An influence felt throughout Indiana
St. Theodora’s first feast day celebrated across archdiocese
By Seann Gallagher and Mike Krokos

CLARKSVILLE—On Oct. 15, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI declared St. Theodora Guérin a saint of the universal Church during a festive liturgy at St. Peter’s Square in Rome. Nearly a year later, Catholics across the archdiocese commemorated her first feast day as a saint on Oct. 1.

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein marked the day by celebrating Mass in honor of St. Theodora at the Sam & Paula Robinson Performing Arts Center at Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville, which was founded in 1951 by the Sisters of Providence of Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods. Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general of the archdiocese, led a similar celebration in the schools in the six schools that make up Mother Theodore Catholic Academies. The Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis included nearly 700 students who attend Holy Angels School, Holy Cross Central School, Central Catholic School, St. Andrew & St. Rita Catholic Academy, St. Anthony School and St. Philip Neri School.

A Mass was also celebrated for the Sisters of Providence and the Church of the Immaculate Conception at their motherhouse, Father Daniel Hopcus, chaplain of the congregation, presided at the liturgy for the religious community that St. Theodora established in 1840.

A great legacy

The Clarksville Mass was the final in a yearlong series of liturgies in honor of St. Theodora celebrated by the archbishop in each of the archdiocese’s 11 deaneries. Attending the Mass were student representatives from Providence as well as students from each of the eight grade schools in the New Albany Deanery. Joan Hurley, president of Providence, spoke before the Mass about the honor of hosting the special celebration.

“We have a great legacy that we owe that saint,” she said. “I think it’s a great privilege for us because this is the first-ever feast day for St. Theodora.”

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein delivers his homily during an Oct. 3 Mass in honor of St. Theodora Guerin at Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville in the New Albany Deanery. Students from all the Catholic schools in the deanery were present for the Mass that concluded a yearlong series of liturgies in honor of Indiana’s first saint that were celebrated in each of the archdiocese’s 11 deaneries.

“Nothing can happen today that wasn’t done days ago,” he said. “It’s beautiful. [Today] is a special day. It’s a privilege to be part of it.”

At the start of the Mass, Archbishop Buechlein looked out at the students in the congregation who were wearing their distinctive school uniforms. “It’s like a rainbow of color,” he said. “It’s beautiful. [Today] is a special day. It’s the first feast day of St. Theodora. And many of us, myself included, were educated by the Sisters of Providence.”

Our heritage goes back to this saint!

At the arch of the Mass, Archbishop Buechlein looked out at the students in the congregation who were wearing their distinctive school uniforms. “It’s like a rainbow of color,” he said. “It’s beautiful. [Today] is a special day. It’s the first feast day of St. Theodora. And many of us, myself included, were educated by the Sisters of Providence. …

“The next day, Kevin was knocking on our room in her home for the boy.

Here’s one story that will help people understand the love that Mary Helen Eckrich gave to Catholic school children through five decades as a teacher and a counselor: One of her former students had suffered the tragedy that no child should endure. First, his mother died. Then his father died. When Eckrich learned about the death of the boy’s father, the mother of seven children went to the funeral home and told the parish priest that she had room in her home for the boy.

“He’s still one of our kids.”

A number of former students feel that they’re “one of the kids” of Eckrich, who began teaching at Holy Name School in Beech Grove in the 1960s and retired from Father Thomas Seccina Memorial High School in Indianapolis in 2005.

Eckrich has also been a volunteer religious education teacher for 19 years. And she and her husband of 59 years, Matt—“my gift from God,” she says—have been involved in a parish Pre-Cana marriage preparation program for engaged couples for 20 years.

“I wanted my children—and other children I would be fortunate enough to teach—to know that God really loves them. And it’s a love that’s never going to go away,” says Eckrich, who considers herself to be a member of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

By John Shaughnessy

Education awards to honor those who make a difference

By John Shaughnessy

At the heart of Catholic education is the belief that a focus on faith and values will shape the life of a person—and that person will shape the world for the better.

On Nov. 7, five individuals who live that belief will be honored by the archdiocese’s Celebrating Catholic School Values: Scholarship and Career Achievement Awards.

The excitement swirling around Desautels—a longtime educator at St. Pius X School in Indianapolis—when it was announced on Oct. 3 that the school was selected as a 2007 Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education.

Yet what made the celebration even more special to so many is the St. Pius community was the immediate recognition that the honor wasn’t just a reflection of the recent academic success of the school.

Instead, the school community views the Blue Ribbon award as a testament to the parish’s 52-year commitment to providing quality Catholic education for children.

The honor was also viewed as a continuation of the success that archdiocesan schools have had in being recognized as Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence.

“It’s a wonderful validation of the hard work that everyone from St. Pius has done from the beginning. My uncle, Msgr. Charles Ross, was the founding pastor of the parish in 1955. The school was the big thing for him. He always wanted the best for the school. I’m sure he’s up in heaven celebrating, knowing his school is being recognized nationally.”

Current pastor Father Gerald Kehrlick noted that same theme after St. Pius was chosen as one of nine schools in Indiana—and the only Catholic school in the state—to earn the Blue Ribbon distinction in the past five years.

“Nothing can happen today that wasn’t begun years ago by principals, teachers and parents,” Father Kehrlick said. “We also have to give the credit to the parishioners who don’t have children here anymore or who never had

By John Shaughnessy

Taking stock for the future


St. Pius X School named Blue Ribbon School of Excellence

By John Shaughnessy

Theresa Desautels smiled as she watched students, parents and teachers celebrate a remarkable accomplishment that is becoming a tradition in Catholic schools in the archdiocese.

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See BLIZT, page 14
The power of God’s influence once again dawned on Father Todd Riebe when he was sent as a missionary priest to the Sudan in Africa in 1983.

“I thought I was going to be in a parish out in the bush,” Father Riebe recalls. “The day I arrived, the archbishop told me I was to be the principal of a Catholic high school. I was devastated. After a week, I learned that God knew better than I. The school, the students, and the parents became my parish.”

Father Riebe had a similar experience shortly after he arrived in Richmond in 1995 to lead the parishes of St. Mary, St. Andrew and Holy Family. A group of parents greeted him by asking him about creating a Catholic high school in that eastern Indiana city.

“God just kept giving it to me,” Father Riebe says with a laugh.

Seton Catholic High School opened in 2002. His commitment to Catholic education is stronger than ever.

“Catholic schools not only give a first-class education, they also give formation for life,” he says. “Everyone picks up a worldview one way or another. Now, more often than not in today’s society, that world view is opposed to the message of Catholic education.”

Riebe says that when he first met the girl who is now his wife of 53 years, Joann, he bragged to her Sunday school class about the times he was going to lead parishes.

“In school, we learned the importance of charity and reaching out to people,” says Wood, who also served as an attorney for the archdiocese from 1975 to 2005.

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“When it came down to choosing Catholic education for our sons and daughters, the decision was simple,” Riebe says.

“I'm just a firm believer in Catholic education. People come to receive Jesus.”

With babies, older people—it's wonderful to see all those people come to receive Jesus.”

In school, we learned the importance of charity and reaching out to people.”

“Whenever I enter a Catholic school, I'm always struck by how the Church provides additional services to those families. I think we're significantly strengthening some of those families.”

Michael Hudson

It seems especially fitting that Michael Hudson will be honored at this year’s award celebration. After all, he chaired the first Celebrating Catholic School Values dinner in 1996.

