Conference connects the Holy Spirit and evangelization

By Sean Gallagher

BATESVILLE—"I can feel the fire, Holy Ghost fire. I can feel the fire burning in my soul.

These words were sung with passion and flowed from a high school auditorium on March 1 in Batesville during a conference sponsored by St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County.

Some 500 people from across Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio attending the conference bought out the song between presentations that focused on how the gifts, also known as charisms, of the Holy Spirit can be used in everyday life to share the Gospel with others.


Called by Name, a music group made up mostly of members of St. Nicholas Parish and led by Angie Meyers, led participants in praise and worship songs between presentations and during the conference Mass.

Participants thought it was the Holy Spirit that was the driving force behind all that happened at the conference.

"I think this is absolutely wonderful," said conference attendee Chris Dickson, a member of St. Mary Parish in Richmond.

"This is the best conference that I’ve ever been to here yet."

"It really convicted me because I know that I haven’t been doing the job [of evangelization] that the Holy Spirit has been telling me that I’m supposed to do. I’ve been too timid. And now, it’s like, ‘OK, all the stops are out now. You have no more excuses.’"

In his presentation, "The Charisms and Evangelization," Bishop Jacobs emphasized how the Church’s mission of evangelization

By Mike Krokos

BEECH GROVE—This is a love story about faith, family, perseverance and passion.

It’s a story about the power of a father’s unconditional love for his son and the dreams that love has unleashed.

It’s a story about the sacrifices a father is willing to make so his son’s dreams can become reality.

The story of Patrick Henry Hughes, and his father, Patrick John Hughes, inspired and captured the hearts of more than 500 people who attended the annual Holy Name of Jesus Parish Father and Son Breakfast on March 2.

Patrick Henry Hughes, who will turn 20 on March 10, was born without eyes and the ability to straighten his arms and legs.

Yet, for Patrick Henry, life is more about using the gifts that God has given him.

His view is “not disabilities at all, more abilities.”

“I see blindness as ability and sight as a disability,” said Patrick Henry, who attends Mass at St. Bartholomew Parish in Louisville, Ky., with his parents and two brothers, ages 17 and 12.

“I just see what’s on the inside [of a person].”

For Patrick Henry, his abilities include being a talented pianist, vocalist and trumpet player.

A full-time student at the University of Louisville who commutes back and forth from campus, Patrick Henry also excels in the classroom. The sophomore is a straight A student and son of the talented pianist, vocalist and trumpet player.

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It’s a story about the power of a father’s love, a son’s passion.

A father’s love, a son’s passion

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Hughes family shares inspiring story at father and son breakfast

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he is in the school’s marching band. But that is only part of Patrick Henry’s story.

A love of music

His mom, Patricia, seemed on her way to her him. In 2006, Patrick Henry was playing the piano at age 2, Patrick Henry was playing on "You Are My Sunshine" and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." At the father and son breakfast, Patrick Henry sat at a piano, gently sliding his fingers on the keys as he performed "Rusles of Spring," a classical piece whose soothing sound is music to any listener’s ears.

Later, he shared melodic vocals as he played "Somewhere, Over the Rainbow" and Brooks and Dunn’s hit song "Believe" on the piano.

"He’s my hero," father Patrick John told ESPN’s Tom Rinaldi when discussing his son during a television piece on the family in 2006. The video was aired at the father and son breakfast.

"The places my son has taken me. . . . He has taken me on a path I would have never imagined," Patrick John said at the father and son breakfast.

"I have been blessed." 

Sacrifices for a son

Patrick John works the graveyard shift—11 p.m. to 5 a.m. at United Parcel Service in Louisville—so he can attend classes with his son at the University of Louisville. But that is only one of the sacrifices that father has made for his son. When Patrick Henry enrolled at the University of Louisville in 2006, he was interested in playing in the school’s pep band at basketball games. There was one catch: Only members of the marching band can play in the pep band.

Not to be deterred, Patrick John attends band practice with Patrick Henry. Father learns each new routine and pushes his son in his wheelchair through the 220-member band’s maneuvers.

"It’s an amazing commitment that his father has," said Norris, who attended the father and son breakfast.

"You talk about quality time," Lamping said. "Do you see the day as an opportunity or a struggle? No matter what your burden, have faith and never give up," he added. "I let this unfold at God’s speed."

"He’s got a discipline in him that I wish I had when I was younger," Patrick John said.

