with Holy Week, the feast day “will not be commemorated liturgically” in most U.S. dioceses next year, according to the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat for Liturgy.

Because March 17 falls on the Monday of Holy Week next year, the Irish bishops’ conference requested and received permission from the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments to move the solemnity of St. Patrick, Ireland’s patron saint, to the nearest Saturday, March 15.

But an earlier decision by the Vatican congregation to transfer the feast of St. Joseph in 2008 from March 19, the Wednesday of Holy Week, to March 15 “impeded the transfer of the solemnity of St. Patrick to March 15” in the United States, said an article in the liturgy secretariat’s newsletter for April.

The feast day may be moved to Friday, May 14, 2008, in dioceses “where St. Patrick is the principal patron of a particular church” and where “it is customarily commemorated as a solemnity,” the newsletter said.

The U.S. bishops have not requested such a transfer as a conference, however. “In the vast majority of the dioceses of the United States of America, where the feast of St. Patrick is commemorated as a nonobligatory memorial, the feast will not be commemorated liturgically in the year 2008,” the newsletter said.

Estimado Caballero Supremo:

Cuando mi esposo se hizo Caballero de Colón, nos presentaron a nuestro agente de seguros, Mike Walter, e inmediatamente nos dieron cuenta que Mike no ocupaba de su carrera como si fuera un “ministerio” en vez de un cargo de ventas. Nunca me imagino que ese entonces lo que ese ministerio habría de significar para mí.

Durante nuestras reuniones, no fui fácil de persuadir. Mike nunca se dio por vencido y siempre buscó la forma como demostrarnos que la necesidad existía. Nos ayudó hasta que por fin pudimos comprender el valor de contar con la protección de un seguro de vida.

Mi esposo murió repentinamente el año pasado. Su muerte fue un golpe para todos nosotros. Aunque desde el punto de vista médico no deliría haber sucedido, me imagino que Dios pensó que había cumplido con su labor en esta tierra. Pude contar con Mike de inmediato. Estuvo en el velorio, asistió al funeral y permaneció a mi lado para asistirme en cuanto fuera posible. Lloré por mi esposo igual que yo.

En este mundo en donde todos nos preocupamos sólo de las ganancias, presencie la que los Caballeros son verdaderamente capaces de hacer. Pude contar con ellos cuando más lo necesitaba.

— Amber Dill

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Buenos Aires, Argentina

*Basado en uno cerveza y te: las medidas no son exactas para que se ejercite ejercicio.
Catholics, others urge increased funding for children’s health care

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Catholic organizations have joined with a variety of medical, civic, labor and other religious groups in calling on Congress to increase funding for the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, despite a threatened veto by President George W. Bush.

Representatives of nearly three dozen organizations participated in a Capitol Hill news conference on July 25 organized by the Catholic Health Association, which also released a new public opinion poll that showed Americans overwhelmingly support the program known as SCHIP.

“We stand united because we believe Congress and the president should do the right thing for our children and our nation—reauthorize a critically important program that is supported by the vast majority of voters,” said Sister Carol Kehan, a Daughter of Charity who is CHA president and CEO.

Others at the news conference represented the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Charities USA and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul as well as the National Council of Churches, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, Islamic Society of North America, Lutheran Services in America, Episcopal Church, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and United Jewish Communities.

“We may not see eye to eye on many of the issues facing this nation, but we all agree that our children must be able to receive the health care they need to learn, to participate in school and to build their futures on a healthy foundation,” Sister Carol added.

By a 17-4 vote, the Senate Finance Committee recently approved the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act, which would provide an additional $35 billion to SCHIP over the next five years to maintain the current coverage levels and provide health insurance for 3.2 million children now without coverage. The increases would be funded by a 61-cent-per-pack rise in the federal tax on cigarettes.

Bush said on July 18 that “if Congress continues to insist upon expanding health care through the SCHIP program—which, by the way, would entail a huge tax increase for the American people—I’ll veto the bill.”

Instead, he supports revisions in the tax code that would provide deductions to help more people to afford health insurance.

The Senate was expected to begin debate on the legislation before the end of July.

At the Capitol Hill event on July 25, Candy Hill, vice president for social policy at Catholic Charities USA, called it “a tragedy that 9 million children are living without health insurance in this country when we know that SCHIP works and is making a real difference in the lives of children from low-income families.

“We can—and must—do better,” she added. “SCHIP should be reauthorized and strengthened so even more low-income children have the health care coverage they need to grow up healthy and strong.”

“We firmly believe that there is no excuse for any child in our nation to go without access to health care,” said John L. Carr, USC CB secretary for social development and world peace. “This is an important moral measure of our society and of this Congress.”

Roger T. Playfair, executive director of the National Council of the U.S. Society of St. Vincent de Paul, said it is a “moral imperative” in the world’s richest nation to make sure “that the children of the poor have access to quality health care.”

A poll commissioned by CHA found that 86 percent of respondents said Congress should vote to continue SCHIP, with 57 percent strongly favoring such a vote and 29 percent somewhat favoring it.

Asked specifically about the Senate proposal, 71 percent said they supported it (41 percent strongly and 30 percent somewhat). More than 60 percent of the respondents said Bush “would be doing the wrong thing if he vetoed SCHIP legislation.”

The survey of 800 registered voters, conducted on July 19-22 by Public Opinion Strategies of Alexandria, Va., had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.46 percent.

Other Catholic organizations not participating in the news conference expressed support for expanded funding of SCHIP in a July 23 statement.

“When even one child is sick and cannot receive medical care, we are diminished as a nation,” the statement said. “Our faith and our Catholic social teaching demand that we foster a culture of life which includes health care for those who need it most.”