“It’s quite impressive to see how momentum has been generated by the hard work of the volunteers and the people of the archdiocese,” says Hudson, a member of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis. “Monsignor [Joseph F.] Schaeuel and the archbishop [Daniel M. Buechlein] have been very involved in the process.”

As someone who grew up around the oil fields of Texas, theCriterion’s Michael Hudson knows the riches that can spring from the development of a valued commodity. Now the chief executive officer of an energy company for 30 years, Hudson has supported the archdiocese’s commitment to providing Catholic education to students in center-city schools.

“I’m not a sociologist, but there are three things we build the strength of a community on,” he says.

“Parents come to the archdiocese in schools, they’re part of the process. Parents become more involved in their children’s education. Over the years, we’ve also seen how the Church provides additional services to those families. I think we’re significantly strengthening some of those families.”
Despite heat, faithful turn out for annual Life Chain, Respect Life Mass

By Mary Ann Wyand

Spiritual warfare was hot and tiring work for pro-life supporters in central and southern Indiana on Respect Life Sunday.

Unseasonably warm 90-degree weather distracted many Life Chain participants in Indianapolis, Columbus, Connersville, Greenwood, Greenfield and Terre Haute on Oct. 7 as they prayed for an end to abortion for 60 minutes in the swirling heat and unpleasant humidity.

But these dedicated Catholic and Protestant prayer warriors came armed with bottles of water, and faithfully continued praying for the conversion of minds and hearts influenced by the culture of death.

Their one-hour prayer vigils in Indiana and during more than 1,200 other Life Chains across the country marked the 20th anniversary of the founding of the national pro-life ministry.

Royce Dunn, director of the national Life Chain organization based in Yuba City, Calif., told This Criterion in a recent telephone interview that millions of people see the Life Chains every year.

He said this ecumenical ministry continues to convert abortion-minded people and save the lives of countless unborn babies year after year.

"God has taken this ministry and grown it across the country," Dunn said. "We're marking two decades of volunteers taking the pro-life message to the streets.

"Dunn, a Baptist, said the Life Chain ministry is based on biblical servanthood.

"It is wonderful the extent to which God has used the Life Chain to bring the Baptist preacher alongside the Catholic priest in prayer," Dunn said. "God hears all our prayers, and that's what is important. The Catholics have kept the pro-life fire burning even before many of us Protestants discovered [the need to pray for an end to abortion]. It's humbling to see how God has chosen to use the Life Chain in that regard.

"Central Indiana Life Chain participants in Indianapolis lined up along North Meridian Street and held signs that read "Abortion kills children," "Abortion harms women," "Adoption—the loving option," "Jesus forgives and heals" and "Lord, forgive us and our nation" on Sunday afternoon as thousands of football fans drove by on their way downtown to watch the Indianapolis Colts and Tampa Bay Buccaneers game at the RCA Dome.

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary parishioner Rose Kehoe of Indianapolis, a Central Indiana Life Chain committee member, said most Life Chain participants pray privately every day for an end to abortion and greater respect for life.

"Life Chains are "a once a year public expression of that prayer before God and members of the public who witness it," she said. "Our intention is to remind those who see it of the realities of abortion.

"Mgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general, was the celebrant for the archdiocesan Respect Life Sunday Mass on Oct. 7 at St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

"It is our choices that make who we are," he emphasized in his homily. "We can always choose to do the right thing.

"The vicar general said it is comforting to know that many people see helping others as part of their Christian duty. Jesus expects us to do our Christian duty, he said, and to do it well.

"Christians value life," Mgr. Schaedel said. "Christians defend life from conception to natural death. This afternoon, we're out on the street letting people know it. It's who we are. It's what we are supposed to do if we want to follow Christ. Our reward is simply doing the right thing. We do what Jesus asks us to do. Moral goodness provides its own rewards."

During the Mass, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner Steve Hamilton of Carmel, Ind., was honored by the Archdiocese Edward T. O'Meara Respect Life Award for distinguished volunteer service to the cause of life in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Lafayette Diocese.

"I want to thank you for recognizing my pro-life activities with this award," Hamilton said. "It would not have been possible without the support that I have received and the encouragement from my family, especially from my wife, Wanda, who passed away last year, and from members of our Respect Life ministry at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church. Your acts of pro-life voluntarism always inspire and enchant me."

Father Paul Landers, administrative manager of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Shelby County, prays the rosary during the Central Indiana Life Chain on Respect Life Sunday, Oct. 7, in front of St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

"More than 48 million unborn babies have been killed in abortions since 1973.

St. Andrew the Apostle parishioner Mary Jane Dye of Indianapolis sits in the shade during the Central Indiana Life Chain on Respect Life Sunday, Oct. 7 in Indianapolis. Temperatures climbed to 90 degrees on Respect Life Sunday. She and her husband, John, participate in the one-hour Life Chain prayer vigil every year.

Archdiocesan Youth Council president Michael "Mikey" Padilla, a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus, earned the Our Lady of Guadalupe Pro-Life Award for his outstanding pro-life service.

He accepted the award on behalf of "all the youth of the archdiocese who are on fire for God's love ... [and] bring great hope to the pro-life movement."

Quoting Pope John Paul II, he said, "Let us build a world worthy of God."
Be Our Guest/Thomas Gray

Potential donors, former inmates respond to RecycleForce story

We very much appreciated the thoughtful story written about our program on the front page of the Sept. 28 issue of The Criterion.

Here at Workforce/RecycleForce, we would like to thank the Catholic community for all the support we have been given.

We especially like to thank David Siler, executive director of Catholic Charities and Family Ministries for the archdiocese, for the support and faith he has demonstrated. And while the list of people and organizations in the Catholic community to whom we owe a note of gratitude is long, we would like to thank, in particular, Management 2000 and the Day family for the tremendous support they have repeatedly shown us.

Surprisingly, we have already received several phone calls from people wishing to donate computers. Hopefully, what has surprised me is the fact that we have already received more than a dozen phone calls from formerly incarcerated individuals who are looking for work who have seen the article.

We would encourage any and all employers to think about giving a second chance to an individual who is trying to get back on his feet. We would be more than happy to act as a matchmaker.

Again, we would like to thank the Catholic community for its support.

(Thomas Gray is president of RecycleForce Indianapolis.)

Letters to the Editor

Poignant story is a tribute to celebrating family and All Pro Dad

We at All Pro Dad were touched by John Shaugnessy’s article in the Sept. 21 issue of The Criterion about the development of All Pro Dad’s Day at Cardinal Ritter High School in Indianapolis, and the widespread influence that this spark is having on families across the world.

Especially loved this quote from Bill Bissmeyer: “If Dad’s Day was just based on love, it would have dried up and fizzled out,” he says. “It’s about the loss of a child. It’s about celebrating the kids we have. It’s about celebrating family.”

What a wonderful tribute to the Lord’s awesome power and grace!

— Mike Krokos

Our program offers practical information about the principles of Planned Parenthood.

However, what has surprised me is the introduction to the Acts of the Apostles from The New American Bible indicates that it is “the second volume of Luke’s two-volume work, [and] continues Luke’s presentation of biblical history, describing how the salvation promised to Israel in the Old Testament and accomplished by Jesus has now under the guidance of the Holy Spirit been extended to the Gentiles.”

I thank my students for pointing out this error with humble enthusiasm and The Criterion for its coverage of Catholic education.

— Anthony Basso

Indianapolis

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, past sensitivity and content.

