Pope Benedict XVI met with the superiors of religious orders recently, most media coverage participants left feeling encouraged and even...

By Sean Gallagher

Lent is often viewed as a journey where the faithful spiritually accompany Christ on his way through Calvary to the empty tomb of Easter. But this pilgrimage is manifested in a rather physical way in Rome, where scores of English-speaking Catholics daily make their way through the streets to participate in an early morning Mass at the “station church” assigned to each day of Lent.

This tradition is rooted in the early history of the Church. In the fourth and fifth centuries, the bishop of Rome began visiting his parish churches on a regular basis. There are more station churches than there are days of Lent so some churches are assigned days during other parts of the liturgical year. But Lent is a season where the station churches are given special attention.

The pope continues to celebrate Ash Wednesday Mass at the Basilica of Santa Sabina, the first of the station churches, and he will sometimes visit other churches on the Sundays of Lent, as he did on Feb. 24.

Over the years, archdiocesan seminarians and priests studying in the Eternal City have participated in this devotion of visiting the station churches. Seminarian Sean Danda is in his third year of studies at the Pontifical North American College in Rome (NAC), and came to value the station churches after his first Ash Wednesday visit to Santa Sabina.

“I began to see how the past touched upon the present, and just how our faith developed over the centuries like an acorn that grows into an oak tree,” he said in an e-mail interview. “Santa Sabina is part of a long and unbroken tradition. The beauty, the quiet and the prayer possible in that church drew me into the faith that existed past, present and future at that place.”

Although the tradition is in many ways unbroken, it hasn’t always been as strongly attended to as it is at present. When Msgr. Frederick Easton, archdiocesan vicar judicial, was studying canon law in Rome during the late 1960s, it was more difficult to make it to the churches for Mass in English. But at least made the effort to visit many of the churches sometime during the day: “It was almost like a symbol of Lent.”

Msgr. Easton said. “It linked me back to the earlier Church. And it gave me a sense of being connected back to the history of the whole Lenten praxis of the Church.”

Seminarian Sean Danda stands in front of the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome on Feb. 21. The basilica is one of the station churches in Rome assigned to each day of Lent. Seminarians from the Pontifical North American College and other English-speaking in Rome celebrate Mass early each morning of Lent at the churches.

Pope offers encouragement to religious orders

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—When Pope Benedict XVI met with the superiors of religious orders recently, most media coverage focused on the pope’s description of the “difficult crisis” that religious life is facing. But like many papal talks and encounters, his realistic assessment of problems was matched by appreciation, encouragement and some advice for the future.

At the end of the 90-minute session, participants left feeling encouraged and even “thrilled” at the pope’s interest and support, according to one participant in the closed-door meeting. The encounter had been requested for several years by the international federations of male and female religious orders so just the fact that it happened was considered a positive development.

Present at the Feb. 18 meeting were the pope, three Vatican officials and 21 superiors general who represented, in a sense, the approximately 950,000 men and women religious around the world.

In a brief prepared talk, the pope spoke frankly about clouds on the horizon of religious life and the process of secularization that “unfortunately does not spare even religious communities.”

He cited some promising signs, too, including new forms of religious life marked by simplicity and austerity. But he said the Church’s oldest religious orders have experienced “a difficult crisis due to the aging of members, a more or less accentuated diminishing of vocations, and even sometimes a spiritual and charismatic fatigue.”

“The crisis, in some cases, has reached worrisome proportions,” he said. “There were the quotes highlighted in many reports on the meeting: The pope’s words were seen as reflecting deep Vatican dissatisfaction with mainstream religious orders in general.

But as usual, the view from the inside...
By the early 1970s, however, the seminarians at the NAC had started to follow the tradition more closely. Msgr. Mark SwarczkoF, pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, was a seminarian there at the time.

“It wasn’t a time to go touring,” he recalled. “As a matter of fact, we were all in such a hurry to get to school, it was a rush to get there in time for Mass. So it was clearly a Lenten devotion.

The NAC seminarians usually walk together to the churches, some of which can take an hour to reach on foot.

“Father Lewandowski said the cold in Rome is a darn cold. It kind of seeps through you. And, of course, none of these churches had heating in them. So oftentimes, you’d be there bundled up in a heavy coat while it could be rainy and it could be cold.”

By that point, various language groups in Rome were following the tradition closely.

“One was always wanting to weasel in on that great time that we had just before school,” Msgr. DudaF said. “We’d have to fight off the Germans. We’d have to tell our holismists that we only had 25 minutes so they couldn’t go long.”

As a seminarian, DudaF wasn’t bothered with such details. He has the time to appreciate the beauty of each station church and how they are a living testimony to so many who died for the faith and made the faith what it is today.

“These churches teach us that it is beautiful faith and one worth dying for,” DudaF said. “I think about the millions upon millions of pilgrims who have come to pray at these holy places.”

There are other problems, too, including the increasing defecation rate of new entrants. In many places, 40 percent to 60 percent of those entering religious order formation programs leave before making their final commitment.

Father Lewandowski said his own Crosier order has projected that its membership will decline by half over the next 10 years. Every order is trying to tackle the problem and attract new vocations, he said.

According to official Church statistics, from 1978 to 2005 the number of religious priests worldwide declined from 158,000 to 137,000, while religious brothers decreased from about 75,000 to 55,000. The sharpest drop was in the number of women religious, which went from 953,000 to 783,000.

The situation is clearly going to get worse in coming years, mainly because of the aging population of the largest religious orders. There are other problems, too, including the secular principle of being useful to society in educational, health care or other areas of society in educational, health care or other areas of society.

It’s certainly an entirely wrong perspective, urging a renewed focus on the religious, which went from 985,000 to 137,000, while religious brothers decreased from about 75,000 to 55,000. The sharpest drop was in the number of women religious, which went from 953,000 to 783,000.

PILGRIMAGE

This is the home page of a Web site run by the Pontifical North American College in Rome that allows visitors to learn more about the station churches of the city that are assigned to each day of Lent. It can be accessed at www.pnac.org/station_churches-station_index.htm.

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Media is watching evangelicals, but Catholic votes still key

WASHINGTON (CNS)—All the punditry about religion in this year's presidential election seems to be about evangelical Republicans. Will the evangelicals vote for former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee because he is a Baptist minister? Would they not vote for former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, out of the race since Feb. 7, because he is a Mormon?

Will the conservative evangelicals who made up the GOP base that won the last two presidential elections line up behind Sen. John McCain of Arizona? It was only four years ago that pandalos were consumed with the political leanings of Catholics. Would they back Democratic Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, the first Catholic-major party nominee since John F. Kennedy? Would the election outcome be affected by the statements of some bishops who said Kerry's support for keeping abortion legal meant he should be denied Communion, and a few who suggested Catholics should not vote for him?

But in this year's lively primary election season, there has been little attention to Catholics as a voting bloc—at least not in the mainstream news media. There are, however, some trends apparent in how Catholics are voting.

According to exit polling, Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York has been getting a majority of the votes of Catholics in nearly every Democratic primary, no matter who won. Only in Louisiana and Georgia did Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois get more votes from Catholics than Clinton did. In his home state of Illinois, which he won with 65 percent of the vote, Obama took only 48 percent of the votes of Catholics, to Clinton's 50 percent.

In even states such as Maryland, where Obama took 60 percent of the vote, Clinton was supported by a majority of Catholic Democrats.

In Wisconsin, according to a CNN Democratic exit poll, Clinton and Obama just about split the overall Catholic vote: 50 percent and 48 percent, respectively.

Among Republicans, McCain has been a favorite with Catholics since the beginning, but Romney also did better in counties where the Catholic population is high.

Pollster John Zogby said those centrist Catholics are the true swing voters whose electoral choices are one of the most powerful predictors of how a presidential election will go.