Signers of the statement included the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Pax Christi USA, the national social justice lobbying group Network, Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good and several groups of men and women religious.

At churches and synagogues in more than 40 U.S. cities from Anchorage, Alaska, to Allentown, Pa., on July 28-29, congregations heard sermons urging that SCHIP be strengthened and expanded to reach more uninsured children. Called Compassion Sunday/Compassion Sabbath, the events were coordinated by the PICO National Network, a coalition of religious congregations and faith-based organizations working on social justice concerns. (PICO stands for People Improving Communities through Organizing.)

Organizers hoped to generate thousands of phone calls to Congress about SCHIP before the summer recess begins in early August.

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Franciscan monastery offers glimpse of Holy Land

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Since 1899, a Franciscan monastery in the Brookland neighborhood of Washington has been a popular stop for pilgrims who want a glimpse of the Holy Land.

The grounds of the Franciscan Monastery and Commissariat of the Holy Land represent the Christian interest in the Holy Land, and it shows in the beauty of their church and the surrounding gardens.

Brother Maximilian Wojciechowski, a friar of the monastery since 1994, said the places surrounding Jesus’ life can sometimes seem surreal when they appear in Scripture. He said the monastery brings new life to the Gospel.

The Franciscan Monastery and Commissariat of the Holy Land to Christians is that “it’s actually where Christ was born and died and raised.”

The church is the dominant structure on the grounds. It is not a replica of any one structure found in the Holy Land, but was designed with a number of architectural influences found in buildings there. Within, beneath and around the church are full-size reproductions of actual Holy Land sites, including churches, memorials, shrines, tombs and historical monuments.

The grounds in Brookland were dedicated in 1899 after Father Godfrey Schilling purchased the land and commissioned the building of the monastery and church. A architect A. Eligio Leonori visited the Holy Land, taking measurements and graphs of the sites, which were then replicated on the grounds between 1900 and 1930.

A bronze baldacchino covers the main altar in the center of the church with the Twelve Apostles carved on its pillars. The dome above reflects Byzantine and Italian Renaissance and Romanesque styles. The floor plan of the church is that of a Jerusalem cross, one large cross surrounded by four smaller crosses, one in each corner. Staircases lead to four raised altars at the ends of the church.

At the east end, below the altar of the Transfiguration, is a reproduction of the Holy Sepulcher, the tomb where Jesus’ body was buried. This is one of the Holy Land sites that Leonori visited and measured to ensure the accuracy of its dimensions. Stucco reliefs covered in silver and bronze adorn the chambers of the sepulcher.

The Franciscan Monastery and Commissariat of the Holy Land sites, the remains of St. Benignus and St. Innocent are also preserved beneath the church.

The Franciscan order has maintained a presence in the Holy Land since 1219 when the Franciscan order’s general chapter established the province of the Holy Land.

The grounds in Brookland are part of a worldwide undertaking to promote and preserve the Christian presence in the Holy Land, the birthplace of Christianity. More than 330 Franciscans work in 74 sanctuaries, 16 schools and 29 parishes throughout Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, lower Egypt and Cyprus.

The monastery’s work and the Franciscan presence in the Holy Land depend on donations provided by a national Good Friday collection and on private contributions from patrons who visit the order’s commissariats around the world.

The Franciscan order has maintained a presence in the Holy Land since 1219 when the Franciscan order’s general chapter established the province of the Holy Land.

Brother Maximilian, who works in the monastery gift shop, said Franciscans are drawn from all over the world to serve in places similar to the Holy Land sites, dispersed among the Stations of the Cross that wind their way through the bushes, flowers and trees. Like the Franciscan Monastery in Washington, the Birthplace of Christianity in California, the Franciscan Monastery in Brookland is an exact copy and appears just as it does in southern France where Mary appeared to 14-year-old Bernadette Soubirous in 1858.

A side from the architectural and historical features, the monastery also hosts organ concerts, confession, daily Mass and vespers with the friars.

All the monastery’s friars at some point have served in the Holy Land, where they worked in schools and ministered to the poor. Each year, those friars lead several pilgrimages through Europe and the Holy Land.

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Crossroads walkers mark 13 years of pro-life activism

By Mary Ann Wyand

They walk and pray and walk some more and pray again with one goal in sight.

Their destination is the nation’s capital, and their goal is expressed by their slogan of “saving lives one step at a time.”

By speaking the truth about abortion and praying every day during the 13th annual Crossroads Pro-Life Walk Across America this summer, they are trying to educate countless Americans about how abortion kills babies.

They believe that the truth will change people’s minds and hearts, which will lead to an end to legalized abortion.

And so they walk for the more than 48 million babies who have died in abortions in the U.S. since 1973 and the unborn babies whose lives are at risk as well as for the men and women whose lives have been changed forever by the tragedy of abortion.

This summer, more than 50 young adults are walking on one of three 10-week, 3,200-mile, coast-to-capital pilgrimages and sharing their pro-life messages with an estimated 1 million people in dozens of cities.

Walking an average of 17 miles a day, each Crossroads volunteer will cover more than 1,200 miles by Aug. 11 when all three groups of pro-life pilgrims are scheduled to arrive on Capitol Hill in Washington for a prayer service.

Since the first Crossroads pro-life pilgrimage in 1995, the walkers have been able to save the lives of many unborn babies and 10 former walkers have pledged their lives to God as priests or religious.

Third Order Regular Franciscan Father Dan Pattee, a native of South Bend, Ind., and director of graduate theology at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio, and seven young adults departed from San Francisco in May at the invitation of several Franciscan University students.

“In October, I asked my superior and he permitted me to go,” Father Dan said. “Then I knew it was the work of the Lord.”