Faith, family, friends and freedom

Though he is not a student, Patrick Henry is also known for the straight F’s he lives in life: faith, family, friends and freedom.

His faith in God is evident. In the past year, he spent 15 minutes a day reading the Bible. He read the entire book in roughly 10 months. It was the fourth time he has read it in its entirety.

"A love of music

For his father, the life lessons are "Never give up," he adds. "You live your life by faith and never give up," he added. "I let this unfold at God’s speed."

He also lives his life by the acronym "P.A.T." P is for passion, patience and perseverance; A is for ability and positive attitude; and T is for try and try again.

"You talk about quality time," Lamping said. "Do you see the day as an opportunity or a struggle? No matter what your burden, have faith and never give up," he added. "I let this unfold at God’s speed."

Afterward, Patrick John offered more advice for parents.

"Love your kids, and do what you can for them. Make the most of your time."

— Patrick John Hughes

Patrick John Hughes, left, watches as his son, Patrick Henry Hughes, sings and plays the piano at the annual Holy Name of Jesus Parish Father and Son Breakfast in Beech Grove on March 2.

Alex Law, 11, a member of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, meets Patrick Henry Hughes after the March 2 Holy Name of Jesus Parish Father and Son Breakfast.

"You talk about quality time," Lamping said. "That’s what it’s all about."
How are individual Catholics to apply their faith to everyday circumstances as well as to political discussions on the local, state and national levels in a society filled with people who profess a multitude of religions or none at all? This was the question that Robert Royal sought to answer in a presentation on Feb. 27 at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis as part of its Lenten “Spaghetti and Spirituality” adult faith formation speaker series.

Royal is the president of the Washington-based Faith and Reason Institute (www.frinstiute.org), and the author of several books about the intersection of faith and public life. He is also the graduate dean for the Catholic Distance University (www.cduniv.edu).

At the start of his remarks, Royal sought to distinguish between a society being secular, which he said is true to varying degrees in every age, and a secularism that has been growing in strength in some societies during the past several decades.

“Secularism is something quite different than that secular space where all voices—religious and non-religious—are welcome,” Royal said. “Secularism is not neutral. It is a substantive position like Methodism or Marxism or Catholicism.”

He said that Catholics in the United States, speaking from the perspective of their faith, can do much to oppose injustice, especially to those who are most vulnerable in our society.

“The Church is fulfilling its own proper role toward a proper secular order when it opposes these things,” Royal said. “And it has a right to say secularism should not be because it is not a fair system in a democracy.”

He also said that religion needs to play a role in discussions about the right ordering of society because it is being re-energized more and more around the world, despite sociological theories from the past that foresaw a gradual secularization of society.

Royal said that the fact that the emergence of a new generation of “militant atheists,” such as Richard Dawkins (author of the recently published The God Delusion) and Christopher Hitchens (who recently wrote God Is Not Great) points to the strength of religion, not its weakening.

“It’s clear you don’t attack something that is weak,” Royal said. “One of the reasons why the secularists are so irritated at the moment and are coming forth with these attacks on all religion is that religion remains powerful in the world.”

Royal also pointed out the continuing power of religion in the world by discussing a speech made last December in Rome by French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

Since its revolution in the late 18th century, France has been known for its growing separation of religion from discussion of public matters, which in French culture is called laïcité.

In his speech, however, Sarkozy said that France has to respect the role of faith in its history and the wisdom that religious traditions can offer today to French society.

“Imagine if even in France this sort of argument is starting to be made, people have started to understand something dangerous about what happens when we have a strictly secularist society in which religious voices cannot speak,” Royal said.

He said Catholic voices in the United States “need to be bold” in speaking about public matters on which their faith can make contributions to further the common good.

This is important because there are trends in our society and culture that are putting millions of lives at risk and having terrible effects on the lives of the most poor among us.

Royal argued that, contrary to the “militant atheists,” it is not so much organized religion that has been a source of violence in the world as “organized irrelevance.”

Royal noted that, in the 20th century, communist regimes built on atheism were responsible for some 100 million deaths and that Nazism, which promoted a “scientistic racism,” accounted for another 40 million deaths.

“But we should not take for granted in our Western democracies that we’ve entirely escaped those sorts of slaughters of the innocents,” he said. “We know that in this country, since abortion has been legalized, 50 million babies have died in the womb. In other words, Roe v. Wade has killed more children in the womb than Nazism killed in the 20th century.”