“Those are the folks who see both sides of the issues,” he said.

This year, they are also very much “in motion,” according to Green, and that fact is not lost on candidates in either party.

While media attention has focused on the role of evangelicals in the Republican race, Green said both Democrats and Republicans have been working hard at outreach to Catholic voters and other faith groups.

Alexia Kelley, executive director of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, said issues of concern to people of faith have been much more front and center in this year's political debate than in recent elections.

Providing health care, addressing protecting workers' rights and generally working to protect the common good—all components of the Catholic Church’s social justice teachings—are themes that have been heard from candidates of both parties, Kelley said.

The language of the candidates, including references to the “common good,” indicates at least an awareness of its importance to “Gospel voters,” Kelley told CNS. Her goal is to see that the verbal outreach to people of faith is more than just words.

“We have work to do to make sure that ‘common good’ is not just a buzz word,” she said, “that it’s not superficial interest, pandering to us.”

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Looking beneath the surface of heated rhetoric on immigration reform

By Sr. Diane Carollo, S.G.L.

The culture of death has a most profound impact on American society.

The mentality it generates suggests that human life should be viewed as anything less than sacred and inviolable. When this mentality takes hold, human life becomes negotiable and loses its inestimable value in the legal system. Is it no surprise then that individuals and society become spiritually bankrupt.

Any healthy and spiritually bankrupt establishments laws, policies and agendas that promote such things as abortion, reproductive cloning, embryo research, stem-cell research, euthanasia, assisted suicide and the death penalty. This is not to say that this list exhausts all the assaults on the dignity and sanctity of human life in our society.

In recent years, and especially during this election year, the plight of undocumented immigrants has forced voters to evaluate the opinions of various candidates running for political office on immigration reform.

Unfortunately, much of the discussion on immigration reform focuses on punishing undocumented immigrants and building walls to prevent them from gaining access to the United States. What is ignored is the necessity of exercising Christian charity and building walls to prevent them from gaining access to the United States.

As we try to resolve the present immigration crisis in our country, let us prayerfully consider the outlined principals for immigration reform found in the January 2003 pastoral statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops titled Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope.

In his memoirs, former U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson states that the most immoral thing he ever did was to take part in the war against Mexico. Those who speak of the right to maintain the integrity of our borders should remember that the present border with Mexico is the result of an unjust war waged against that country by the slave interests of the United States.

Let us learn a moral lesson from God’s judgments and responsibilities, the guilt of a cruel harshness toward our southern neighbors.

(Servants of the Gospel of Life
Sister Diane Carollo is director of the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry.)

I am writing this letter to express my heartfelt appreciation to the many holy priests of our archdiocese who valiantly labor to guide their flocks along the path to salvation. They continue to emphasize the truth of the Church’s teachings—many times in the face of much resistance and hardship—of the pro-life position.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that some Catholics even feel that a one-hour Sunday Mass is too long. What is ignored is the necessity of exercising Christian charity to those who live marginal and vulnerable lives precisely because they are desperately poor.

The mentality it generates suggests that human life should be viewed as anything less than sacred and inviolable. When this mentality takes hold, human life becomes negotiable and loses its inestimable value in the legal system.
Mi más profundo agradecimiento por todo su apoyo y sus oraciones

A profound ‘thank you’ to all for your support and prayers

I guess this week’s message could be titled “Reflections from chemo land.”

First of all, my intention is to find a way to say a profound “thank you” to all of you who have sent cards, notes and e-mails of support and prayers. I certainly experience the strength of your prayers and good wishes.

Chemotherapy promises a positive prognosis. Judging from the effects of the first two treatments, getting there is going to be quite a ride. In my case, the chemo injection is about two hours in length, which provides time for extra prayer and reflection.

There are anonymous booths in the oncology center and truly caring nurses who administer the injections. One elderly gentleman was expressing for anyone who would listen how lucky he was feeling to have such a good wife and sons and daughters. He repeated his thoughts several times, and that led me to reflect on the goodness of my mom and dad.

I remembered that in the back of my favorite Bible I have kept a note written to my mom as she was recovering from replacement of a broken hip. She wrote:

“Dear Mark, Aunt Mary says her accident happened for a reason. I’m sure mine did, too. I can’t tell you how much it made me think about God and how He must have felt to have such a good wife and sons and, also, members of our extended family.

It occurs to me how our dads are like that: they make it as easy as they can for us. I must admit that with hindsight I could regret that I shouldn’t have spent more time with him in his last year or so, but I still wouldn’t have remembered. Of course, he is very much with me in my thoughts and prayers now.

I could never respond to all the cards, notes and e-mails that I have received. Here, I would like to pick and choose from hundreds of homemade cards and notes that I have received from children in our school and parish religious education programs. My favorite homemade card was cut out of red construction paper. It was a cleverly created monster-type figure yelling in bold letters, “Hail Mary!” That was it. It not only amused me; it was the right message in two words.

Another fellow by the name of Myles wrote next to a big yellow star: “A little light is a lot of hope.”

Alana wrote: “Hope you get better in time for spring. I’ll send you a letter, you are almost like a king.”

Anthony wrote: “Hope you feel better soon because you are the greatest!”

Jennifer wrote: “God’s love illuminates everything no matter what.”

Danielle wrote: “My mum has cancer, too. I would like for you to pray for her, and I will be praying for you.”

Lucas wrote before the Super Bowl: “I hope that you get well soon. We have been praying for you.” Then, in caps, he wrote, “GO G-MEN a.k.a. the Giants.”

John wrote: “My mother also has a form of cancer. She has breast cancer.”

I will.†

Do you have an intention for Archbishop Buechlein’s prayer list? You may mail it to him at:

Archbishop Buechlein’s Prayer List
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
1400 N. Meridian St.
P.O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

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

Arzobispo/Arzobispo Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.

SEEKING THE FACE OF THE LORD

BUSCANDO A LA CARA DEL SEÑOR

Archbishop Buechlein’s intention for vocations for February

Young Adults: That they may realize the importance of their presence in our parishes and have the generosity and courage to serve in the Church, especially as priests and religious.

El propósito del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en febrero

Adolescentes: Que se den cuenta de la importancia de su presencia en nuestras parroquias y tengan la generosidad y el valor de considerar el ser vicio en la iglesia, especialmente como sacerdotes y religiosos.

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en febrero

Adultos jóvenes: que se den cuenta de la importancia de su presencia en nuestras parroquias y tengan la generosidad y el valor de considerar el ser vicio en la iglesia, especialmente como sacerdotes y religiosos.

A p...
Events Calendar

February 29
Knights of Columbus Hall, Council 8313, 695 Pennsylvania Ave., Greenwood. “Veterans of Valor and Operation Care Package.” Web site updating and open house, dinner, 5 p.m., $37.50 per person. Information: 317-535-5632.

Old Shepherd Good, 1109 E. Cameron St., Indianapolis. Stations of the Cross followed by soup and bread dinner, 6 p.m., no charge. Information: 317-236-1596.

St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, 4050 E. 38th St., Indianapolis. Lenten fish fry, 4-3:50 p.m., free. Information: 317-859-4673.

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish, 200 4th St., Aurora. School PTO fish fry, 4-7 p.m. Information: 812-926-1558.

March 1

March 2

March 4
St. John of Ave Maria, 4217 N. Central Ave., Indianapolis. Rosemary Mass, desecration of the Cross, 6 p.m. Information: 317-283-5508.

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus Convent, 6437 Central Ave., Indianapolis. “Evensong,” March 9, 4-5 p.m. Information: 317-787-4058.

March 5
Holy Cross Church, 125 N. Oriental St., Indianapolis. “Scripture and Our Environment,” group lecture and discussion, 7-8 p.m. Information: 317-637-2620, ext. 402.