From the Pacific coast, walkers on the central route crossed the arid desert in Nevada and Utah then snow-covered mountain ranges in Colorado and continued on through the Great Plains states on their way to the Midwest and onward to the District of Columbia, walking in all kinds of weather and extreme temperatures that ranged from 25 degrees to 110 degrees.

“I am inspired by each one of the walkers,” Father Dan said. “For them, this [pilgrimage] is personal because they are post-1973 babies who were born after women had a choice and could be pro-death. A lot of their peers have not made it into this world and they feel that. To me, it’s been a real lesson on just how motivated this generation feels when they come on to the truth of what abortion is doing to their generation.

“One of the most pro-life virtues I can think of for young people today is the virtue of chastity,” he said. “It’s so pro-life. It’s pro-dignity of the human person. It’s valuing the whole person, and it’s the virtue that preserves you for the future, whatever your vocation might be. That is one thing I pray for because it keeps all your doors open in the order of nature and grace.”

Central walk leader Jason Spoolstra, youth director of St. Maria Goretti Parish in Fort Worth, Texas, is walking across the country for the second time.

“I received permission from [Sacramento] Bishop William Wengd to do it,” Spoolstra said. “There’s a great spirituality that goes along with Crossroads. I think it’s a great way to get out and see the country and meet the faithful. … You visit so many parishes and meet so many people. … That will be helpful in my future ministry.”

Prayer is an integral part of the pro-life movement for Tina Hardy, a member of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Indianapolis.

“I wanted to do something pro-life after graduation,” Hardy said. “There are days that are harder than others. It’s important to get involved and pray, I think prayer is the most important thing you can do for the pro-life movement.”

“Crossroads workers inspired me,” Father Dan said. “I am inspired by each one of the walkers.”

“I am encouraged by the fact that the babies who have died since Roe vs. Wade have changed the world,” Spoolstra said. “I don’t know that 11.5% of the people in Central and Southern Indiana live below the poverty level. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul serves them 52 weeks of the year by providing food, clothing, household necessities and other emergency help.

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Crossroads walkers Beth Ann Flessner, left, from St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Madison, Miss., and Alzbeta Voboril from St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Wichita, Kan., pray with the archdiocesan Helpers of God’s Precious Infants on July 21 in front of an abortion clinic in Indianapolis.

“It’s the small gestures from people that really mean a lot to us,” Spoolstra said. “In 2005, I did part of the southern walk then the rest of the way on the central walk. I told myself, ‘If God wills it, I’ll walk again, and here I am’.”

Beth Ann Flessner, a member of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Madison, Miss., and a senior at the University of Dallas, joined the pro-life pilgrimage because she was born on Jan. 22, 1986, the 13th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion during all nine months of pregnancy.

Flessner said her birthday always made me think that I was supposed to do something for the pro-life movement.”

Seminarian Jason Handcock from the Diocese of Sacramento, Calif., decided to participate in the pro-life pilgrimage after praying about summer ministry plans during an exsiccatic pilgrimage.

“I received permission from [Sacramento] Bishop William Wengd to do it,” Handcock said. “There’s a great spirituality that goes along with Crossroads. I think it’s a great way to get out and see the country and meet the faithful. … You visit so many parishes and meet so many people. … That will be helpful in my future ministry.”

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Stem-cell research still a hot topic in Congress and states

WASHINGTON (CNS)—As the U.S. Senate considers whether to try to override the presidential veto of a bill permitting federal funding of embryonic stem-cell research, a new bill in the House of Representatives would promote stem-cell research and clinical trials that do not involve the destruction of human embryos.

The Patients First Act, introduced by Republican Rep. J. Randy Forbes of Virginia and Democratic Rep. Dan Lipinski of Illinois, is supported by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, according to Richard M. Doerflinger, deputy director of the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, because “it will promote stem-cell research that is helping patients now in clinical trials or showing real benefits in animal trials. “The hype and public debate over embryonic stem cells has unfortunately diverted attention away from medical research that is already working, using stem cells that pose no moral problem,” he added.

Meanwhile, the topic of stem cells also is making news in the state of New Jersey.

Gov. Jon Corzine signed legislation on July 26 that will ask voters in November to approve spending $450 million over 10 years for embryonic stem-cell research. And in Missouri, where voters amended the state constitution last November to protect stem-cell research that destroys embryos, legislators have refused to approve funding for new stem-cell projects and there has been talk of repealing the controversial amendment.

Doerflinger said a vote in the Senate on the Stem-Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007, vetoed by President George W. Bush on June 20, was unlikely before the November referendum on whether the state should borrow $450 million to fund stem-cell research during the next 10 years. The state Senate earlier had approved $230 million for that period.

New Jersey’s Catholic bishops have opposed the use of state bonds to fund embryonic stem-cell research, saying that “the creation and destruction of human embryonic stem cells violate the sanctity of human life. “However, we do advocate the use of adult (non-embryonic) stem cells that have been shown to offer promise in the fight to eradicate heartbreak diseases that are debilitating and life-threatening,” said a statement from the New Jersey Catholic Conference, the bishops’ public policy arm. Meanwhile, the Missouri Catholic Conference was continuing efforts to overturn the constitutional amendment, approved by 51 percent of the state’s voters in November 2006, that codifies the protected status of stem-cell research, including that involving the destruction of embryos.

“The hype and public debate over embryonic stem cells has unfortunately diverted attention away from medical research that is already working, using stem cells that pose no moral problem.” —Richard Doerflinger, deputy director of the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities

The Associated Press reported in late July that efforts to fund some embryonic stem-cell research in the state had been thwarted by legislators and a prominent medical institute had halted a $300 million expansion plan because of fears that the amendment might be overturned.