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

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

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los triunfos Cristianos por la riqueza o por lo que cuentan. Invierto más que pasamos por alto un punto esencial de la historia de Jesús y de nuestra vida de discípulo. La de Cristo es una historia de promesa, sí, pero es una promesa de vida alcanzada sólo a través de la realidad de la cruz. Y así es también la vida de un cristiano, la historia que vivimos en la fe, no es una historia de triunfo a los ojos de muchos. Puede ser que el mensaje más elocuente que nos den nuestras parejas de aniversario es su entrega a la cruz en las cosas de la vida diaria. ¿Quién puede calibrar el poder espiritual de los sacrificios valerosos y resignados en la vida de los padres? Nuestros padres Cristianos y todos nosotros como cristianos vivimos en los días difíciles de una sociedad que se vuelva cada vez más materialista, donde la riqueza de la familia es más importante que el amor familiar.

Resulta obvio que las parejas que han sido bendecidas con un matrimonio que prospera en sus años dorados han recibido la gracia de Dios para que ella sea un gran éxito. Pero también es verdad que ellos aceptaron esa gracia. En un sentido, aceptaron a Dios como una tercera parte mutua en sus matrimonios. Son parejas que mantuvieron su fe y lo hicieron en oración.

Les per di nuestros celebrantes que continuaron tomando todo lo que se les presenta en el camino durante los años dorados para orar juntos y también aparte. Les dije que los necesitamos como una fuente generadora de oración. Nuestra juventud necesita vernos a los mayores rezar en la Iglesia y en el hogar. Nuestra juventud también nos necesita como testigos de un amor constante por nuestra Iglesia. Necesitamos ayuda para comprender que los sacramentos de la Iglesia nos sostienen en la fe, en la esperanza y en la caridad. Necesitamos ver que confiamos en la gracia de Dios y que nosotros mismos deseemos colocarnos en sus manos, especialmente en los momentos difíciles. ¿Dios bendiga a sus padres y abuelos?

Los celebrantes de bodas son un faro de esperanza para la juventud. La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en octubre. Nuestra juventud también nos necesita como testigos de un amor constante por nuestra Iglesia. Necesitamos ayuda para comprender que los sacramentos de la Iglesia nos sostienen en la fe, en la esperanza y en la caridad. Necesitamos ver que confiamos en la gracia de Dios y que nosotros mismos deseemos colocarnos en sus manos, especialmente en los momentos difíciles. ¿Dios bendiga a sus padres y abuelos?

¿Tiene una intención que desee incluir en la lista de oración del Arzobispo Buechlein? Puede enviar su correspondencia a:

La 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 octubre
Pastores Juveniles: Que ellos siempre puedan animar a los jóvenes a considerar dando servicio a la iglesia, sobre todo como sacerdotes y religiosos.
Events Calendar

October 12
Prime Banquet and Conference Center, 2635 E. National Ave., Indianapolis. St. Francis Spirit of Women program, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., $10 per person. Information: 317-865-5551.

October 13
St. Augustine Home for the Aging, 2345 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. Annual chili supper, 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m., $5 adult, $3 child, $20 maximum per family. Information: 317-284-1699.

October 14
B. Dalton Bookstore, 10020 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. Book signing, “A Belief in Providence: A Life of Saint Theodora Guérin,” Julie Young, author, 6-9 p.m.

October 12-November 10

October 17

October 18
Knights of Columbus Hall, 1021 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. Catholic Business Exchange, Archdiobvp Dan M. Buechlein, speaker, Mass, 6:30 a.m., buffet breakfast and program, $51 per person, reservation required in advance. Information: www.catholicbusinessexchange.org

October 16
St. Anthony Parish, 379 N. Warner Ave., Indianapolis. Eucharist Procession, 1:30 p.m., $3 per person.

October 20
St. Francis of Xavier Parish, 335 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. Divorce and Beyond Program, six-week session, 7:9 p.m., $50 per person includes materials. Information: 317-226-1906, 800-382-8836 or www.mylifexp.org

October 21
Prarie Village, 6944 E. 86th St., Indianapolis. Fifth annual health fair, 8:30-11:30 a.m. Information: 317-859-0080.

October 19
St. Isidore the Farmer Parish, 6051 S. Ridgeway Road, Indianapolis. Fall Festival and Shooting Match, 11:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., games. Information: 317-843-5713.

VIPS
Lawrence A. and Catherine (Molohon) Honan Jr., members of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 12. The couple was married on Oct. 12, 1967, at St. Joseph Church in Lebanon.

Paul and Mildred (Phelps) Herrman, members of Holy Family Parish in Richmond, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on Oct. 12. The couple was married on Oct. 12, 1957, at St. Anthony Church in Indianapolis.

The couple has four children: Jeanne Carter, Patricia Connatt, Jim and Thom Herrman. They have five grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

John and Sheila (Mears) Monfreda, members of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 31. They were married on Aug. 31, 1968, at St. Anthony Church in Indianapolis.

The couple has eight children: Marie Damler, Missionary of Charity Sister M. Zita Monfreda, Greg, John, Keith, Matt, Mike and Roger Monfreda. They have 18 grandchildren.

One person makes a difference when the mission of Christ meets the world. Be that person. Join us.

For more information contact: Father Leslie Blowers, M.M., Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers, P.O. Box 1924, Cincinnati, OH 45224 e-mail: mblowers@maryknoll.org phone: (513) 681-7888

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Hundreds celebrate St. Theodora’s feast day with Sisters of Providence

By Mary Ann Wyand

ST. MARY-OF-THE-WOODS—“Caution! Saint at work” and “A saint walked here” billboards featuring St. Theodora Guérin’s image greet travelers on Interstate 70 near Terre Haute.

The signs invite people to turn on Exit 3 at West Terre Haute and visit the Sisters of Providence motherhouse at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, which is the home of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Providence and the new National Shrine of St. Mother Theodore Guérin.

Providence sisters—who lovingly call their foundress St. Mother Theodore—celebrated her first feast day on Oct. 3 during an emotional Mass at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse with several hundred pilgrims who came in cars and a bus to participate in the historic liturgy.

Father Daniel Hopcus, chaplain for the congregation and the celebrant, thanked Provident God for the life of St. Mother Theodore, her prophetic witness to the Gospel, and her faithful pursuit of love, mercy and justice for God’s people.

Later this year, pilgrims who come to venerate St. Theodora’s remains in the church will also have an opportunity to sit outside on benches beside a new statue of St. Theodora Guérin—in this place, the site of her arrival, of her home, the center of her ministerial outreach and her final resting place,” Providence Sister Denise Wilkinson, general superior of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence, said during the liturgy.

“In a short time, we will have a six-foot bronze statue of St. Mother Theodore that will stand right outside the church,” Sister Denise said. “He had a statue of her signed by Teresa Clark placed in his room where he could see it, and he told me that … he had many conversations with her, and that she had become a living and hopeful presence in his life.”

Fleschner decided to donate money for the statue and benches to “have a place to be with her so that they could breathe in her strength and her comfort as he had done … and enjoy the beauty of the place she called home.”

Sister Denise said she believes that he felt St. Mother Theodore’s love and gained strength from her deep reliance on Providence in the midst of his suffering.

After the Mass, Sister Marie Kevin said Fleschner joined the Church last year at Easter at St. Patrick Church and traveled to Rome for St. Mother Theodore’s canonization Mass on Oct. 15, 2006.

They prayed together during his cancer journey, and she took communion to him until the day before he died at age 55.