March 6
St. Therese of the Infant Jesus Convent, 6437 Central Ave., Indianapolis. “Mother-Daughter Day of Reflection and Renewal.” Information: 812-933-6437 or e-mail center@oldenburgosf.com.

March 7
St. Francis Hospital, 1201 Hadley Road, Mooresville. “Men’s Good, Food, Fellowship” Workshop for women with cancer,noon-2 p.m., registration deadline March 1. Information: 317-782-4422 or www.SFFrancis.org/hospicecenter.

March 8

March 9
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. A Lenten retreat with Dominican Sister Of M.C. Information: 317-545-7681 or www.archindy.org/lifeminis.

March 14
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. A Lenten retreat with Dominican Sister Of M.C. Information: 317-545-7681 or www.archindy.org/lifeminis.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Outdoor Stations of the Cross,” 4:30 p.m. Information: 317-545-7681 or www.archindy.org/lifeminis.


March 15
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. A Lenten retreat with Dominican Sister Of M.C. Information: 317-545-7681 or www.archindy.org/lifeminis.

March 18-23
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22243 Main St., Oldenburg. Lenten fish fry, 6 p.m., no charge. Information: 317-623-8007 or e-mail hearinglegal@esf.org.

March 20
Benedictine Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Lenten Retreat, “Shine Is the Language Spoken Here?” registration due March 12. Information: 317-788-7581 or e-mail benedictine@benedictineinns.com.

March 22
Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat, Indianapolis. Post-abortion haunted house and silent movie, village, confession, location, all calls are confidential. Information: 317-236-1521, 800-382-8936, ext. 1521.

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus Convent, 6437 Central Ave., Indianapolis. “St. Therese of Lisieux” retreat for women, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., $40 per person. Information: 317-241-6314, ext. 122 or 317-637-2620, ext. 1403.

March 27
Holy Cross Church, 125 N. Oriental St., Indianapolis. “Living a Deeply Franciscan Life” retreat for young adults. Information: 317-637-2620, ext. 402.

March 28
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Outstanding Stations of the Cross,” 4:30 p.m. Information: 317-545-7681 or www.archindy.org/lifeminis.

Parishes offer Easter bread

Members of St. Athanasius the Great Byzantine Catholic Parish in Indianapolis, a parish of the Byzantine Catholic Church, are considering options such as baking Easter rolls and Pascha breads, an Eastern European tradition, for sale to the public.

The loaves are baked with sweet nuts, poppy seeds, apricots, or almonds. To place orders, call 317-840-3844 and leave a message with your name, address, telephone number, and preference of flavor and loaf size.

For more information about the Easter rolls and bread for sale at St. Athanasius Parish, log on to http://ft-fol.com/st-athanasius/ and click on “Events and Activities.”

Members of Holy Trinity Parish in Indianapolis also bake potica, a traditional Eastern European bread, throughout the year.

To learn more about potica for sale at Holy Trinity Parish, call 317-838-9509.†
Bill to regulate pornography passes House, heads to Senate

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

While delivering property tax relief to Indiana residents remains the dominant issue at the state Capitol, one lawmaker is working to address another problem facing Indiana communities—the sale of pornographic materials.

State Rep. Terry Goodin (D-Crothersville), author of House Bill 1042, which passed the Indiana House of Representatives by an 88-5 vote, said, “This bill is in response to a situation in my district where a store near residents there was selling books, movies and snacks. Instead, the store opened selling sexually explicit materials.

Had the residents been notified, they could have petitioned to keep the retailer out.”

Rep. Goodin said he also has noticed an increase in the number of stores that sell pornography in rural areas, particularly on interstates which span several counties.

“The problem is the state of Indiana has a hodgepodge of zoning laws,” he said.

While many counties have ordinances to regulate this type of retailer, this legislation is geared toward those areas without county protection.

House Bill 1042 would require that a person or business intending to sell sexually explicit materials, products or services register and file a statement with the Secretary of State.

“This registering requirement triggers a mechanism to give the local municipalities the heads-up that this kind of business is getting ready to open up in their area,” Rep. Goodin said.

The zoning board would be in a better position to take action to stop the business from opening, he added.

“This is a problem that has been fought across the United States,” Rep. Goodin said. “Once a business that sells pornography is open in a community, it is very difficult, to near impossible, to get it closed.”

Rep. Goodin said the Senate amended the proposal to improve the definition of sexually explicit, and made some technical corrections to strengthen the bill to stand up in court if it is challenged.

Rep. Goodin is not aware of any other state that has enacted legislation similar to his proposal, but said the concept for his bill was based on a summation of ideas given to him by constituents.

Rep. Goodin said he was excited about passage of the bill by a Senate committee, and is hopeful the full Senate will pass the bill when it gets to the floor.

Sen. Brent Steele (R-Bedford), Senate sponsor of the legislation, said the bill will help counties that don’t have any county zoning.

“What these shops do is they will find counties that don’t have any county zoning with an interstate running through it,” Sen. Steele said. “Then they set up shop there. Or if there is any zoning, it is very loosely written zoning so when the shop registers, it will just live as a ‘retail establishment.’

“What we say in the bill is, if you’re going to sell this stuff—which we can’t stop them from doing under the First Amendment—they have to register with the Secretary of State’s office.”

The filing fee is $250.

“There will be an actual declaration of the business’ intent to sell sexually explicit materials,” Sen. Steele said. “Then zoning boards and county commissioners will be able to keep approval of these kinds of businesses.

“Right now, there is no way of knowing that these kinds of shops are starting up until after they are already open for business.”

Sen. Steele said. “Hopefully, this bill will slow these people down or stop them entirely.”

House Bill 1042 provides that selling sexually explicit material, such as pornography, without proper registration could result in a Class B misdemeanor charge. A Class B misdemeanor charge can result in up to 180 days in jail or a $1,000 fine.

The bill will apply to businesses established after June 30, 2008, or to any existing business that moves to a new location. It is not retroactive to existing businesses that remain in the same location.

According to Top Ten Reviews, an Internet research company, the revenue generated from pornography in the United States in 2006 was $13.33 billion. The revenue generated from the sale of pornography by category includes video sales and rentals, $3.62 billion; Internet, $2.84 billion; cable, PPV (pay-per-view), in-room and mobile/phone sex, $2.19 billion; exotic dance clubs, $2 billion; novelties, $1.73 billion; magazines, $95 billion.

House Bill 1042, which the Indiana Catholic Conference supports, was approved by the Senate Committee on Corrections, Criminal and Civil Matters on Feb. 20 by a 6-0 vote.

The bill now moves to the full Senate for second and third reading. If the bill passes the Senate by Feb. 26, it will go back to the House for a concurrence on the Senate amendments to the bill.

(Rep. Brent Steele is a correspondent for The Criterion.)†

Archdiocese of Indianapolis working on anti-pornography initiative

To address the issue of pornography on a diocesan level, Daniel Sarell, director of Family Ministries for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, said his office is in the midst of a licensing agreement with the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas, to adopt their archdiocesan anti-pornography initiative for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

The initiative, “As For Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord,” will provide parishes with educational and liturgical resources to help address the problem of pornography.