“Right now, you can’t tell the amendment passed,” the A.P quoted Democratic state Sen. Chuck Graham, a supporter of the amendment, as saying. “People are running in the opposite direction.”

**Page 11**
NEW YORK (CNS)—Tune in to “The Catholic Guy” on Sirius satellite radio any afternoon, and you might hear radio host Lino Rulli doing a round of speed dating, looking for a date.

Or you might hear him interviewing a cast member of “The Sopranos” about growing up Italian-American, parodying a hip-hop song on “mock or roll Fridays” or extolling the benefits of going to confession.

On the free-wheeling, family-issues program “Speak Now With Dave and Susan Kong” in the 10 a.m. to noon slot, the Westchester married couple’s banter on a recent morning ranged from the expanded opportunities for the Latin Mass to a planned interview with outspoken hard-rocker Ted Nugent on “parenting a teenager.”

“We’ll take advice from anybody,” quipped Dave Kong, against a split-second instrumental clip of Nugent’s “Cat Scratch Fever.”

That same week, fellow host Bob Dunning’s topic on his earlier afternoon program, “Across the Nation,” was “Are video games addictive?”

All three programs are part of the daily lineup on the Catholic Channel, which has been up and running for the last eight months on Sirius satellite radio’s channel 139.

“It’s very cutting edge, for Catholic radio,” said Gus L. Lloyd, a veteran Catholic radio host whose “Seize the Day” program is the Catholic Channel’s morning drive-time opener.

“That’s what drew me here,” he said. “We get to be ourselves, to show our human side. I tell people I’ve got the best job in the world.”

Co-produced by Sirius and the Archdiocese of New York, the channel airs nationally seven days a week, 24 hours a day, featuring talk shows with listener call-ins, football and basketball games from the University of Notre Dame in Indiana and live daily Mass from St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York.

Under the arrangement, the archdiocese provides all of the programming, which is then purchased by Sirius for its commercial-free, subscription network. To receive the programming, listeners must purchase a special radio and pay a monthly fee, with rates beginning around $13.

There is no archdiocesan expenditure involved, said Joseph Zwilling, the archdiocese’s director of communications, who also is general manager of the Catholic Channel.

Zwilling, who put together the programming lineup and remains actively involved in the channel’s operation, said the goal in creating it was “to produce Catholic radio that reached out to people who ordinarily would never listen to Catholic radio.”

“We wanted to use all of the modern popular radio techniques and formats and incorporate that with the Catholic point of view,” Zwilling told Catholic New York, the archdiocesan newspaper. “We wanted to be funny, topical and contemporary.”

He said his only requirement was that “we must be unapologetically and totally Catholic.”

“But at the same time,” he said, “I would be very happy if somebody tuned on the channel and listened because they liked what they heard—and didn’t realize for the first five, 10 or 15 minutes that this was a Catholic channel.”

Indeed, that happens with some regularity, said the channel’s program director, Rob-A. Storino, who said he hears from listeners who are “practicing Catholics, non-practicing Catholics and non-Catholics.”

When they come across it on the dial, he said, they listen because they like what they hear.

“We talk about pop culture, politics, different religions—all the things that people are talking about,” he said.

New York Cardinal Edward M. Egan, who has been an enthusiastic booster of the channel and frequently promotes it during his public appearances, has a one-hour program on Thursdays at noon called “A Conversation With the Cardinal.”

Mediated by Storino, the show gives the cardinal a relaxed forum to speak on a broad range of topics that lately have included an explanation of the order of Mass, his enjoyment of this year’s Puerto Rican Day Parade and his youngest granddaughter, James Xaver Aloysius Egan, whom he had recently baptized.

In the “Catholic Curiosity Corner” segment of the program, the cardinal addresses questions and comments e-mailed by listeners to info@thecatholicchannel.org.

Sirius had approached the archdiocese several years ago about Cardinal Egan hosting a program. While that did not materialize, the talks eventually moved to the idea of a full-time Catholic channel.

“We wanted to see if we could make something we never had before for everyone—one, said Scott Greenstein, president of entertainment and sports at Sirius, explaining the network’s interest.

“If there’s a large group in America, we want [to offer] something compelling and interesting to that group,” Greenstein said.

He noted that there are 65 million Catholics in the United States, making up 25 percent of the population, and that the network was positioned to offer them “a modern Catholic lifestyle channel.”

CNS photo/Chris Sheridan

Susan Konig talks to listeners during the live morning program “Speak Now With Dave and Susan Kong,” which she co-hosts with her husband, David, at left. The program is part of the daily lineup aired on Sirius satellite radio’s Catholic Channel, co-produced by Sirius and the Archdiocese of New York.

CNS photo/courtesy of Lino Rulli

Known for his offbeat humor and young adult appeal, Lino Rulli is pictured at the Catholic Channel’s Sirius Radio station in New York. Rulli hosts the afternoon call-in show, “The Catholic Guy,” focusing on many areas of Catholic life, including current events, apologetics, doctrine and pop culture.
perseverance, its nature and what the United States might do to help these vulnerable groups in Iraq. The hearing was the first of two intended to give the commission a better idea of the nature and scale of religious persecution in Iraq. The next is scheduled for September and will focus on Sunni-Shiite sectarian violence.

The first witness to testify was the Rev. Andrew White, vicar of St. George's Anglican Church in Baghdad, Iraq, and president and CEO of the Foundation for Reconciliation and Reconstruction in the Middle East.

Rev. White said that in a week 36 members of his congregation in Iraq were kidnapped. He said the Christians living in Iraq are in need of basic necessities, including food, water and physical protection, as the government has come forward to help. He said the United States has the potential to provide these services in Iraq, but as yet has not acted.