Royal emphasized that injecting a Catholic perspective on discussions of public affairs is primarily the role of the laity, something that the Second Vatican Council highlighted.

“The specific role of the laity is to take Catholic principles and to see that they permeate these free societies,” Royal said.

“And to do that is hard.

“It means being very quick on your feet, and knowing how to argue and when to argue and when not to argue. It means knowing what you’re talking about. It means being courageous. And one of the hardest things for most people is to say some hard things when it can have social and maybe even professional consequences.”

Royal exhorted his listeners, in this season of Lent, to grow in holiness for the sake of the common good.

“It’s the way of holiness that will hold our identities as Catholics together,” Royal said. “And count on it. It will transform not only your families, not only your communities. It can transform America and it can transform the world. That’s why Jesus came into the world and asked his disciples to preach the Gospel to all nations.”

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Suggested Gifts for the New Convert

Rosaries, Prayer Books, Religious Books, Bibles, Pictures and Plaques, Crucifixes, Statuary, Medals and Chains, Rosary Bracelets,

Many Other Religious Gifts

Krieg Bros.
Catholic Supply House
Established 1892
119 S. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46225
317-638-3416
1-800-428-3767

Sorg-Moran Agency
Insurance & Financial Services
1711 North Shadeland Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46219
317-356-4392
Toll Free 1-866-374-3921

Larry Moran offers investment advisory services as a Registered Representative of Prudential Financial Planning Services (PFPS), a division of Prudential Securities, LLC (Pruco) and securities products and services as a Registered Representative of Pruco Securities, LLC (Pruco); insurance and annuity sales as a Registered Representative of Prudential. Sorg-Moran Agency is not affiliated with Pruco. Other products and services may be offered through our non-Pruco entities, 1-800-201-6690. IFS-A140174 Ed 11/2007

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I

Georgetown University has identified marriage conducted in June 2007 by their married lives? happy and holy married life? If "God's neglect too often weaken or tear apart. bonds that selfishness, sin and serious their wounds and to strengthen the trial, God's grace is especially needed ordinary married life demands can opens out to the entire community. children and an extended family that sacrifice individual goods and desires journey that will require ongoing obstacles to a successful married life. for life—without the grace of Christ unreasonable to think that any two view of marriage by saying, "It's Saint Meinrad, he summed up his this assignment. At the time, he was well-aware of the importance of this sacrament for the health and vitality of the family, the Church and society. Without patience, perseverance and a profound sense of the presence of God's grace, the sacrifices that even ordinary married couples are asked to do can seem overwhelming. And in times of severe doubt or trial, God's grace is especially needed to keep the couple together, to heal their wounds and to strengthen the bonds that selfishness, sin and seasonal neglect too often weaken or tear apart. What's the secret to a long-lasting, happy and holy married life? If "God's grace" is the answer, as Msgr. Koster believed, what should married couples do to cooperate with Christ—in good times and bad—and achieve success in their married lives? A recent survey of Catholics about their commitment to prayer, to fidelity and worship of the Church. —Daniel Conway

Success in marriage requires cooperation with God’s grace

In the mid 1970s, the late Msgr. Charles Koster traveled from Indianapolis to Saint Meinrad once a week to teach a class on the sacrament of marriage to seminarians. Msgr. Koster was well-equipped for this assignment. At the time, he was judicial vicar for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. Koster had merely traveled to the thousands of married couples—in both good times and bad—Msgr. Koster was keenly aware of the importance of this sacrament for the health and vitality of the family, the Church and society. During one of his classes at Saint Meinrad, he summed up his view of marriage by saying, "It's unreasonable to think that any two people should be able to stay together for life—without the grace of Christ assisting them. There are many serious obstacles to a successful married life. God's grace is not optional, but only if the couple cooperates." Success in marriage involves much more than simply "staying together." It requires a partnership that is spiritual, emotional and physical. It means committing to a lifelong journey that will require ongoing conversion from self-centeredness to a genuine openness to another. And it requires the willingness to sacrifice individual goods and desires for the sake of others, housework, children and an extended family that opens out to the entire community.