Sarell said he hopes to launch the program in parishes by the end of this summer.†

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March 4, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
March 4, 7 p.m. at St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bradford
March 5, 7 p.m. at St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg
March 12, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Ogdenia
March 12, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Rock, Franklin County
March 12, 7 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County
March 13, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Morris
March 14, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg

Bloomington Deaneary
March 4, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Mitchell
March 6, 7 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington
March 11, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville

Connereville Deaneary
March 5, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Connereville
March 11, 7 p.m. for St. Rose, Knightstown, and St. Anne, New Castle, at St. Anne, New Castle
March 13, 7 p.m. at St. Bridget, Liberty
March 13, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Rushville

Indianapolis East Deaneary
March 13, 7 p.m. for St. Bernadette, Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower)
March 13, 7 p.m. for Holy Cross, St. Mary and SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Indianapolis North Deaneary
March 5, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Pius X
March 6, 7 p.m. deanery service at St. Pius X
March 9, 2 p.m. deanery service at St. Pius X

Indianapolis South Deaneary
March 4, 7 p.m. for Good Shepherd and St. Roch at St. Roch
March 8, 9:30 a.m. at St. Barnabas
March 10, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood
March 11, 7 p.m. at St. Mark
March 12, 7 p.m. for St. Joseph and St. Ann at St. Ann

Indianapolis West Deaneary
March 1, 9:30 a.m. for St. Anthony and Holy Trinity at St. Anthony
March 3, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
March 5, 7 p.m. at St. Christopher
March 11, 6:30 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield
March 12, 7 p.m. for St. Joseph and St. Ann at St. Ann
March 13, 7 p.m. at Holy Angels

New Albany Deaneary
March 3, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navileton
March 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul, Sellersburg
March 6, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, St. Joseph Hill
March 9, 8:30 a.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd Knob
March 9, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
March 10, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford
March 10, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
March 12, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd Knob
March 16, 4 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany

St. Meinrad
March 1, 9:30 a.m. for St. Anthony and Holy Trinity at St. Anthony
March 3, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
March 5, 7 p.m. at St. Christopher
March 11, 6:30 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield
March 12, 7 p.m. for St. Joseph and St. Ann at St. Ann
March 13, 7 p.m. at Holy Angels

Tell City Deaneary
March 9, 2 p.m. for Good Shepherd and St. Roch at Terre Haute Deaneary
March 5, 7 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Terre Haute
March 11, 6:30 p.m. deanery service at St. Meinrad, Terre Haute

Due to space constraints, penance services scheduled later during Lent may be omitted from the list in this week’s newspaper. However, the entire schedule is posted on The Criterion Online at www.CriterionOnline.com.
Class rank is becoming a thing of the past at many high schools

By John Shaughnessy

Chuck Weisenbach knew he had a situation that was hurting a growing number of academically talented students at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis—a situation that has also plagued many students at Catholic high schools across the archdiocese.

So when the Roncalli school community spent a year studying the situation from all sides, Weisenbach, Roncalli’s principal, announced in January that the interparochial high school for the Indianapolis South Deanery would no longer provide “class rank” for its students.

In changing its long-standing tradition of providing class rank based on a student’s grade-point average, Roncalli became part of a growing movement across the country and the archdiocese.

About 55 percent of the high schools in the United States don’t use or provide class ranks, according to the National Association for College Admission Counseling. That choice has been made by seven of the 11 Catholic high schools in the archdiocese.

Besides Roncalli, those seven schools include Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School, Cathedral High School and Providence Cristo Rey High School, all in Indianapolis. Providing class ranks has also been abandoned by Father Michael Shawe Memorial Jr./Sr. High School in Madison and Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg.

Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis provides its students with their class rank at the end of their junior year, but it doesn’t share that information with colleges.

The four schools that still provide class rank are Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis, Father Thomas Seccina Memorial High School in Indianapolis, Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville and Seton Catholic High School in Richmond.

“There are reasons for both,” says Tom Davis, the principal at Seccina. “We continue to rank students in the traditional way. We want kids to compete. We want them to work for their highest rank. Our feeling is, ‘If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.’

“Father Michael Shawe Memorial faced similar situations before it dropped its use of class rank two years ago. ‘We felt it was hurting a lot of our kids who were excellent students,’ says Jerry Bomholt, Shawe’s principal. ‘It seemed to have a negative effect on how our students were considered for scholarships. We felt our kids were really getting cheated.

“As an example, Bomholt noted that to be considered for some scholarships, students had to be in the top 10 percent of their class. Because Shawe has small graduating classes, that requirement has worked against its students.

“We recently had a graduating class of 30,” Bomholt recalls. “To be in the top 10 percent of the class, you’d have to be one, two or three. We had seven kids with a GPA over 4 [an A average]. Those kids were at a tremendous disadvantage.”

If more high schools are moving away from using and providing class ranks, how do colleges measure a high school student’s performance and his or her ability to succeed at the next level?

Part of that answer comes from a student’s results on standardized tests, such as the SAT and the ACT. More selective colleges also emphasize leadership ability, community service and a commitment to extracurricular activities. A major emphasis is also placed on the academic difficulty of the courses that a student takes in high school and how well the student does in those courses.

“Colleges look at the academic rigor of your program,” says Benedictine Sister Louise Hoering, the director of guidance at Bishop Chatard High School. “We try to get our students into an academic mode where they’re taking the most challenging courses for them.

Removing undue stress and competition

At Bishop Chatard, the Class of 2008 will be the last one to know their class rank throughout their high school career. The current freshmen, sophomores and juniors won’t be provided with that information until the end of their junior year, and even then the information is just provided for the individual student’s knowledge. It’s a decision that school officials believe frees the students to select courses that will prepare them best for college and life.

“They take the classes where they want to excel, and they want to prepare themselves for college and not worry if they have a class rank that’s less than their friends,” says Sister Louise.

The change from an emphasis on class rank to a focus on class selection has been positive so far, according to officials at secondary schools that no longer use or provide class rank.

Students are less likely to “manipulate” their choice of courses to maximize their class rank, school officials say. It also removes undue stress and competition among students, some of whom saw their health suffer as they strived to be number one in their class or in the top 10 of their class.

When Cathedral High School still used class rank, a new counselor to the school “really noticed the stress level of our students in terms of competition,” says Mike Jaskosi, Cathedral’s director of guidance and college advising. “In the past three years [since Cathedral stopped providing class rank], there’s been a reduction of that, without question.”

Before it made its decision to not provide class rank, Cathedral checked with admission officers at the top 30 colleges where its graduates attended. None of the university officials said it would have an effect on Cathedral students being admitted to their college, Jaskosi notes.

“The more selective the college is in the admissions process, the less they care about class rank,” says Roncalli’s Weisenbach, who also polled college admission officials in Indiana and outside the state.

Even at many high schools that no longer provide class rank, that information still exists. While it isn’t available to students and their parents, school administrators and counselors have it available as a way of helping determine the valedictorian and salutatorian of the class. The information is also available when certain scholarships absolutely require a class rank.

Roncalli’s approach states, “If the scholarship application requires a specific class rank, the student will complete all components of the application with the exception of class rank. They will submit the application to their guidance counselor, who will complete the class rank component and then mail the application.”

Whether their school does or doesn’t provide class rank, students are encouraged to put their emphasis on their education in all its forms.

“Class rank, although it may be important, is not the end-all. Gaining a good knowledge base is important,” says Joseph Grossock, the principal of Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception.

“Students are in high school to learn from a multitude of ways. The proper focus for any high school student is to gain a well-rounded experience, to experience all things.”

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Jesus is condemned to death

"The Judge of the world, who will come again to judge us all, stands there, dishonored and defenseless before the earthly judge. …"

Station I
Jesus takes up his Cross

"… He takes up the Cross, our cross, the burden of being human, the burden of the world. And so he goes before us and points out to us the way which leads to true life. …"

Station II
Jesus falls for the first time

"… In Jesus' fall beneath the weight of the Cross, the meaning of his whole life is seen: his voluntary abasement, which lifts us up from the depths of our pride. …"

Station III
Jesus meets his Mother

"… at the hour of the Cross, at the hour of the world's darkest night, you became the Mother of all believers, the Mother of the Church. …"

Station IV
Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

"… At first, Veronica saw only a buffeted and pain-filled face. Yet her act of love impressed the true image of Jesus on her heart. …"

Station VI
Jesus falls for the second time

"… Lord Jesus Christ, you have borne all our burdens and you continue to carry us. Our weight has made you fall. Lift us up, for by ourselves we cannot rise from the dust. …"

Station VII
Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem who weep for him

"… Grant that we may not simply walk at your side, with nothing to offer other than compassionate words. Convert us and give us new life. (cf. Jn 15:1-10)."