“The United States can do a huge amount, but you have to do it, and not talk about it and write papers, and actually do something,” he said. “There are Americans know absolutely nothing about what’s going on on the ground in Iraq, but their position and their attitudes will influence exactly what happens in Iraq.”

A nother witness, Pascale Warda, former minister of migration and displacement in Iraq and a Chaldean-Assyrian Catholic, delivered her statement through an interpreter. She said Christians in Iraq are targeted by violence because “they are identified as American allies and infidels, for the simple reason that they share a common faith with those in the Western world.”

Warda said she has survived four assassination attempts since 2004, including one in which all four of her Christian bodyguards were killed. Warda spoke of the situation for Chaldean-Assyrian Christians, the largest minority group in the region, the majority of whom are Catholic. She said members of minority religions in Iraq have three choices: convert to Islam; pay the “jizya,” a tax imposed on non-Muslims; or leave the country with next to nothing.

Many Christians have fled to northern Iraq seeking safety and have overwhelmed the Nineveh plain, an area with a large Christian population and Christian roots that go back 2,000 years to St. Thomas the Apostle.

Those displaced in the Nineveh plain lack housing, jobs and schools for their children, and need the support of the American and Iraqi governments if they are to stay in the region and not be forced from the country, Warda said.

“Insecurity is limiting us, but do we continue to live? I think yes,” she said in an interview with Catholic News Service. “Iraq is a very rich country. In one year, it would change completely if security is there. So people need security.”

The Catholic Church is limited in how it can help the Church in Iraq, Warda said. “Since [the war] started, many priests were killed in a very bad way,” she said. “Many churches were destroyed and targeted so the bishops are in a situation that is not really easy ... but they didn’t stop—they do as they can.”

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom was created in 1998 to monitor religious freedom worldwide and make policy recommendations to the president, the secretary of state and Congress. Members of the commission are selected by the president and members of Congress from both parties on the basis of their knowledge and experience of international religious freedom.

The commission’s annual report covers select countries that have shown prolonged or extensive violations of religious rights. Other witnesses on July 25 included Donny George, former chairman of the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, who left Iraq last year when the life of his 17-year-old son was threatened; M. Isael Youash, project director of the Iraqi Sustainable Democracy Project; and Subah Nasir, the Iraqi-born secretary of the Manhattan Society of America.†
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Priest tells teens he thinks about people's souls at baseball games

UNIONDALE, N.Y. (CNS)—At a retreat for teens at a Catholic high school in Uniondale, Msgr. James McDonald, rector of Rockville Centre’s diocesan seminary, talked baseball.

“When I go to Yankee Stadium—actually I go to Shea Stadium, not Yankee Stadium,” Msgr. McDonald said, drawing laughter. “I think, ‘How many of these people need to go to confession?’”

The audience laughed again.

“That’s really how I think,” he said.

Msgr. McDonald said, and that is not being spoken of, you and I, are being cheated and salvation is being compromised.

“For you and I, that is the central question—salvation,” the priest said.

The Catholic Church “has so many activities,” but “we are faced with the stark reality that fewer and fewer people know Jesus Christ, and fewer and fewer listen to him,” he said.

Many Church activities serve those who already go to church, yet many people have no contact with the Church but need to, he said. There are too many of those people for priests to know about or find, Msgr. McDonald said.

“But any one of you can go up to that other person,” he noted. “If you don’t, who will?”

The priest told his audience that he often thinks about souls outside of church, for example, when he passes people in a restaurant parking lot.

The doctrine of hell, that those in mortal sin face eternal separation and punishment from God, “is hardly ever spoken of in a Catholic church,” Msgr. McDonald said. “And when that is not being spoken of, you and I, are being cheated and salvation is being compromised.

“The truth will set you free” (Jn 8:32) and “Who do you say I am?” (Mt 8:29)—adorned the fence between talks.

Between speakers, people prayed quietly, many kneeling on mats. A life-size picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe stood inside the tent. †

The retreat at Kellenberg Memorial High School drew a few hundred young people from Long Island, Brooklyn, Westchester, Staten Island and Syracuse as well as New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Michigan. They came at different times over the three days.

Angela Schannapieco, director of Youth 2000 New York, said the retreats first came to New York in the early to mid-1990s. They “are based on the old Forty Hours devotion,” she told Catholic News Service.

The retreats are Eucharist-centered, but have been adapted with music and talks geared to young people. At the Uniondale retreat, there was exposition of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the weekend and opportunities for confession offered by Msgr. McDonald, Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and other priests.

Talks were given under a big tent on an open field at Kellenberg. Banners with quotes from Scripture—such as “The truth will set you free” (Jn 8:32) and “Who do you say I am?” (Mt 8:29)—adorned the fence surrounding the field.

Inside the tent, a monstrance holding the Eucharist sat atop a wooden tower. Lighted candles adorned the rungs of the tower below it. A banner outside the tent read “SilenciSilencio” for the time between talks.

Between speakers, people prayed quietly, many kneeling on mats. A life-size picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe stood inside the tent.

Important as they are, he said, “To fully benefit, what you and I have to do is give ourselves totally to God.”

The retreat at Kellenberg Memorial High School is a eucharistic devotion consisting of continuous adoration of the Blessed Sacrament by shifts of people for 40 hours.

The retreats are Eucharist-centered, but have been adapted with music and talks geared to young people. At the Uniondale retreat, there was exposition of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the weekend and opportunities for confession offered by Msgr. McDonald, Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and other priests. There was an evening eucharistic procession on July 21.

Talks were given under a big tent on an open field at Kellenberg. Banners with quotes from Scripture—such as “The truth will set you free” (Jn 8:32) and “Who do you say I am?” (Mt 8:29)—adorned the fence surrounding the field.