Sister Marie Kevin downplays her own difficult cancer journey and healing, insisting that, “I don’t think it was exactly a miracle, but I got well.”

She said people tell her that they “feel drawn” to St. Mother Theodore when they see her picture, and Fleschner also talked about how he felt close to her.

Father Rick Ginther, pastor of St. Patrick and St. Margaret Mary parishes, said in a telephone interview that Fleschner joined the Church after his brother, Steve, and nephew, Paul, became Catholic.

“Sister Marie Kevin spoke one evening about suffering, … specifically about her survival of cancer,” Father Ginther said. “… They became very good friends. … He was a very specific friend in his illness and healing, insisting that, ‘I don’t think it was exactly a miracle, but I got well.’”

Fleschner, who had been diagnosed with cancer, became friends with Providence Sister Marie Kevin Tighe, the promoter of the saint’s cause and a cancer survivor, and Teresa Clark, the artist who created the saint’s official sculpture for reproduction as statues, during Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults classes two years ago at St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick parishes in Terre Haute.

During that time, Sister Denise said, he came to love St. Mother Theodore.

“As Larry moved through the different stages of a very devastating cancer, he took great comfort in Mother Theodore,” Sister Denise said.

“… They became very good friends. … He was a very spiritual man. He found comfort in Roman Catholicism … and Mother Theodore’s belief in God’s Providence. From what I understand from his family, even as he approached death, it wasn’t ‘Why me?’ It was, ‘All right. God provides, and God will take care of me even into death and into new life.’”

Providence Sister Barbara Doherty, coordinator of the shrine office, said St. Mother Theodore’s “birth date is Oct. 2 [1798], and her feast day is celebrated on Oct. 3. Her canonization day is Oct. 15, the foundation day is Oct. 22 [1840], and her beatification is Oct. 25 [1998]. For us, the whole month of October is celebrated as St. Mother Theodore’s month.”

Throughout the year, Providence sisters join pilgrims in prayer during Masses at the motherhouse church. A favorite petition is “Provident God, hear our prayer.”
Pope Benedict XVI said the commission’s report is an important part of a project being promoted by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to encourage universities, associations and individual scholars “to identify useful lines and convergences for a constructive and effective deepening of the doctrine on natural law.”

The Catholic Church teaches that natural law, whose basic norms are reflected in the Ten Commandments, is not a code of moral and ethical principles imposed on people by religion, but is a way of knowing right from wrong that is a part of human nature and can be identified by the use of human reason.

Because the principles are “accessible to every rational creature,” the pope said, they are a secure basis for dialogue and cooperation among all peoples and for the building of societies in which human dignity and freedom are protected. Unfortunately, Pope Benedict said, modern societies have lost sight of natural law and too many people are convinced that society or the majority of a society’s citizens is “the ultimate source of civil law.”

Then the problem becomes not the search for what is good, but for power or rather the balance of powers,” he said. At the root of this tendency lies ethical relativism, which some people even see as one of the principal conditions of democracy because relativism would guarantee tolerance and mutual respect,” the pope said.

However, Pope Benedict said, history has demonstrated repeatedly that the majority can be wrong and that only reason and openness to perennial moral principles can guarantee a just society. “When the fundamental needs of the dignity of the human person, human life, the institution of the family and equity in the social order—that is, basic human rights—are at play, no man-made law can subvert the norms written by the Creator in human hearts without society itself being dramatically attacked in what constitutes its necessary basis,” the pope said.

Natural law, he said, is “the true guarantee offered to everyone” so they can live in freedom, have their dignity respected and not be manipulated or exploited by the more powerful.

Pope Benedict said there is a need “to mobilize the consciences of all people of good will,” whether or not they are Christians, so that natural law is recognized as the only certain basis for regulating social life.

The pope also congratulated members of the theological commission on their document, “The Hope of Salvation for Infants Who Die Without Being Baptized,” which was published in April.

The document, which emphasized the importance of baptism as the ordinary means of salvation, said the traditional concept of limbo—as a place where unbaptized infants spend eternity in happiness but with no communion with God—seemed to reflect an “unduly restrictive view of salvation.”

Pope Benedict told commission members, “I trust that the document may be a useful point of reference for Church pastors and theologians, and also a help and source of consolation for faithful whose families have suffered the unexpected death of a baby before it could receive the cleansing of regeneration” brought by sacramental baptism. †
Taking stock for the future

Financial planning—Don’t wait: Do it now

**Catholic Spirit Syndication Service**

Planning for your financial future after retirement likely involves some of the most important decisions you will ever make.

Even if you are several years away from your last day on the job, experts suggest the earlier you begin to plan for retirement, the more peace of mind you’ll have during those long-awaited “golden years.”

**DO** start planning when you are in your middle to late 50s. “That’s the time to really take a good look at your financial picture,” said John Tetzloff, advance case specialist with the Catholic Aid Association in St. Paul. “In most families, the kids are grown and college is paid off. It’s a time when you’re in good health and able to make sound financial decisions.”

**DON’T** think that retirement options get better as you get older. “The fact is the time for you to build up your savings or make financial choices comes greater cost,” said Tetzloff. “Make sure to budget for taxation so you aren’t surprised.” Consult a professional financial planner.

**DON’T** take the spousal pension option automatically if you have a traditional pension. “Review the pension options very carefully to make sure the ones you choose are the best ones for your particular financial situation,” Robinson said.

**DO** make sure you have enough permanent life insurance to pay any remaining bills after your death. “You don’t want to leave your surviving spouse with a lot of debt,” Robinson said. Purchasing term insurance, especially if you are already in your 60s or 70s, “will not serve you well,” he added.

**DON’T** neglect burial insurance either. “That’s an expense you want to make sure is covered,” Robinson said.

**DO** make yourself aware of the tax ramifications of withdrawing money from IRAs and other accounts. “Changes result because it’s common for people to no longer have mortgage or dependent deductions,” said Tetzloff. “Make sure to budget for taxation so you aren’t surprised.” Consult a professional financial planner.

**DO** take the dollars out of your 401K account when you retire and roll them into an IRA. “This protects you and your money if your company finds itself in financial trouble down the line,” said Robinson.

**DO** make your financial wishes known to a trusted adviser or family member. “It is advisable that at least one individual knows where all your assets are located,” Tetzloff said.

**DON’T** think that retirement options get better as you get older. “The fact is the time for you to build up your savings or make financial choices comes greater cost.”

**DO** consolidate your assets. As you move toward retirement, think about consolidating your IRAs and other savings plans. Most people tend to become more conservative with their investments as they grow older and are willing to take fewer financial risks, which Tetzloff and other experts agree is the right course of action.

**DON’T** forget to take out a long-term health insurance policy if you haven’t done it. “I advise clients who are in their mid-40s to seriously take this into consideration,” said Dale Robinson, general manager of the Dale A. Robinson Agency for Knights of Columbus in St. Paul. “When you’re elderly and you find you need long-term health insurance for care, you can’t get it.”

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Mortgage woes creeping into higher income brackets

(As noted in a previous issue: The last names of some people in this story were withheld to protect their privacy.)

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (CNS)—When the manufacturing plant where Jason worked closed in 2004, he fell behind in his mortgage payments and was threatened with foreclosure.

Jamie fell into the traps laid by predatory credit lenders and disreputable mortgage companies.

Bill’s taxes and mortgage payments increased in 2004, but his income remained flat and he wasn’t able to keep up with his mortgage payments.