My husband of a few minutes and I were kneeling to the left of the altar and slightly behind the priest during our local Mass. The priest had just consecrated the host. He placed the Eucharist on the altar and genuflected. As I was gazing at the Eucharist, I had a very real sensation that Christ was gazing back at me. He seemed to speak in my mind: "Now we both sacrifice our lives—I for the world, and you for your spouse." There were no rays of light. No choir of angels sang. It was just a simple, private moment that Christ gave me as a gift on my wedding day. And it was not tidings of "Congratulatios!" or "Now will you stop bothering me?" It was a message of truth about the type of love to which spouses are called. How relevant that his message on the sacrificial nature of marriage came during the sacrament of the Eucharist, the pinnacle of sacrifice. How awesome and humbling it is that our Savior lifts us to his level through sacrifice: "Now we both sacrifice," he said, as if the very act of sacrificing gives us common ground with him. Not every sacrifice is unique to married couples. I know we’re all called to sacrifice in unique ways, whether single, married or religious. But the special reminder that Christ gave me during the nuptial Mass related positively to marital stability and vice versa,” not only for Catholics but also for people of all faiths. In other words, Catholic married couples who practice their faith and consistent with Catholic teaching on participation in the sacraments and fidelity to our faith, to our Catholic spouse, to say they are very familiar with Catholic teaching on marriage, and to have views about marriage that are informed by their faith and consistent with Church teaching. As Archbishop Kurtz notes, "Religious affiliation and practice are related positively to marital stability and vice versa," not only for Catholics but also for people of all faiths. In the past, when you used the word immigration it always meant legal immigration. But that has changed. Now, if you wish to clearly express your feelings about immigration you have to identify whether you are talking about a legal or illegal status. I also do not understand why giving support to illegal immigrants is the Christian thing to do. Don’t we understand that by supporting these illegal guests we place them in the most egregious situation imaginable? By breaking the law to enter this country, followed by obtaining illegal documentation—as many do—puts them in a position to be abused by many people, including some Christians. Why would we want to encourage anyone to work for below livable wages, live in substandard housing, or to be in constant fear of deportation? I certainly agree there are those who abuse illegal immigrants for their own self-interest. But let’s not forget that illegal immigration is all about self-interest. They, for the most part, are not interested in the welfare of this country, but only in what they can financially gain while working in this country. They do not want to assimilate into our society, learn our language or permanently add to its diverse culture. I also agree that the situation is very complex. This complexity is the result of our political leaders neglecting the problem of illegal immigration for 40 years and, might I add, for their own self-interest. My hope is that public discussion on this matter will include precise use of words that will clearly define its position. Then maybe we can start understanding and solving this problem. Leo Rhoda Indianapolis

Letters to the Editor

Properly defining words would help in public discourse about immigration

I would like to comment on the "Be Our Guest" column in the Feb. 22 issue of The Criterion. In the column, the letter writer used the word immigration 10 times with no modifier. I am a strong believer in legal immigration, and I am equally opposed to illegal immigration. In the past, when you used the word immigration it always meant legal immigration. But that has changed. Now, if you wish to clearly express your feelings about immigration you have to identify whether you are talking about a legal or illegal status. I also do not understand why giving support to illegal immigrants is the Christian thing to do. Don’t we understand that by supporting these illegal guests we place them in the most egregious situation imaginable? By breaking the law to enter this country, followed by obtaining illegal documentation—as many do—puts them in a position to be abused by many people, including some Christians. Why would we want to encourage
La Pasión nos recuerda que debemos unir nuestras penas y dolor a la de Cristo

Joseph Church in Jasper is one of the largest churches in Indiana. En el Criterio de viernes, marzo 7, 2008

Seeking the Face of the Lord
Buscando la Cara del Señor

Passiontide reminds us to join our sorrow and pain to that of Christ

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO DANIEL M. BUECHLEIN, O.S.B.

The Criterion Friday, March 7, 2008

La Pasión nos recuerda que debemos unir nuestras penas y dolor es a los de Cristo.

La Pasión nos recuerda que debemos unir nuestras penas y dolor es a los de Cristo.

Segundo, posiblemente nos inclinamos hacia prácticas devocionales después del Concilio Vaticano II, lo cual absolvía las prácticas devocionales que de hecho nos distraían del significado esencial y del papel de nuestras oraciones y reflexiones centradas más específicamente en aquellos que se celebran en el ambiente eucarístico. ¿Y qué hay de la Pasión? ¿Qué debería ser distinto en nuestra adoración y oración? Antes de celebrar la maravilla de la Pascua con Jesús se nos lleva a concentrarnos en el hecho desolador de que sufrió una muerte infame. Y resulta provechoso reflexionar sobre el cumplimiento de la Misión del sábado hasta el comienzo de la Vigilia Pascual.†

Los jóvenes: que ellos acepten el ánimo del Espíritu Santo, para que puedan discernir a un crimen. Acción de gracias\footnote{Las acciones de gracias se hacen en el día de la Pasión. Después de la celebración eucarística, se invita a los fieles a expresar un momento de acción de gracias.}

Quest – 1400 N. Meridian St.