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Father Joseph Mary, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal, administers the sacrament of reconciliation to Jasmine Torres, 16, of Bronx, N.Y., during the Youth 2000 New York retreat at Kellenberg Memorial High School in Uniondale, N.Y., on July 20.

Faith, Hope and Charity/David Siler
Loving concern offers hope in tough times of heartbreak

A friend of mine recently suffered a heart attack while playing basketball at our parish sports center. I went by the hospital the next morning to get an update on Bob. As I entered the parking lot, I saw a car parked by the front door with the men who performed CPR on our friend, coming out of the hospital.

As we stood there talking about the incident, our pastor, Father Paul, entered, approached us and offered John a hug.

I learned from John that several other parishioners had already stopped by to find out how they could help. As I left the parking lot, I waved at two women, friends of Bob’s wife, pulling in to pay a visit.

A prayer service was planned for the following evening. As I drove into the office the next day, I began to reflect on the incredible blessing of a Christian community. Within a matter of hours of a crisis, our parish community, St. Matthew’s, was pouring into its very best—caring for the person that is down.

Our parish community grew even closer—and extended our love even more to Bob’s family—when he learned several days later that Bob had died.

'We are called to love the unlovable, to care for the unloving and to seek out the lost. We are called to be the hands of Jesus in the world. The fullness of the meaning of charity.’

—David Siler

My own family has experienced the immediate impact of Bob’s death. I am learning to love and help the person who has lost hope. I am learning to love and help a develop cancer, go through a divorce, lose a job or become depressed and full of despair. My friends, family and our community helped me to love and supported him, just as he gave love and support to so many people in his life.

Then there are those individuals who do not have a community to support the load. I think these are the ones that Christ referred to as the lost and forsaken. It is for these especially that Christ asks us, his followers, to love and help them.

The lost and forsaken may not be able to love. In fact, they may not even be able to like. And it could be that the very reason they may not have a support community is because they are difficult to be around. The lost and forsaken—those who are least in the eyes of Jesus, are held to a very high standard.

We are called to love the unlovable, to care for the unloving and to seek out the lost. We are called to be the hands of Jesus in the world. The fullness of the meaning of charity.

We are called to offer our Holy Father calls “loving, personal concern.” Loving, personal concern is not something that is given at a distance. A friend of mine likes to say, “Prayer is nice, but sometimes I need you.”

We need to offer the human touch—the skin—that makes a difference in the lives of others.

(David Siler is executive director of the Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries. E-mail him at dsiler@archindy.org)
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, August 5, 2007

- Ecclesiastes 1:2-11
- Colossians 3:1-5, 11-12

The first reading for this weekend is from the Book of Ecclesiastes, sometimes referred to as the Book of Qoheleth, a book rarely appearing in the readings at Mass. It is among the works in the Bible that are collectively called the Wisdom Literature. As such, it says that the divinely revealed understandings of God and of God’s law, so much a part of the Hebrew tradition, are not unreasonable or far-fetched. To the contrary, these understandings of Revelation correspond with the heights of human logic and wisdom.

This weekend’s reading begins with a basic conviction of the authors of the Wisdom Literature as well as the prophets. This conviction is that humans create misery for themselves and even doom their own wanderings from the path set down by God’s law, in other words, people dig their own graves.

The Book of Qoheleth has the added option that in straying from God’s law people also act not just unreasonably but foolishly.

The origin of the name “Qoheleth” is unknown.

For its second reading on this weekend, the Church offers us a passage from the Epistle to the Colossians. It was the case in so many cities and places in the Roman Empire of the last quarter of the first century A.D., Colossae was essentially a pagan city because primarily pagans lived here. However, Christians were also living in Colossae.

It was to inspire the Christians in Colossae that this book was written. The first part of this reading insists once more upon the fact that true believers are united with Jesus. They are in the “company” of Jesus. When the last judgment comes, those in this “company” will be with Jesus. They will be among the “firstfruits” when the Lord returns.

In the second point, the epistle tells the Christians of Colossae that there is no substitute for avoiding not just temptation but also, as the theologians say, the “occasion of sin.” Christians should know that their instincts can be very powerful and cannot always be trusted. Faithful followers of the Lord must put the inclinations of their instincts to the question of whether or not what is preferred is in fact in accord with the Lord’s teachings.

St. Luke’s Gospel is the source of the last reading. It is a parable spoken by Jesus in response to an appeal to settle an argument that a man was having with his brother.

In reply, Christ calls upon the man and the disciples to see material possessions for what they are. They are not the most important thing in the world. They do not endure. They bring no lasting satisfaction. They certainly have no eternal value.

Jesus speaks harshly in this passage. He calls a person who in a frenzy searches for material gain a “fool.” This term is not expressly an echo of the theme of the Wisdom Literature, but it is absolutely consistent with the ideals of the Wisdom writings.

Reflection

Historians say that one of the most effective architects of the glory and power of France four centuries ago was Cardinal Armand Jean de Plessis de Richelieu, who lived from 1585-1642. As a Bishop of Loucon, the cardinal instituted, and carried through, imaginative projects to restore a fervent Catholicism after the Reformation had battered the Church.

His brilliance led to his appointment as French prime minister. Never personally immoral, he nevertheless lost his spiritual bearings. Advancing France, by cutting any corner, was his only purpose in life.

When he was dying, according to fiction he would not fear death. He said that if he had substituted his palace for a monk’s cell but possibly true, he had said that if he had substituted his palace for a monk’s cell he would not fear death.