In each of these cases, Chemung County Catholic Charities’ Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Services was able to help the individuals work with their lenders and prevent foreclosure, according to Jane Galvin, program coordinator.

Contrary to popular belief, Galvin said, mortgage foreclosure is not a problem faced only by those with low incomes.

“‘It hits all ranges of income and status,’” she said.

Many of the people she has helped have been middle class, and had been used to living comfortably and even had donated to Catholic health organizations that provides hundreds of thousands of members with more choices in health care – more doctors to choose from, more places to go for care and more options to meet your health care budget! Choices that make both employers and employees feel good. But what makes Sagamore truly unique is our mission to treat all our members with respect, dignity, honesty and compassion.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Life’s a picnic when you’re with Sagamore!
Online retirement tools for tech-savvy boomers

Catholic Spirit Syndication Service

As the baby boomer generation approaches retirement, more seniors than ever are turning to a new tool for retirement planning—the Internet.

People between the ages of 50 and 64 are dedicated Internet users at home and at work, and they will carry those usage patterns over into the next phase of their lives—retirement, according to the Pew Internet and American Life Project. About 70 percent of adults in this age group are now online.

These Web-savvy boomers can find a variety of useful information for planning their retirement on the Web. Deciding when to retire, planning for Social Security and learning the facts about 401(k) fees are just some of the topics that can be found with the click of the mouse.

Here are three Web sites that provide a helpful window into this next phase of life.

Social Security Administration, whose Web site is www.ssa.gov/retire2

The Social Security Administration’s retirement planner provides detailed information about Social Security retirement benefits under current law. Users can click on benefit calculators to test out different retirement dates or levels of future earnings. The calculators show retirement benefit amounts as well as disability and survivor benefit amounts following disability or death.

The program offers information about Social Security programs and provides answers to some key questions like “What happens if you work after you retire?” and “How do certain types of earnings and pensions affect your benefits?”

For those nearing retirement, there are detailed instructions on how to apply for benefits, including which supporting documents are needed as well as an online application.

The easy-to-follow Web site’s sections include:

- Benefit calculators
- Quick calculator—Enter your date of birth and this year’s earnings for a simple, rough estimate of benefits.
- Online calculator—Include your complete earnings history and projection of future earnings until your retirement date for a more precise estimate.
- Detailed calculator—Download and install this calculator on your computer for the most precise estimates.

Near retirement?

The section contains a series of questions that guides the user step-by-step through the retirement process.

Frequently asked questions

U.S. Financial Literacy and Education Commission, whose Web site is www.mymoney.gov/retirement

This U.S. government Web site, available in both English and Spanish, offers a library of retirement resources at your fingertips.

Twenty-five retirement planning topics are listed in alphabetical order and include articles from and links to the U.S. Department of Labor, Federal Trade Commission, Department of the Treasury/Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration.

Highlights of this online library include:

- IRS guidelines on IRAs
- Defines traditional and Roth IRAs, who can use them, how contributions are made, withdrawal information/penalties/taxes and what’s new with IRAs for 2007.
- Living trusts
- Estate-planning key terms are explained as well as questions to ask and steps to take before signing papers to create a will, a living trust or any other kind of trust.
- SEP retirement and SIMPLE IRA plans for small businesses
- Reviews the advantages of a Simplified Employee Pension (SEP) plan and a Savings Incentive Match Plan for Employees (SIMPLE) IRA plan, and how to set up and operate both plans.
- Social Security information for women
- Since women represent 58 percent of all Social Security beneficiaries age 62 and older and approximately 71 percent of those age 85 and older, the Social Security Administration has outlined cost-of-living protections and other important information for women.
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), whose Web site is www.aarp.org/money

AARP’s Web site offers a comprehensive retirement planning overview section featuring the AARP retirement planning calculator, a guided tour through various types of retirement investment accounts, and a wealth of information on how to manage your money during retirement.

The first step to use this resource, available in both English and Spanish, is the retirement planning calculator—an easy-to-use tool to find out how much money you’ll need in retirement.

There’s also an excellent, quick 10-question quiz—“Will You Be Able To Afford Retirement?”—that tests your knowledge on what it takes to be secure in retirement.

Other sections include:

- Managing money in retirement
- Discusses making the most of what you have through planning, nontaxable gifts, annuities and lifestyle choices, such as how and where you live.

“Mission Retirement”

A five-part retirement planning video you can watch on your computer screen covering planning and saving for retirement, the benefits of tax-advantaged savings opportunities and managing your assets in retirement.

401(k)s

A section reviewing the investment, administrative and individual fees for 401(k) plans and tips for getting the most out of this savings vehicle, including reviewing the plan at least twice yearly if approaching retirement and looking at your contribution amounts and allocations.

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Older Americans: Fewer live in poverty, but many still struggle

By Julie Asher

The financial situation of older Americans has improved significantly over the past four decades, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics and a fact sheet on poverty issued by Ohio State University Extension.

In 1959, people age 65 and up accounted for 35.2 percent of all people in poverty in the U.S. The nation had about 178 million people in 1959, and about 40 million lived in poverty. Now they make up just under 10 percent of the nation’s 373 million poor people. Today the U.S. population is about 298 million.

Much of the change over that time period, the fact sheet said, can be attributed to retirees’ pension plans and to government programs, including Medicare, Social Security cost of living adjustments or Supplemental Security Income for the elderly blind and disabled.

“Today’s older Americans are very different from their predecessors,” said a Census Bureau report commissioned by the National Institute on Aging.

They live longer, are in better health and have achieved a higher level of education, which is linked to “higher income, more wealth and a higher standard of living in retirement,” it said.

But that’s not the complete picture. While “the financial circumstances of older people have improved dramatically . . . there are wide variations in income and wealth,” the report said.

“Poverty rates vary by group,” it added.

Older women, for example, are more likely to be living in poverty than older men—13 percent versus 7 percent. The report said 24 percent of older blacks and 20 percent of older Hispanics are more likely to live in poverty compared to about 8 percent of older non-Hispanic whites.

What life is like for older Americans with limited means is something Sister Kathleen Rickelman sees every day as a volunteer at the Kankakee, Ill., office of Catholic Charities of the Joliet Diocese.

A member of the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary, Sister Kathleen works with low-income and destitute Americans 65 and older in the city of Kankakee and Kankakee County.

Sister Kathleen helps people apply for government benefits and provides them with basic necessities, such as food, coats and blankets. If someone can’t pay an electrical bill, she provides a voucher to cover it when she can.

Catholic Charities relies on donations to provide that assistance.

When told that nationally the poverty rate for elderly people in general has dropped substantially over the past four or more decades, she said that where she is she doesn’t see any evidence of that.

“Yesterday we had somebody who had to make a choice between buying groceries and buying medicine,” she said.

The current U.S. poverty threshold for a person 65 and over living alone is an annual income of $9,060, but Sister Kathleen knows elderly people who live on between $5,000 and $6,000 a year.

One month recently, her office gave out $2,000 from a special fund to help elderly people pay for their medications. Her elderly clients have Medicare, but that only covers 80 percent of their medical bills, and most don’t have supplemental health insurance to take care of the remaining 20 percent.

“I am doing the very best I can for the most people I can,” Sister Kathleen said. “It is heartbreaking to see some of them come in: They can hardly walk, they can’t see, they can’t hear.”

But the 75-year-old nun, whose volunteer job is nearly full time, said she and a lot of “wonderful volunteers” are working hard to improve the lives of the elderly poor.