Station VIII
Jesus falls for the third time

"… When we fall, we drag you down to earth, and Satan laughs, for he hopes that you will not be able to rise from that fall. … But you will rise again. You stood up, you arose and you can also raise us up."

Station IX
The Cyrenian helps Jesus carry the Cross

"… Lord, you opened the eyes and heart of Simon of Cyrene, and you gave him, by his share in your Cross, the grace of faith. Help us to aid our neighbors in need, even when this interferes with our own plans and desires. …"

Station X
Jesus dies on the Cross

"… Lord Jesus Christ, at the hour of your death the sun was darkened. … Help us to believe in you and to follow you in our hour of darkness and need. …"

Station XI
Jesus is stripped of his garments

"… Lord Jesus, you were stripped of your garments, exposed to shame, cast out of society. … Give us a profound respect for man at every stage of his existence, and in all the situations in which we encounter him. …"

Station XII
Jesus is taken down from the Cross and given to his Mother

"… Help us not to leave you alone. Give us the fidelity to withstand moments of confusion and a loveready to embrace you in your utter helplessness, like your Mother, who once more holds you to her breast."

Station XIII
Jesus is laid in the tomb

"… Lord Jesus Christ, in your burial you have … become the lifeless grain of wheat which produces abundant fruit for every age and for all eternity. …"

Station XIV
Jesus is nailed to the Cross

"… Lord Jesus Christ, you let yourself be nailed to the Cross, accepting the terrible cruelty of this suffering, the destruction of your body and your dignity. …"
Embracing the Franciscan way

Marian College speech and debate coach uses faith-based approach

By John Shaughnessy

The sign attached to the office door of the Rev. George LaMaster seems to be an unusual one for a former national champion for public speaking. And yet the head coach of the speech and debate team at Marian College in Indianapolis says the sign accurately reflects the approach to life that he is seeking for himself and the members of his young team.

The sign on his door quotes St. Francis of Assisi: “Always preach the Gospel and use words when necessary.”

“Since I’ve been here, I’ve tried to embrace the Franciscan way,” said LaMaster, 37, an assistant professor of communication who also is a Presbyterian minister. “I’m taken with Francis. I appreciate the commitment to solidarity with the poor and the oppressed. I’m struck by Francis’ irrepressible joy in the face of suffering. And I love celebrating the eminent presence of God in all things. I’m making a pilgrimage to Assisi this summer.”

I’m making a pilgrimage to Assisi this summer.”

It’s one of the interesting perspectives that LaMaster shared as he talked about the philosophy he uses while leading Marian’s speech and debate team in its second year of competition.

The Criterion: You’ve said that Marian College is unusual among college speech teams because you practice “faith-based forensics.”

Talk about that approach.

LaMaster: “Students express their faith and values in the speeches they give and their performances. There’s one woman who’s writing an informative speech about the life of Mother Teresa. ‘Mother Teresa encouraged adoption. This student has a brother and a sister who are adopted. The family has a picture in their living room of Mother Teresa. ‘Another one that comes to mind is a student who has a speech on the need to provide better mental healthcare for veterans returning from Iraq. When she performs it, you can tell she’s speaking out of her deepest convictions.”

The Criterion: What do you love about speech and debate?

LaMaster: “I think it transforms the students first and then the world. I was in Princeton Theological Seminary from 1993 to ’96. At the time, I was moonlighting as a speech and debate coach. I saw lives transformed as they found their voice to speak out. They find their own vocabulary for what they want to say about the world. ‘I also met my wife, Jen, on the speech team at Bradley University.”

The Criterion: What’s it like for you teaching and coaching at a Catholic college?

LaMaster: “I never thought I’d have a speech team where I could start a competition with a prayer. That’s a wonderful thing,” LaMaster said. “It gives a character to the whole experience. It holds the competition in perspective. So students aren’t first and foremost out to win. They’re there to express themselves and have fun. To them, speech is a gift. They want to share it, hone it and celebrate it.”

The Criterion: What do you hope the team members ultimately gain from the experience?

LaMaster: “Confidence, integrity, a close community, certainly communication skills. They get to do something excellent and beautiful in front of other people. Every kid gets a chance to stand in the center of the stage and they get to talk about their core values in really critical and meaningful ways. ‘Building community is important to me. The team is really important to me. I’ve had seniors say, ‘This team has changed my life. These are my best friends.’”

The Criterion: Any favorite moments in coaching?

LaMaster: “I never get tired of the really big, hard questions. A typical journey through college, if there is one, begins with a naive confidence in the faith I inherited, travels through questioning that faith—maybe even turning from it—and then ends by recommitting to the faith and holding it in a new way.

“When I have a student for four years, I get to walk alongside them during that journey. In my own faith. I’m comfortable with questions, living with tensions and not holding answers too tightly.

“College is the place where we question and explore.”

Marian College speech and debate coach the Rev. George LaMaster, right, prays with his team before a tournament at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., in October 2007. “I never thought I’d have a speech team where I could start a competition with a prayer. That’s a wonderful thing,” LaMaster said. “It gives a character to the whole experience. It holds the competition in perspective.”

Coaching for Christ

Bishop Chatard, Cardinal Ritter, Roncalli, and Scecina Memorial High Schools are sponsoring a wonderful evening of faith, food and fellowship for all CYO coaches. This event is free of charge as a way of saying Thanks to all CYO coaches.

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

6 to 8:30 p.m.

Bishop Chatard High School - Varsity Gym

Hors d’oeuvres and beverages provided

Keynote address by

Indiana University Head Football Coach

Bill Lynch

Coach Bill Lynch recently completed his first season as Indiana University head football coach. Lynch is the only head coach in Hoosier history to lead a team to a bowl game in his debut season. He led Indiana to its first win since 1983, its first bowl appearance since 1983 and its first Old Oaken Bucket victory since 2001. Coach Bill Lynch, a graduate of Christ the King Catholic School, Bishop Chatard High School and Butler University, will reflect on how he integrates his Catholic faith into his coaching philosophy and strategies.

6:00 - Mass at Bishop Chatard High School
6:45 - Hors d’ouevres and refreshments
7:15 - “Coaching for Christ” by Roncalli Football Coach Bruce Scifres
7:35 - Discussion featuring a panel of high school coaches
8:15 - Keynote address by RJ Coach Bill Lynch
8:45 - Closing Prayer

Coaching for Christ is free of charge, but R.S.V.P. is requested by Feb. 29, 2008.

To reserve your place at this exciting event, contact the CYO Office (317)632-9311.

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Faith

Old Testament Book of Psalms is God’s love poetry

By James Schellman

Anyone who has ever been in love knows how important it is to be in the company of the object of that love. The need to be in her or his presence is constant and seemingly inexhaustible.

The literature of love is full of ruminations about that experience. Recurring throughout this literature is the theme of the importance of the face of the one who is loved. The face is variously a thing of beauty, a guide to personality or a means to come to deep knowledge of another.

The Scriptures offer many instances of a similar fascination with the face. In the Bible, the pre-eminent face that attracts us is God’s. This is nowhere more evident than in the psalms. And this should come as no surprise since the Book of Psalms is nothing less than some of the most epic love poetry of all time—God’s love poetry!

The psalms present us with a faithful-across-millennia love story between God and his covenant people. In the language of every human emotion imaginable, the psalms offer us a conversation of adoration, petition, hope, despair, longing and more.