Cardinal Richelieu was only one of the untold people who have looked back over their lives and regretted their foolishness. What was supposed in purgatory is quoted as being St. Bridget: “This head which loved to be adorned ... is now dewed in flames within and without. ... These arms which I loved to see admired are cruelly bound in chains of red hot iron. ... These feet, trained for the dance, are now surrounded with vipers that tear them with their fangs.”

Another section describes a soul in a valley. Hot cauldrons and fire are on one side, and ice and glacial winds on the other. The soul’s journey is endless.

A sixty-five chapters about purgatory!

A Church official who gives them affirms that the work contains nothing contrary to Catholic faith. It is not a declaration that what is in the book is true or even that the person giving the testimonial understands what is in it. In fact, such a disclaimer is often printed in the front of the book.

In other words, both of these forms of approval mean one thing: Nothing in it contradicts Catholic teaching. Catholic faithful may accept it or not as they wish, but their Catholic faith is not directly affected either way.

Whether or not Catholics accept such visions depends on how much they know about their religion. In my experience at least, people who are relatively uninformed sometimes tend to be attracted to such lurid mythologies and bizarre disclosures.

Basic official Catholic teaching about purgatory can be briefly summarized. A condition, “a process of purification,” Pope John Paul II called it, may take place upon death for remission of temporal punishment due to sin, and this suffering may be lessened through prayer and works of charity. As I have explained before, all else is conjecture.

Whether, for example, purgatory is a place (Pope John Paul II didn’t think so) or not, or whether we know it, we can only speculate. Specifically, what sort of pain or suffering might be involved the Church has never tried to guess. Your confusion is understandable.

Readers may submit prose or poetry for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column.

Question Corner/ Fr. John Dietzen

Church teaches that purgatory is a ‘process of purification’

Q: I am a cradle Catholic who could not attend a Catholic school. However, I’ve taken courses and tried in other ways to keep up with my faith. I have a book titled Purgatory Explained. It’s 65 chapters long and sounds strange. A large part of the book recounts many apparent visions of purgatory. Someone supposedly in purgatory is quoted as saying St. Bridget: “This head which loved to be adorned ... is now dewed in flames within and without. ... These arms which I loved to see admired are cruelly bound in chains of red hot iron. ... These feet, trained for the dance, are now surrounded with vipers that tear them with their fangs.”

Another section describes a soul in a valley. Hot cauldrons and fire are on one side, and ice and glacial winds on the other. According to the book, these revelations do not belong to the deposit of the Church’s faith, but “they are historical facts, based on human testimony. ... They are authenticated, and we cannot reject them without offending against reason.”

Is this reason? The book has a “nihil obstat” and an “imprimatur.” Why would the Church agree to have such a book published? It’s certainly confusing. (Iowa)

A: Purgatory is a ‘process of purification.’ That is possibly hundreds of times more than the Church has said officially about purgatory in 2,000 years.

You’re right. Those kinds of “inspirational” books confuse a lot of people, especially if they’re unaware of some important relevant facts.

First, the quote you give about authentication is meaningless theologically. For one thing, the only “historical fact” actually established is that some visionary reported she learned this in an apparition. Everything else is personal hearsay or testimony.

More importantly, we must understand what Church approval of books means. Both a “nihil obstat” (“nothing stands in the way”) and an “imprimatur” (“I may print”) mean only that the Church approval of books means. It is not a declaration that what is in the book is true or even that the person giving the testimonial understands what is in it. In fact, such a disclaimer is often printed in the front of the book.

In other words, both of these forms of approval mean one thing: Nothing in it contradicts Catholic teaching. Catholic faithful may accept it or not as they wish, but their Catholic faith is not directly affected either way.

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Whether, for example, purgatory is a place (Pope John Paul II didn’t think so) or not, or whether we know it, we can only speculate. Specifically, what sort of pain or suffering might be involved the Church has never tried to guess. Your confusion is understandable.

Readers may submit prose or poetry for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column.

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

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.
Dale Bruns served Catholic Church in central and southern Indiana

He is survived by his wife; seven children, Tess Bruns-Boldersay, Dr. Donna Bruns-Stockham, Holly Dr. Dale, James, Thomas and Timothy Bruns; one brother, Ralph Bruns; and 14 grandchildren.

Memorial gifts may be sent to Immaculate Conception Parish, the Oldenburg Academy of Immaculate Conception or the Marian College Seminarian Fund.

Legacy for Our Mission: For Our Children and the Future

Campaign Effort Helps Parish Build Future Foundation

For some people, such as Indianapolis resident Mark Hudson, giving back to one’s parish is a common part of their daily life. That’s why the longtime Irvington resident and Our Lady of Lourdes parishioner immediately responded to the call when his pastor asked him for assistance.

Father Nick Dant, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes since 2002, invited Hudson to chair the parish’s Legacy for Our Mission capital stewardship campaign, which began its planning activities in early 2006. Hudson helped lead the effort to prepare the community for the parish campaign.

The work has paid off, with the parish surpassing the campaign goal established by the archdiocese, Hudson said. As an initiative that will help the parish serve people well into the future, the results of the Legacy for Our Mission campaign are already assisting parishioners in a variety of ways. Available funds are helping pay for needed improvements in the parish kitchen, which called for new food preparation and storage equipment for events held at the church, as well as serving the preschool at the prekindergarten through eighth-grade parish school.

Upgrades for the kitchen are just one way the parish is addressing deferred maintenance needs throughout its facilities. Parishioners also have planned a series of other projects, including:

- interior and exterior restoration work for Our Lady of Lourdes Church
- exterior fixes for the parish office
- repair work for the exterior of Our Lady of Lourdes School and Lyons Hall
- installation of a school video monitoring system
- restoration of a stone grotto
- repairs to the church organ
- various other maintenance projects.