“I firmly believe this is what God sent me for,” she said.

Sister Kathleen also doesn’t like to describe Catholic Charities clients in Kankakee as “poor.”

“They’re economically deprived, but they are not ‘poor’—they are spiritually wealthy, so giving and generous,” she said.

(Julie Asher is national editor at Catholic News Service.)
By Peggy Weber
Catholic News Service

Proponents of privatizing Social Security have “created an unnecessary fear” about the program’s future, according to Greg Anrig, vice president of The Century Foundation, a public policy research group founded in 1918.

In an interview, Anrig said Social Security faces many challenges, “but in recent years there has been a drumbeat of fear-mongering on Social Security’s future.”

Anrig said “the nature of the problems are not nearly as severe as those who want to transform it say.”

He said there is no need for an overhaul of the entire system and that “we can make relatively minor adjustments, sooner rather than later, to sustain Social Security.”

Amid all the bad press regarding Social Security, Anrig said that 2018, the year Social Security’s trustees point Social Security will tap into the interest on the trust funds, “is not the real year of concern since at that point Social Security will tap into the interest on the trust funds.

“From the standpoint of the federal budget, after 2018 some general revenues will be needed to pay the difference between each year’s payroll taxes and guaranteed benefits,” he said. However, the trust funds are there to help until adjustments are made.

Anrig thinks that privatizing Social Security would not be a good idea.

“The biggest problem would be the cost of making that change,” he said. “Diverting payroll taxes into private accounts would cause a much more immediate and severe crisis for all.”

And he said Social Security’s disability and survivor’s insurance would be decimated under privatization.


“Even if Congress were to leave Social Security untouched, the program would be able to pay currently guaranteed benefits in full until 2042. Thereafter, about 70 percent of promised benefits would be financed,” according to Anrig.

He also suggests it is a myth to hold that “Social Security isn’t sustainable.”

Taxpayers should take a careful look at the federal budget and realize that some changes in it easily could assist Social Security and eliminate any panic, he advises.

“The new prescription drug benefit enacted... will cost more than twice as much as eliminating the Social Security shortfall. So saying that Social Security isn’t sustainable is simply wrong,” Anrig said. “The program’s entire 75-year shortfall could be paid for simply by rescinding just a third of the planned tax cut, which primarily benefits the highest earners,” according to Anrig.

Another myth Anrig addressed is that Social Security’s trust funds are filled with worthless IOUs. That’s a scare tactic, he believes.

He said the trust funds hold “nothing but U.S. Treasury securities,” and therefore are backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government.

Anrig said that 2018, the year Social Security’s trustees project that payroll taxes no longer will exceed that year’s benefits paid out, is not the real year of concern since at that point Social Security will tap into the interest on the trust funds.

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St. Pius was among the 287 schools honored nationally by the No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools program. According to archdiocesan officials, St. Pius is the 25th of 71 Catholic schools in the archdiocese to earn the national recognition. No other diocese in the United States has matched that distinction.

"Once again, I am thrilled that the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has gained national recognition," said Annette "Mickey" Lentz, executive director for Catholic education and faith formation for the archdiocese. "St. Pius is so deserving of this award. Their success indicates much hard work over time. I am very proud of the school and its leadership as well as those whose shoulders they stand on."

The formal announcement of the honor was made to the St. Pius community after the weekly school Mass on Oct. 3, the feast day of St. Theodora Guérin, the pioneer of Catholic education in Indiana.

During the brief ceremony, the saint’s influence was noted by the archdiocese’s superintendent of Catholic schools, Ronald Costello. "I think it’s great we were able to announce this on her feast, considering her commitment to academic excellence," Costello said.

After thanking teachers, priests, parents, parishioners and volunteers, St. Pius X principal Ted Caron turned to the students and said, "Do you know who we also need to thank? All of you. When you go home and work hard on your homework or study for that test, it’s one of the reasons we won this award."

Catholic schools are nominated for the award by the Council for American Private Education. Blue Ribbon schools are then chosen based upon the following three criteria, according to G. Joseph Peters, the archdiocese’s associate executive director for Catholic education.

- Schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance on state tests.
- Schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on test scores.
- Private schools that achieve in the top 10 percent in the nation.

St. Pius X School will be honored at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 12-13. Plans are also being made at the parish and the school to celebrate the honor.

"It’s well-deserved," said Julie Dietrick, the mother of four children who have attended St. Pius. "My fourth child, Annie, is in the eighth grade. The school makes them absolutely ready for high school and college. It’s a great place."
Faith gives people stability in a changing world

By Jem Sullivan

Claude Monet, the French Impres- sonist, is known for his remarkable series of paintings of Rouen Cathedral. He was so taken with the beauty of this massive Gothic cathedral that he painted close to 30 scenes of its west facade. Each canvas depicts the same view of the cathedral, but no two are alike. Monet captures the same scene in 30 different variations of light, color, weather and season. And he gives us a visual image of the rapidly changing world that surrounds each day.

It has often been said that change is one of the defining marks of the scientific, information and technological age in which we live. The latest scientific and medical breakthroughs and technologies are rendered obsolete almost instantly by ever-new advances.

Think, for example, of the cell phone or computer you once used and the rapid advances in communication technology since then. Or take, for instance, the ever-changing advice on the technology since then. Or take, for instance, the ever-changing advice on the health benefits of foods we eat each day. It would be fair to say that the only constant thing in our world is change! As disciples of Christ, we approach change in society through the lens of faith. God’s word sheds divine light on our human experiences and guides us to better understand the benefits as well as the limits of the many changes all around us.

At times, we might welcome and embrace change in our world. At other times, we resist changes in society when they devalue the dignity of the human person and distract from our divine origin, purpose and destiny.

As Christians, we believe that beneath all that changes there is much that is unchanging, much that is ultimately rooted in Christ, who is the unchanging face of God’s love in our world.

The bishops of the Second Vatican Council reflected on the rapid changes in the modern world in the document “Gaudium et Spes.” In it, they drew attention to the paradoxical state in which Christians live their faith today.

They acknowledged the deep-seated changes in the social, political and cultural areas of life, and noted the advancements in the scientific and technological orders, in attitudes, moral values and religious commitments of people in our time. While technology, science and medicine advance, there is a parallel weakening of spiritual and religious worldviews.

Modern life is a paradox, the council bishops also pointed out. In their own words, they drew attention to the “dichotomy of a world that is at once powerful and weak, capable of doing what is noble and what is base, disposed to freedom and slavery, progress and decline, brotherhood and hatred.”

Humankind is growing conscious that the forces of change unleashed are in our hands and it is up to us to control them or be enslaved by them. Herein lies the modern dilemma.

How are Christians to contend with such rapid and pervasive changes in our world?

Change challenges us to think more critically about the relationship of faith and life. As we witness, read or hear about changes in our neighborhoods, communities, cities and country, we are invited to reflect on the transforming power of faith on culture.

How might the Gospel speak to a much-changed world? Does how the example of Jesus show us a clear path of loving witness and gentle conviction in the face of rapid change? How do the teachings of the Church shed light on complex and emerging issues of life and death, of human relationships and advancing technologies?

These questions are the stuff of adult faith formation. If we desire to make sense of the rapid developments in society, we must explore our ongoing faith formation in the word of God and in Christian faith becomes a priority.