It is in the psalms that are focused on God’s face that the language of deepest longing is at its very best, for example:

• “Many, say, ‘Oh, that we might see better times!’ O Lord, let the light of your face shine upon me!” (Ps 4:7).
• “Of you my heart speaks, you my glance seeks... Hide not your face from me” (Ps 27:8-9).
• “Let your face shine upon your servant, save me in your kindness” (Ps 31:17).
• “All isrest is my soul for God, the living God. When shall I go and behold the face of God?” (Ps 42:3).

In this love poetry, we come to the heart of biblical understanding that the face of someone or his or her very person is indistinguishable. In other words, the face is a metaphor for the full disclosure of another in intimate and loving communion. The longing to see God’s face so acutely expressed in the psalms is a longing to know God intimately.

We begin to grasp how profound the psalms are as love poetry when we realize that Jesus prayed them in synagouge and temple, and no doubt as he worked and walked, for he was immersed in the liturgical worship of his people.

The Scriptures attest to Jesus’ participation in this worship and often place words from the psalms on his lips—for example, on the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Ps 22:2).

It is simply beyond our imaginations to be able to grasp how the psalms would have done their work in the life of God in the flesh.
• The Psalms of Jesus—In his humanity. Jesus must have come to know that he shared an intimacy with God by learning the psalms’ language of longing. They offered him a privileged, divinely inspired dialogue where he came to know his divinity and his sacrificial mission to bring all into that communion of love that he uniquely shared with the Father in the Spirit.
• The psalms of the Church—The earliest generations of Christians adopted and adapted Jewish use of the psalms. Early on, these psalms were used during worship in central parishes known as cathedrals.

The psalms were a part of the community’s Morning and Evening Prayer and its eucharistic worship. A little later, the psalms were adopted by the fledgling monastic and hermitic movements. This worship has come down to us today in the Liturgy of the Hours prayed in many settings by the laity and those religious communities and clergy bound to this Divine Office.

The early development of the psalms are still only partially understood, but it is clear that for the fledgling Church the Book of Psalms was above all else prophetic poetry fulfilled in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Our ancient forebears saw Jesus everywhere in the grammar of the psalms. They understood that some psalms spoke of Christ, others spoke to him, and in still others Christ himself spoke to the Father or to his people.

With an indescribable love and longing, our ancestors in faith praised God for Christ and learned to long for him anew, for his final coming at the end of time and the consummation of the whole great story of the world’s redemption.

We are the heirs in our own time of this faithful, redemptive longing. In the Gospel of John, the words of Jesus could not be more explicit: “If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him” (Jn 14:7).

We have seen the face of God for whom we so long, and that face is Christ.


"The longing to see God's face so acutely expressed in the psalms is a longing to know God intimately."

—James Schellman

The psalms offer mercy and comfort

This Week’s Question

What is your favorite psalm? What does it express for you?

“Psalm 51:12, which says ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God.’ It makes me think how nice it is to know we’re forgiven. It also reminds us to keep our hearts clean and stay close to God.” (Sheila Wiggins, Casper, Wyo.)

“Psalm 118:24: ‘This is the day the Lord has made, Let us rejoice and be glad.’ ... Even today when the Northeast is experiencing a snowstorm, and schools and offices are closed, I thank the Lord for the beauty of his creation.” (Phylis Mays, Needham, Mass.)

“Psalm 23:1: ‘The Lord is my Shepherd.’ I think it offers comfort and hope, and so much hope of comfort.” (Richard Hass, St. Clair Shores, Mich.)

“The lamentation of David [Psalm 51:1]: ‘Have mercy Lord in your kindness...’ I relate to Psalm 51 as a sinner who is given hope that we’re never beyond God’s mercy.” (Kayser Swidan, Carmel, Ind.)

“The one that says, ‘You have called my name...’ It expresses how each one of us is different and individual to him.” (Sibyl Schug, Laurel, Mont.)

“Psalm 121:1: ‘I lift up my eyes to the mountain; from where shall come my help; my help shall come from the Lord, who has made heaven and earth.’” (Janice Hummel, Evansville, Ind.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: What do you view as two essential steps toward a lasting marriage?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to creepen@catholicnews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †
Biblical women: Mary, the mother of God

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the greatest of all the biblical women. It’s more than fitting, therefore, that there is so much about her in the Bible than any of the other women. I will, therefore, write about three columns to her.

Although there are legends about Mary’s birth and childhood in the Protovangelium of James, we first meet her in the Gospels in Matthew and Luke when she is a teenager living in Nazareth. She was betrothed to Joseph, and she was pregnant, but had not yet had the celebration at which Joseph would take her to his home. One day, the angel appeared to her and told her that, of all the women in the world, she had been chosen to be the mother of the Son of the Most High. Mary was curious, though, to know how that could be since she had taken a vow of chastity.

Angels: From the sublime to childish views

Last week, I briefly wrote about angels according to the Bible, that is, angels as mentioned by name. Jesus spoke of angels. They have even been identified in the realm of the False Prophets, Principalities, Dominions, Thrones and Archangels. The Old Testament mentions two others. Seraphim and Cherubim.

According to Catholic Online, accessed at both www.catholiconline.com and www.catholicnews.com, the name cherubim derives from a Hebrew word meaning “a guardian or protector” because the Creator himself is so powerful and glorious that He cannot be approached in person by human beings. Angels do not have man’s shortcomings and can therefore act for God. Angels were maternal as well as other ethereal beings of the earth as spoken of by Jesus in Luke 20:35-36.

According to the same source, angels were the ones who delivered the message that the dead were raised to life in the Garden of Eden. An angel intervened to stop Abraham from sacrificing his son. An angel saved Lot and his family when they were about to be destroyed. An angel appeared to a very self-sufficient young woman. She was inspired by the Holy Spirit to praise Mary: “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb” (Lk 1:42). She recognized Mary as “the mother of my Lord.” Then Luke inserts Mary’s own words: “My soul proclaims that mighty praise that might be a Jewish Christian hymn. In it, Mary says, “from now on all ages will call me blessed” (Lk 1:48).

Mary presumably remained with Elizabeth until Elizabeth’s son, who would become the third child of James and his relative Elizabeth (believed to be her aunt), was born, then returned to Nazareth. It was probably at this point that Joseph learned that “she had done something wrong.” How could he not believe that she had been unfaithful to him? He knew that he wasn’t the father of this child, but what could he do? He decided to divorce her quietly. That was, in a dream, Joseph learned that there was indeed another explanation. An angel appeared and told him that “it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her” (Mt 1:20). That was enough for Joseph, who took Mary into his home.

Some of the people mentioned by name. Jesus spoke of five times, and have a special role during the conception and birth of Jesus. In both the Old Testament and New Testament, some angels are named by mention. Jesus spoke of angels. They have even been identified in the realm of the False Prophets, Principalities, Dominions, Thrones and Archangels. The Old Testament mentions two others. Seraphim and Cherubim.

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(Next week: More about Mary)
Carrying My Cross

I do not carry my cross
As a weight upon my shoulders.
Rather, it is, as Mary,
The body laying across my
Lap of the dead Jesus.

His head hanging back,
Eyes open in non-seeing slits,
Hand limp, touching the ground,
Making all that's seen.
His full weight draped over
Me in the profound moment
Of the deep sleep of death.

My heart shattering with the knowledge
That the divine broken, blood-covered body
Is an act of unconditional love.
This is the cross that
Peals through myself in
A bone crushing way.
By Trudy Bledsoe

The Way for You is Simple. The first requirement for forgiveness any time is to accept responsibility for the wrong we have done and desire forgiveness. Apparently, you have passed this point long ago.

You should receive the sacrament of penance, if not with your parish priest then with another priest. There are several priests in our archdiocese.

After that, to return to holy Communion and continue your Catholic life as faithfully as you were taught to do it.