“We were able to easily identify the areas of need,” Hudson said. “The improvement areas were just obvious. People decided the changes were necessary because everyone wants to be able to call this place their parish community for many years to come.”

Our Lady of Lourdes has served Catholics on the east side of Indianapolis since its founding in 1909. Nearly 100 years later, Father Dant believes the parish joined together in the campaign with a remarkable spirit of cooperation and stewardship.

“It’s that concept of sharing and returning one’s gifts to God—the very teaching of stewardship as a way of life—that has energized our ministries and parish life,” Father Dant added. “It’s been a very positive experience for the parish. I’ve been impressed with the efforts. I know I’ll continue to be moved by the generosity of our parish as we serve our community as well as others throughout the archdiocese.”

Legacy for Our Mission, the archdiocesan capital campaign of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, is designed to strengthen the archdiocese and address future ministries needs of the archdiocese. By contributing to Legacy for Our Mission, you are helping your parish address its most urgent capital, operating and ministry needs as well as the shared ministries and benevolences of the archdiocesan community.

Please visit the new online home of the Legacy for Our Mission campaign at www.archindy.org/legacy. It can also be accessed at www.LegacyforOurMission.org.

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VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI believes ecology could hold the key to teaching young people about Christian morality.

“The papal intuition is sparked by the fact that ecology is a widely accepted moral concern, but one that points much deeper: Nature itself teaches that some things are naturally right and some are naturally wrong.

A appropriately, Pope Benedict had aipline peaks and meadows as a backdrop when he added the environmental twist to his oft-repeated call for a moral education of the young based on recognition of natural law.

When a priest in northern Italy asked him on July 24 for suggestions on how to educate the moral conscience of the young, the pope began with a rather philosophical explanation of conscience and natural law.

In the Christian view, the natural moral code is not an arbitrary list of do’s and don’ts thought up by religious leaders or resulting from a majority vote, but is part of human nature and the result of being created by God, the pope said. Humans are special creatures precisely because of the freedom involves the entire human community, and not just one person, the pope said.

For this reason, the pope added, children must recognize the laws of nature, especially when everyone else is taking shortcuts that may increase their pleasure at the moment, but are obviously damaging in the long term.

The first thing young people can learn is that “our Earth speaks to us, and we must listen if we want to survive,” the pope said.

“I would propose a combination between a secular way and a religious way, the pope said.

“In helping people understand the natural moral law, the pope said, the first thing young people can learn is that within themselves there is “a moral message, a divine message, which must be deciphered” and obeyed.

“The first thing young people can learn is that “our Earth speaks to us, and we must listen if we want to survive,” the pope said.

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Eco is key to teaching young people about Christian morality
Memorial for the unborn

Angel statue provides place to mourn babies at cemetery

By Mary Ann Wyand

St. Lawrence parishioners Bob and Holly Blagburn of Indianapolis will always mourn the death of their first son, David Michael, who was stillborn in 1966. They remembered him again during a memorial Mass for the unborn celebrated by Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general, and dedication of an angel statue on July 26 at Our Lady of Peace Cemetery in Indianapolis.

And they are pleased that the statue imported from Italy has been blessed by Msgr. Schaedel as a memorial for babies at the south border of the Catholic cemetery located at 9001 N. Haverstick Road.

The angelic monument will serve as a special place for parents who have lost babies through miscarriage, stillbirth or abortion to mourn the deaths of their children and pray for them.

“This monument is erected to the memory of those innocents who have died unjustly,” Holly Blagburn told those assembled, “whose lives were taken from them while they grew silently in their mother’s womb. … For we know that—although our eyes may have never seen their little faces—they are truly here today with us in spirit and forever within our hearts.”

The Tomb of the Unborn Child at the cemetery was suggested by the Knights of Columbus St. Joseph Council #5290 and made possible by the fundraising efforts of six women who are married to Knights.

“As he welcomed more than 100 people to the Mass, Msgr. Schaedel noted that the feast of St. Joachim and St. Ann, Mary’s parents, was the perfect day to dedicate the memorial for unborn children. In his homily, the vicar general emphasized that, “Human life is of the highest value. It has no price tag. The Church consistently teaches there is no higher value than life. But we live in a time when we witness terrible attacks on human life. Warfare in Iraq and other places is bad enough, but what is so appalling about abortion is that it is an attack on life itself.”

In the secular world, he said, “human life has become cheap. If a human life causes one inconvenience then our society and our own United States government have devised ways to get rid of it. The highest court in the land continues to support murder—legalized abortion, including partial-birth abortion … where the child is mostly born before it is killed. You don’t hear much about that in the secular news. Society does not want to know about it. They don’t want to hear that all human life is precious, [that] it’s priceless. ‘Life is not up for a vote,’ Msgr. Schaedel emphasized. ‘The God-given rights of each person cannot be legislated. … [But] that’s the result when we deny the value of life made in God’s image and likeness. Catholics must stand strong. The Catholic Church is absolutely pro-life.”

On the feast day of St. Joachim and St. Ann, he said, we are reminded that Christ, the Son of God, had human grandparents and that in Jesus human nature became sacred.

Yet abortion denies that,” Msgr. Schaedel said. “So does contraception. Such attitudes signal that life is not sacred. It’s disposable. You know that won’t be the end of it. One thing leads to another. Followers of Jesus must do something.”

By dedicating the Tomb of the Unborn, he said, we proclaim life, not death, and shout our beliefs in the goodness of life here and in the world to come. “When it comes to human life, there is no so-called choice,” Msgr. Schaedel said. “God gives us one choice—life. ... So let all those who dedicate this tomb—and those who visit here in the years to come—hear us loudly and hear us clearly.”