When we put “first things first,” in that wonderful phrase of C.S. Lewis, we are able to better discern the potentially positive or harmful effects of change in society. Our commitment to ongoing faith formation—Scripture study, faith-sharing and service of the poor—gives us a firm footing in a rapidly evolving world.

As we ponder the intersection of faith and life through our experience of change in the world, we can rely on the wisdom and certainty that faith brings. God is unchanging, and Jesus Christ is the “same yesterday, today and forever” (Heb 4:12).

When our faith is rooted in God’s revelation in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, then change does not make us restless, frustrated or anxious. For even in the midst of rapid change, we rest our hearts, minds and spirits on the eternal and timeless love of God. We become, in turn, the constant and loving presence of God in the changing world around us.

(From “This Week’s Question” in Faith Alive!)

Faith formation must be tied to real life issues

By Carole Norris Greene

In 2003, Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany, N.Y., named four qualities that Church leaders need to guide others in today’s changing and very challenging times—joy, flexibility and openness to change!

Bishop Hubbard cited Pope John Paul II’s apostolic letter for the new millennium, “Nostra Aetate,” which stressed that “all pastoral initiatives must be rooted in holiness,” in “an authentic, Christ-filled, God-oriented relationship with Christ,” thereby leading to “service to others and the commitment to lifelong faith formation and spiritual growth.” This lifelong faith formation, Bishop Hubbard added, must be integrated with real life issues.

It will be “critically important,” Bishop Hubbard observed, for Church leaders “well into the third millennium” to seek ways to “respond to the hunches of the 78 million aging baby boomers . . . and the 38 million Generation Xers . . . who . . . have stated overwhelmingly that a relationship with God and adherence to one’s faith community are important to their lives, even though many of them cannot name any of the four Gospels or more than two or three of the Ten Commandments or eight religious services only sporadically, if at all.”

(“This Week’s Question” in Faith Alive!)

Discussion Point

From year to year, faith holds us together

This Week’s Question

The world changes rapidly. But how do you think your life and concerns are like those of your grandparents?

“I think the most common concerns of people remain the same: their families, their relationships, being part of a community, and the ability to survive. The externals change, but the people are the same.” (Dawn Willenborg, Kansas City, Kan.)

“The morals and values of people, families making sacrifices or fasting and praying; things like that don’t change. I feel that things move too rapidly today due to technology . . . and they keep my grandkids falling short of enjoying things we enjoyed as kids—like nature and the simple things.” (Marcella Garduno, Chumney, N.M.)

“One thing that holds us together is faith. It doesn’t change. Faith is solid and truth is solid, and that’s what holds us together. Everyone always worries about their children and the choices they make, about our country and world in general, and direction they are going. But we always have to remember to trust in Jesus Christ, and he will pull us through.” (Elizabeth Matacia, Northern, Wis.)

“Our concerns are consistent with our life—family, the bond between family members. There are always problems, but we can seek strength from God and seek his wisdom through prayer. I got my strong faith from my grandmother, and I try to pass it on by spending time with my grandchildren to share and to (encourage) closeness.” (Betty Sheehan, St. Clair Shores, Mich.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: What attitudes or approaches are needed to address a troubled situation constructively?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to cgreene@catholicnews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100.
Biblical women: Jephthah kills his daughter

(Edited in a series of columns)

If there is any episode in the Book of Judges that should shock us, it has to be the story of Jephthah and his daughter. The story clearly indicates the power and authority that men held over women and children during these days of the Israelites.

Jephthah led the Israelites in a battle against the Ammonites, who lived in modern Jordan. He was the son of Gilead and a harlot, and Gilead's wife was said to have tricked him out of a son from Gilead. So he fled from Palestine. Later, though, when the Ammonites were warring against the Israelites, the elders of Gilead persuaded Jephthah to lead them in battle. Jephthah first tried to make peace with the Ammonites, but to no avail, so he prepared for battle.

As his army was marching toward the battle, Jephthah made a vow to the Lord that, if God would deliver the Ammonites into his hand, he would offer as a burnt offering to the Lord whatever came out of his doors to meet him when he returned in triumph. God clearly saw to it that the burnt offering of his human sacrifice to God according to the custom of his pagan neighbors.

However, his forces were successful and inflicted a severe defeat on the Ammonites. When he returned to his home, his beloved daughter was the first to come running out of his house, happily playing the tambourine and dancing in celebration. She was a very lively child.

Alas, he had made a vow to God. He told his daughter about the vow and said that she couldn't come to the Ceilidh. Then, unfortunately, his daughter agreed that he had made a vow and would have to keep it.

She pleaded only that she be permitted to go away with her girl friends for two months "to mourn my virginity." For Israelite women, bearing children was a woman's greatest pride and responsibility, and Jephthah's daughter asked to mourn the day that she would have to die without bearing children.

Jephthah agreed and his daughter and her friends went away for two months. They returned and Jephthah killed her as a sacrificial offering to God. The Bible does not go into detail on how he killed her. As we read this passage, we must conclude that God is logical, but not every event he causes is logical. The Bible clearly states that God caused the Ammonites to fall into one of the Israelites' hands, and it was logical that he should be, while evolution is a theory of creation based on empirical science. Each is correct within its own terms, and the question is whether or not one or the other may have an application to the problem of human understanding, evolution makes sense. Now, if we want to argue about literal creationism versus creation by God explained in symbolic terms, I'm all for it. For a question which I believe that creation took seven literal days since it is a human invention anyway. So, Jephthah's vow to God.

We're here because we're here. Let's make the most of it.

Cynthia Dewes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greensville, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.†

Faithful Lines/ Shirley Vogler Meister

Ideas for traveling in good conscience

A small notice in my parish bulletin suggests that those interested in the "green movement" would be able to pack a bag heavy with conscious travel. I was interested in this and received an e-mail from a church called "Travelling Right: Ethical Tips for Your Next Trip"

Yes, we need to be concerned about where we travel, even when we're away, too.

Although I know that my husband and I and our family have always tried to travel in ways that left where we had been a better place today, there's more to help do this.

Gimundo, the "Travelling Right" is located at www.gimundo.com, which I mentioned in a recent column, notes, "If you've got a conscience, a vacation abroad is a constant conundrum. How can you be sure that you are supporting rather than damaging the environment and local culture, wherever you may roam?"

In the past, after my research about where we were headed and what we needed—especially since we mostly carry-on bags, my research has focused on the nature and travel stresses. Unfortunately, we cannot do that now because of ongoing travel restrictions and unforeseen trip itineraries.

Especially as we go on vacation abroad, Gimundo says, "in the past, after my research about where we were headed and what we needed—especially since we mostly carry-on bags, my research has focused on the nature and travel stresses. Unfortunately, we cannot do that now because of ongoing travel restrictions and unforeseen trip itineraries."

Paul and I did this when traveling to Austria, Germany and Italy ages ago. Now we have two ways to consider, i.e., the environmental impact of greenhouse gases from planes and autos. Not to mention the carbon footprint of websites (www.TerraPass.com) to support clean energy and environmental projects worldwide that neutralize the negative impact on the environment.

Another piece of advice: Give the locals a break, no matter what they are doing on vacation. Going to www.sunfluffytruck.com will explain what's most needed in the community where you are headed.

Another suggestion is to sign up for a volunteer vacation. Such philanthropic opportunities can be found by checking for the perfect volunteer trip on you. Gimundo also suggests a backpack, the latest Lonely Planet guide and a camera. Then you'll be able to pack up with a guilty conscience.