La Iglesia en las más grandes en Indiana. Posee un encanto increíble y ciertamente surtía ese efecto en mí cuando niño. Al igual que muchas familias, la nuestra tenía un banco predilecto que ocupábamos invariablemente.

Como niño creo que había memorizado algunas de estas prácticas. La expresión devocional cayeron en desuso. Extraño la reforma de la liturgia, muchas prácticas devocionales eucarísticas y demás celebraciones litúrgicas pasaron a ser distinto en nuestra adoración y oración?

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

Archbishop Buechlein’s intention for vocations for March 2008: Youth: that they may be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit so that they can truly discern their role in the Church, especially God’s call to priesthood and religious life.

†

La Pasión nos recuerda que debemos unir nuestras penas y dolor es a los de Cristo.

Passiontide reminds us to join our sorrow and pain to that of Christ

Y siempre me impactaba cuando al llegar a la iglesia el quinto Domingo de la Cuaresma, hasta el final de la celebración de la Pasión del Señor y el Viernes Santo. Las imágenes en la iglesia podrían cubrirse a partir de la culminación de la Misa del sábado hasta el comienzo de la Vigilia Pascual.†

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And I was always startled when, on the fifth Sunday of Lent, called Passion Sunday, we arrived in church and all of the statues were covered in purple cloth. It was the practice in those days as a penitential and kind of mournful sign to cover the crosses, statues and images in the church in view of the approaching observance of the Passion and death of Jesus.

When I was a junior monk at Saint Meinrad, my assignment for a time was church decoration. And covering the statues and images for Passiontide was one of my jobs. There were a lot of statues!

After the Second Vatican Council and the reform of the liturgy, a good number of devotional practices were set aside. I missed some of them; this external marking of Passiontide was one of them. The Ordo, the official Church calendar for 1970, has a number of dates on which the statues and images of the United States, crosses in the church may be covered from the conclusion of the Mass for the Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent until the end of the celebration of the Passion. During Passiontide days in the church may be covered from the conclusion of the Mass for Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.† (Notice, the restoration of this devotional practice is not obligatory.)

The practice to mark Passiontide. External signs and symbols that promote our devotion are an acknowledgement of our need for aids to help us strengthen our faith.

We need images and symbols to stir our imagination and so direct our attention to the shifts of meaning and experience in the liturgical life of the Church. This is one of the distinctive features of Catholic worship.

There was a day when we may have placed too much emphasis on devotional externals that, in fact, distracted us from the essential meaning and centrality of the Eucharist and the mysteries celebrated in the liturgy of the Church year.

Arguably, in order to achieve a liturgical and devotional balance after the Second Vatican Council, we tended to the other extreme.

In some respects, our eucharistic and other liturgical celebrations tended to become overly intellectualized. Heart and mind and emotions are all important in our experience of life. So it is in our experience of liturgical life in the Church.

I don’t intend to say that this means crosses and sacred images should be covered during the two weeks of Passiontide. But practices such as this can help capture our attention, and help focus our prayer and reflection more specifically about what is being celebrated in the liturgical year.

So what about Passiontide? What should be different in our worship and prayer? Before we celebrate the wonder of Easter with Jesus, we are led to focus on the stark fact that he suffered an ignominious death.

In order to redeem us from the otherwise hopeless darkness of sin that had been our human heritage, freely he took upon himself the burden of our suffering. He was unjustly convicted and crucified as a criminal. He accepted that humiliation, and the very real emotional and physical suffering it entailed.

That, of course, is by no means the end of the story. But for a brief time in the liturgical year, the Church encourages us to ponder the awesome gift of Jesus in all its stark reality.

It is also in this brief time of Passiontide that we remind ourselves that when it is our turn to suffer in this life, we have the opportunity to join our sorrow and pain to that of Christ.

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March 7
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 2800 E. 20th St., Indianapolis. Lumen Dei meeting, 6:30 p.m., breakfast and program at Proulx Hall, "Faith and Business—Can They Co-Exist," Andy Ondr. Zipp Speed cycling components company, presenter. $10 members, $15 guests. Information: 317-919-5316 or e-mail LumenDei@zipspeed.com

Good Shepherd Parish, 1109 E. Cameron St., Indianapolis. Stations of the Cross followed by soup and bread dinner, 6 p.m., no charge. Information: 317-783-3158.