In this process, it's not necessary to attempt to dissect the past. In fact, when we sin seriously, it is generally impossible to unravel all the good, bad and doubtful motives that influenced us. It is usually not even healthy to try to do so after the fact. God does not expect or want this.

Finally, for a variety of reasons, you are not and have not been excommunicated. To mention only one major reason, the possible excommunication for abortion is committed. Therefore, it does not apply to anyone who has had an abortion.

The archdiocesan Office for Post-abortion healing process of post-abortion healing, the unconditional love and forgiveness in a confidential atmosphere. As part of this process of post-abortion healing, the participant’s memories of abandonment, pain and confusion are replaced through reconciliation with God for the peace of mind and heart. All calls are confidential. The retreat is held at a confidential location.

Project Rachel retreat ministers to women and men after abortion

Abortion has touched so many lives. Has abortion changed your life?

The archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry is sponsoring a confidential Rachel’s Vineyard retreat on March 28-30 in Indianapolis for women and men who are suffering from the aftermath of abortion.

The retreat focuses on God’s unconditional love and forgiveness in a confidential atmosphere. As part of this process of post-abortion healing, the participant’s memories of abandonment, pain and confusion are replaced through reconciliation with God for the peace of mind and heart. All calls are confidential. The retreat is held at a confidential location.

For more information about the Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat, call Servants of the Gospel of Life Diane Rossetti, director of the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, at 317-236-1521 or 1-800-382-9836, ext. 123, or Servants of the Gospel of Life Diane Rossetti, director of the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, at 317-236-1521 or 1-800-382-9836, ext. 123.
CUBA
continued from page 1
provided during his travels around the island. He said he had the chance to “discuss various problems face to face and to share various goals” with Cuban leaders, and he said it was important that he had never before been able to “speak with Cuban authorities as much as during this third visit.”

The cardinal visited Cuba in 2001 and 2005 before he became secretary of state. He said he hoped that relations between the Church and the Cuban government would “continue to mature,” and said “there is a visible way forward” in relations.

He also conveyed a “respectful greeting to [retired] President Fidel Castro,” recalling that “he has spoken so highly of [Pope] John Paul II, [Blessed] Mother Teresa of Calcutta and [Pope] Benedict XVI.”

On Feb. 19, Fidel Castro, who had led Cuba since the 1959 revolution, announced that he was stepping down. He has not appeared in public since a serious illness and surgery in July 2006 forced him to hand over affairs of state to his brother, Raul.

Cardinal Bertone said the recent release of some political prisoners by the Cuban government was a positive gesture, and said the Church had not asked Cuban officials for amnesty, but for “gestures of reconciliation.”

In mid-February, Cuban officials freed seven prisoners, including four members of a group of 75 dissidents jailed in 2003. The freed prisoners traveled to Spain after their release.

“Good gestures, like those it made in the time of [Pope] John Paul II, like those it made ... with the release of some prisoners, are positive gestures that help reconciliation, that give signs of hope,” the cardinal said.

He said the Vatican asks for “gestures of reconciliation among all parties, all forces here in Cuba.” He said the Church has asked to be allowed to provide spiritual aid to prisoners of all types, saying that “is not a political for us—it is a humanitarian problem, a matter of spiritual assistance.”

Earlier, Cardinal Bertone traveled to the Diocese of Santa Clara, in the center of the island, and the eastern Archdiocese of Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo—Baracoa, Cuba’s newest diocese. In Santa Clara, he

CUBA bishops hope new president will respond to demands of citizens

HAVANA (CNS)—Cuba’s Catholic bishops expressed hope that the country’s new president, Raul Castro, and the governing council he heads will respond decisively to the demands of the island-nation’s citizens.

In a statement released on Feb. 25 in Havana, the Cuban bishops’ conference said it prayed that the legislature, known as the National Assembly of People’s Power, the governing Council of State and the president would move ahead “decisively [with] transcendental measures that we know must be progressive.”

The bishops said they hoped the moves “can begin to satisfy the longings and concerns expressed by Cubans.”

The statement referred to the call made by the island’s “top authorities” in September and October for Cubans to debate “the most urgent problems of all kinds” that were affecting the people.

“They called for this to be done with clarity and courage,” the bishops said. “We also want to renew our vote of confidence and with Christian hope express these desires to the new president, Raul Castro, the Council of State and the National Assembly of People’s Power, keeping before us always the common good of the Cuban people, whom we serve.”

Raul Castro was chosen on Feb. 24 to replace his brother, Fidel Castro, who resigned because of illness after nearly half a century in power. Fidel Castro temporarily handed his duties over to Raul Castro on July 31, 2006.

The bishops said they prayed, as they did in 2006, that “nothing will perturb the greater good of peace.”

They said that the official designation of Raul Castro as president and the coinciding official pastoral visit to Cuba by the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, were “events of an exceptional nature.”

Cardinal Bertone’s Feb. 20-26 trip was 10 years after Pope John Paul II’s historic 1998 visit to Cuba. Before leaving on Feb. 26, Cardinal Bertone was scheduled to become the first foreign official to meet with the nation’s new president. †
Steve Angrisano performs at archdiocesan youth rally

(Editors note: This story is part of an occasional series on Catholic musicians with connections to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.)

By Mary Ann Wyand

-- Have guitar—will travel and evangelize -- could be internationally known Catholic musician, composer and storyteller Steve Angrisano’s motto.

His Web site describes him as “a true road warrior [who] travels most of the year, bringing his exhortatory ministry to parishes and youth groups from coast to coast,” north to Canada, and abroad for World Youth Day concerts.

“Live: Songs of the Road,” “Welcome Home,” “Set Free,” “Love It,” “You Are the Way” and “Make a Difference” are among his high-energy Christian music CDs.

In the 2006 Unity Awards, Angrisano earned “Artist of the Year” honors as well as “Song of the Year” and “Songwriter of the Year” for “Mighty King.”

Faith, family and music are so closely intertwined in Angrisano’s life that he learned calling from God as a parent, youth minister and music minister every day. His wife, Jenni, and their three children, Ambrosia, Isaiah and Joseph—often travel with him from their home in Highlands Ranch, Colo., to weekend youth ministry conferences in other states. They pray as a family every day and often sing together.

Angrisano is the keynote presenter for “Infinite,” the 2008 Archdiocesan High School Youth Rally on March 2 at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis.

He will also present a Lenten reflection and renewal concert which is open to the public at 7 p.m. Feb. 29 at St. Jude Parish, 5353 McFarland Road, in Indianapolis.

Angrisano has many Catholic friends in the archdiocese that he met while serving as the keynote presenter for several archdiocesan youth rallies and parish missions as well as the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) held in Indianapolis in 2001.

In recent years, he also has presented youth missions and family programs at Marian College and St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. Young Catholics from many countries have heard him sing during World Youth Day concerts in Rome in 2000 and Germany in 2006. He will present a concert during World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, in July.

Angrisano is known for his unique blend of laughter, songs, stories and humorous audience interaction skills that have earned him four NCYC election and keynote presentations at hundreds of diocesan youth rallies since he began his ministry 11 years ago.

Father Jonathan Meyer, director of youth ministry for the archdiocese, said Angrisano composed the reflection for the 2008 youth rally: “Go Make a Difference,” sung at NCYC in Indianapolis six years ago.

“His ability to help young people to prayer, to silence and to conviction is very impressive,” Father Meyer said. “He brings the core of his presentation and places it before the young people and asks, ‘What are you going to do now?’ He turns it into a conversation and incorporates it into some prayers, which is a gift and is not easy for a lot of people.”

Some people show compelling stories about his faith and family during youth ministry presentations.

As part of his testimony, he occasionally mentions some of his experiences ministering to Collium High School students in Littoilet, Colo., after two boys with guns killed a teacher and 12 teenagers, wounded dozens of others and then killed themselves on Oct. 26, 1999.