What they don't mention is how to be a tourist guilt-free while gone. It is always gratifying to find Catholic churches when traveling. We have rarely missed Sunday Mass when away from home, even when in some wilderness areas. We planned ahead without the help of the latest "Coding the Territory" Experiment on a pumpkin's face. Step into a zany Halloween costume.

" Apparently purposeless activity" serves a holy purpose.

(Christina Capocci is a freelance writer from Inner Grove Heights, Minn. E-mail her at christinacapocci@gmail.com)
Daily Readings

Monday, Oct. 15
Teresa of Jesus, virgin and doctor of the Church
Romans 1:1-7
Psalm 98:1-4
Luke 11:29-32

Tuesday, Oct. 16
Hedwig, religious
Margaret Mary Alacoque, virgin
Romans 1:16-25
Psalm 19:2-5
Luke 11:37-41

Wednesday, Oct. 17
Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr
Romans 2:1-11
Psalm 62:2-3, 6-7, 9
Luke 11:42-46

Thursday, Oct. 18
Luke, evangelist
2 Timothy 4:10-17b
Psalm 145:10-13ab, 17-18

Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

Jesus is truly God and also, fully, completely human

We read your column faithfully and have a question that comes up often about our Lord. It seems there are people in the Church—clergy, religious and laity—who for some reason want to play down the humanity of Jesus. I heard a well-known nun comment that Jesus was not afraid to face his horrendous suffering and death. However, in the Gospels we read that he had tears drop of blood in fear and anticipation of his coming death. The New Testament tells us he was like us in every way except that he didn’t sin. Why do some Catholics feel that they have to sugarcoat his life? (Nebraska)

As you are obviously aware, your question involves one of the key mysteries of our Christian faith, the belief that in the Incarnation, the eternal Son of God took on a human nature. Jesus is truly God and fully, completely human. Nearer from the first days of Christianity, however, the Church has been obliged to contend with groups who tried to “solve” that mystery, to make it more acceptable, by denying one or the other of those two poles. Some denied that Jesus was really God. Large wings of the Christian Church, however, held that while he was truly God, he was not, in fact, human. Some spoke of Jesus’ mind, his intellect, in such a way that it nearly destroys the humanity of that mind. They seemed to say that, particularly in a crisis, he possessed a kind of trancendence of God’s humanity, which made him immune to normal human sufferings and tensions. How far can one go with this without claiming that Jesus did not really, but only seemed to, have a human intelligence and nature? Another divergent faction was called Docetism. The name comes from the Greek word “dokeô,” which means appearance or something imagined. Jesus appeared to the human, to do human things, but that was only an illusion produced by God to make himself seem fully human. Obviously, that is not what our Catholic faith and the faith of most other churches teaches about Christ. The Church dealt with this problem, among other ways, in the early ecumenical councils and the creeds, such as the Nicene Creed and the Apostles’ Creed. The reality of the two natures in Christ was the main point of the Council of Ephesus in 431 when it declared as an article of faith that “Mary is the mother of God.”

One cannot accept that sentence without believing that Mary’s child is God, and that as his mother she brought him to birth as a human being. Regardless of that dogma, however, as you observe, Docetism in some form and other off-center attempts to resolve the mystery of the Incarnation by denying our Lord’s humanity have never quite died out in the Church. Isn’t it asking too much, isn’t it totally beneath God’s dignity, even blasphemous, to assert that God, without ceasing to be God, became a member of the human family? Hence, the assertions of human frailties that implies, even to the point of denying that our answer is no. In some mystery of divine Providence, God found it fitting in his plan to save us, and reveal his eternal love by becoming a member of the human family.

The pronouncements in Scripture about Jesus growing, learning, suffering, weeping and struggling with weakness and fear are as indispensable for the faith of the early Christians as they are to us.

(A free brochure in English or Spanish, answering questions about Catholics ask about baptism practices and sponsors, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 3515, Peoria, IL 61612. Copies may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address or by e-mail in care of jdietzen@aol.com.)


DAHLKAMP, Bernice, 92, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Sept. 25.

Davi, John R., 90, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Sept. 27. Father of Emilee Squire and Jo Ellen Davis. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of five.


Hively, Mary Elizabeth, 55, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Sept. 25. Mother of Christina and John Hively. Sister of Margaret Dobrozsi and Dale Dichter.


O’Connor, Doris Marie Riis, 92, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Indianapolis, Sept. 26. Mother of Clare Bradshaw, Margaret O’Connor Campbell, Kathleen Oskiak, Eileen Willerson, Judith, Nancy, Brian, Dan, Mary, Mark, Kevin and Terry O’Connor. Grandmother of 38. Great-grandmother of one.


http://www.CriterionOnline.com
Monks collaborate on hymn in honor of St. Theodora

By Sean Gallagher

ST. MEINRAD—Sometimes God’s Providence unfolds slowly over the years. At other times, it works in a flash of inspiration.

That’s what happened recently for Benedictine Father Tobias Colgan, the prior, or second in leadership, of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad.

He was asked to compose a tune for a hymn text written by Benedictine Father Harry Hagan, the community’s novice master, in honor of St. Theodora Guérin.

Benedictine Father Jeremy King, Saint Meinrad’s choirmaster, had asked the two priests in early August to collaborate on the hymn that was to be sung by the monks on Oct. 3, St. Theodora’s feast day.

In early September, Father Harry, after working 25 to 30 hours on the hymn text, e-mailed three stanzas of it to Father Tobias.

“I feel a little guilty because my process was much shorter than Father Harry’s,” Father Tobias said. “I received that e-mail at about seven in the morning. And by 7:12 a.m., I think the melody was finished.”

“I was jealous,” Father Harry joked.

On the feast day, the community performed it as a thanks-giving hymn after Communion during its daily Mass.

Providence Sister Regina Marie McIntyre, who has served as an associate organist at Saint Meinrad for six years, was on hand for the liturgy.

“She was overawed because we [sisters] are used to Mother Theodore belonging to the Sisters of Providence, her through tough times. She never gave up on God or anything else.”

God did see St. Theodora through life’s challenges, first as a young girl in France then later when she entered religious life and became a missionary, and helped found Catholic education and the Sisters of Providence at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in Indiana, Msgr. Schaedel said.

Msgr. Schaedel encouraged the students to follow St. Theodora’s example of trusting in God.

“We can always choose to do the right thing,” he said.

“Our choices make us who we are. And do we want to be?”

Awded by her courage

After the Mass, Karen Keyfer said she was awed by the courage that St. Theodora showed in life.

“She was a wonderful woman who did so many things,” said Karen, an eighth-grade student at Holy Cross Central School in Indianapolis.

“I probably wouldn’t be able to lose that many family members in (my) life,” she added.

Keyfer Deminson, another eighth-grade student at Holy Cross, said he was impressed by the life that St. Theodora lived, especially her coming to Indiana from France as a missionary.

“It is hard to imagine that we have our own saint,” he said during his homily.

“In our prayer, we acknowledge St. Theodore as our friend. She prays for us. And what an extraordinary joy that we have a formally declared saint from our local Church in Indiana to encourage us and to spur us on to become holy.”

INFLUENCE

continued from page 1

on hand for the Mass. Like her son, she attended Holy Family School and later graduated from Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School.

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ship she showed to others.

The hymn tune, which has been named “Providence,” is available to be downloaded at no charge on Saint Meinrad’s Web site.

(To download the hymn honoring St. Theodore, log on to http://www.saintmeinrad.edu and click on “Archabbey” and then on “Liturgical Music.”)