Angrisano started playing the guitar and singing during Mass at his parish church when he was 12 years old, and as a young adult realized that God was calling him to youth ministry and music ministry.

Five hundred high school students are expected to participate in the youth rally this weekend, Father Meyer said, and Angrisano will help lead them in reflections on God’s infinite mercy, the infinite sacrifice of the Mass, the infinite presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and the infinite love of God, which Christians are called to share with others.

“Steve will lead us in beautiful prayers in praise and worship—in front of the Blessed Sacrament,” he said. “Steve has the ability to be in the moment and to lead people to Christ, and that’s a gift.

Angrisano smiles often and always wears a cross.

During a 2007 interview at St. Matthew Parish, Angrisano said he strives to be a modern disciple of Christ and uses his ability to be in the moment and to lead others.

“Blessed Sacrament,” he said. “Steve has the conviction and incorporates it into a song or prayer. Christians are called to share with others.

“Music speaks a language that words alone do not,” Angrisano said. “It helps you pray with your head and your heart. I’ve always experienced that, and that’s why I am a musician.”

Online only

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Cardinal News Around Indiana

DIocese of Lafayette

Speaker explores ‘Growing Up Catholic’ in the mid-20th century

By Kevin Cullen

The Catholic News

LAFAYETTE—Millions of middle-age and older Catholics remember Sister Mary Margaret, their third-grade teacher.

Robert Orsi

He said gory stories about the martyrs, lived and breathed The Baltimore Catechism, and made you hold your nose to the blackboard if it didn’t do your homework.

Fuel for some funny stories, yes. But noted Catholic scholar Robert Orsi says that sister provided fervent religious formation and helped transform Catholics into one of the most educated, most successful segments of American society.

Teaching habits in 1960 were “the most educated sisters in all Catholic history,” he said in a lecture at Purdue University on Feb. 8. “They had been to summer schools since the 1920s. … The idea that these were ignorant women who knew nothing about the world was simply not the case.”

Orsi, who earned a doctorate from Yale, holds the Grace Craddock Nagle Chair in Catholic Studies at Northwestern University. His talk, titled “Growing Up Catholic: A Case Study of Catholic Children in Mid-20th Century America,” drew a crowd of approximately 150 people. It was based on the research he did for a book on the social and cultural history of 20th-century Catholic childhoods, which will be published by Harvard University Press.

“My dad is Irish-Catholic so it’s interesting to hear how he grew up,” said Michael O’Neill, a Purdue economics major from Indianapolis. “I grew up in Catholic schools, and I grew up,” said Michael O’Neill, a Purdue economics major from Indianapolis. “I grew up in Catholic schools, and I grew up,” said Michael O’Neill, a Purdue economics major from Indianapolis. “I grew up,” he said.

“Orsi previously taught at Fordham, Indiana University and the Harvard Divinity School. He is past-president of the American Academy of Religion. The author of several books, he is an expert on Catholicism in the United States. His research focused on Catholic children between 1925 and 1975. During that 50-year period, Catholics caught up with Protestants and Jews educationally, and by the 1970s they were more educated, and earning more, than either group, he said.

“‘These children were prepared for the world, and did very well in it, said Orsi.

Catholic children, especially those taught in Catholic schools, tended to be disciplined and extremely well-versed in their faith, Orsi said. To them, supernatural things were real. Guardian angels were real. Souls in purgatory were really released. The saints depicted on religious cards shed real blood.

“Before World War II, if the crayon makers made colors just for Catholic children, they would come mostly in reds of some sort,” said Orsi, whose study involved interviewing adults across the country about their Catholic childhoods.

In addition to teaching academic subjects, school sisters wanted to ensure that the souls of their students were saved, he said. They made them memorize their catechisms. They expected them to understand complex theological concepts at an early age.

Because Catholic high schools were relatively rare, “the nuns and priests knew they had children until eighth-grade,” Orsi said.

Catholic rites were solemn, and that intensified the imaginations of children. There was no such thing as a “children’s Mass.”

Some interview subjects admitted that they didn’t understand transubstantiation, and were terrified when they entered a confessional for the first time. They worried about the souls of unbaptized children in limbo, too.

Some kids tried to invent ingenious ways to “get around” Church prohibitions, especially those concerning fasting. All sorts of rumors and superstitions arose about Catholic sisters.

Still, Catholic children learned that evil was real and that the forces of grace offered protection and care, Orsi said. They saw themselves as embodied beings, and they often accepted heroic challenges. They knew that much was asked of them, both on Earth and in heaven.

Today, those long-ago children are adults. Often, they like to emphasize the distance they have traveled, intellectually and spiritually, since they memorialized the questions and answers of their little catechisms. Still, they received a priceless gift: Thanks to adults who taught them their faith, Orsi said, “the world made sense.”

The Catholic Church today is “very healthy,” he said, but few Catholic children are told what the Church is like. They were when Sister Mary Margaret taught school.

“It was a very powerful formation,” Orsi said. “I can’t imagine it today.”

It was a striking way of engaging children’s minds and hearts.”

Cardinal musician Steve Angrisano of Highlands Ranch, Colo., sings during a youth ministry gathering on Feb. 20, 2007, at St. Matthew the Apostle Church in Indianapolis. He is the keynote presenter for the 2008 Archdiocesan High School Youth Rally on March 2 at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis. Teenage musicians from St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis will assist Angrisano as the house band for the youth rally.

Photo by Mary Ann Wyand
Elementary School Principal

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Marian College
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Fax: 317-955-6248 or electronic submissions to: bmar.marian.edu
Application Deadline: March 14, 2008

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A seminary community is primarily made up of the men who are being formed for the priesthood, and the faculty and staff who are directing that formation.

But an important part of that community that provides support for the Church’s future priests are the seminarians’ family members and pastors.

Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary at Marian College in Indianapolis paid tribute to these people recently at their second annual Parents and Pastors Day on Feb. 23.

Many of the parents and important priests in the lives of the 18 seminarians at Bishop Bruté gathered for Mass and brunch on Marian’s campus that day.

Msgr. Joseph P. Schaedel, vicar general, was the primary celebrant of the Mass. Other priests, including clergy from the archdiocese, the Evansville Diocese and the North American College in Rome attended.

"One of the things about seminarians is that there is their parish and the support they receive from it. Representing their home parishes during the day were many of the pastors and associate priests serving those parishes.

Father Randall Summers is the associate pastor of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, the home parish of Wyciskalla.

Father Summers was ordained to the priesthood less than a year ago. He remembers well the importance of support for seminarians from families and parishes.

“Sometimes you can get lost in school and wonder why we do what we’re doing,” he said. “And it’s nice to have these kinds of occasions to have your pastor be there for support.”

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, who is currently undergoing chemotherapy treatments for Hodgkin’s lymphoma, was on hand during the brunch to show his support for the seminarians and their families.

“When I got the first notice of the cancer, I said, ‘God’s will be done,’ and I started saying it for our seminarians and for vocations,” Archbishop Buechlein said with emotion in his voice.

“Let me tell you, chemo is everything they say it is,” he said with a chuckle. “But the prognosis is good.”

Some of the parents and priests on hand for the special day had in the back of their minds the day when the young men they came to visit are no longer seminarians but priests.

Mary Bedel, a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Enochsburg in the Batesville Deanery, enjoys getting to know the other seminarians who spend so much time with her son, seminarian Daniel Bedel, who is in his second year in the seminary.

“They’re really good friends with Danny. I think Danny has really found his niche in life,” Mary Bedel said. “And they’re just really nice guys, and it’s just really good to know them and pray for them.

“We feel that our future Church is in good hands.”

(For more information about the Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, log on to http://www.archindy.org/bsb.)