St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, 4050 S. Chicago, Indianapolis. Lenten fish fry, 4:30-8 p.m. Information: 317-546-1571.

St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, 502 W. Wayne St., Indianapolis. Lenten fish fry, 4-8 p.m., no charge. Information: 317-201-7014.

St. Joan of Arc Church, 4127 N. Central Ave., Indianapolis. Rosary, Mass with Benediction, Stations of the Cross, 6 p.m. Information: 317-283-5508.

St. Therese of the Little Flower Parish, 1401 N. Rosset Ave., Indianapolis. Lenten fish fry, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Information: 317-357-8352.

St. Jude Church, 5535 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. Music and message by Sarah Bauer and Marlene Akles, 7 p.m. Information: 317-241-6314, ext. 122, or e-mail nmeyer@archindy.org

Cathedral Kitchen and Food Pantry volunteers, from left, Immaculate Heart of Mary parishioner Rick Sparks of Indianapolis and Our Lady of Mount Carmel parishioners Sally Dennis and Deanna Reconcilla serve food for the local hungry in downtown Indianapolis on Nov. 6, 2005, at the ministry’s location at 16th and Pennsylvania streets in Indianapolis.

Cathedral Kitchen receives gift to establish endowment

Cathedral Kitchen and Food Pantry, a ministry of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parishes, received an anonymous $15,000 gift for the purpose of establishing an endowment to support the ministry’s service to poor and homeless people in Indianapolis.

Income from the endowment will provide supplemental funding for the Cathedral Kitchen, noted that the “Cathedral Kitchen and Food Pantry truly serves needy with nourishment, dignity and love.”


St. Barnabas Parish, 5235 W. 6th Ave., Indianapolis. Fish fry, 5-7:30 p.m. Information: 317-919-8186 or e-mail jindleysix@yahoo.com

St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 1421 S. Michigan Ave., Indianapolis. Stations of the Cross followed by soup and bread dinner, 6:15 p.m., Mass, 5 p.m. Information: 317-392-8096 or e-mail saintchristopherparish.org

S. Frances and Claire Church, 5901 Olive Branch Road, Greenwood. “Voices of Easter,” a presentation by those who were close to Jesus during his ministry and Passion, 7 p.m., child care available. Information: 317-859-4673.

Marion College, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Benefit concert for School on Wheels, 7-8 p.m., donations accepted for school supplies. Information: 317-471-8108.

March 8
Sewanee Indianapolis City Center Hotel, 31 W. Ohio St., Indianapolis. Catholic Pro-Life Dinner, 4:30-8 p.m. Information: 317-859-4673. "Voices of Easter," a presentation by those who were close to Jesus during his ministry and Passion, 7-8 p.m., child care available. Information: 317-859-4673.

S. Frances and Claire Church, 5901 Olive Branch Road, Greenwood. “Voices of Easter,” a presentation by those who were close to Jesus during his ministry and Passion, 7 p.m., child care available. Information: 317-859-4673.

March 9
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. Eucharist and soup dinner, 5:30 p.m. Information: 317-529-7777.

St. Joseph Hill Parish, 2605 St. Joe Road West, Sellersburg. “Voices of Easter,” a presentation by those who were close to Jesus during his ministry and Passion, 7 p.m., child care available. Information: 317-859-4673.

March 10
St. Paul Hemline, 501 N. 17th Ave., Grove City. Adoration Guild, meeting, 5-8 p.m. Information: 317-236-1586 or e-mail irmoffice@archindy.org

March 11
St. Barnabas Parish, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Men’s Club, meeting, 7-9 p.m. Information: 317-786-4371.
Property tax relief plan will make the final hurdle
Will it be Gov. Mitch Daniels’ plan, the Senate Republicans’ plan, the House Democrats’ plan or some combination of the three?

Perhaps the bigger concern, a question being asked by the Indiana Catholic Conference, the Indiana bishops’ official public policy representative, is: “How will the property tax relief plan affect the least of these?”

The Church is not the lone voice raising this concern for the poor. Two Catholic lawmakers, Rep. John Day (D-Indianapolis) and Sen. John Broden (D-South Bend), have chimed in to stand up for lower income residents.

Rep. Day offered an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) amendment to House Bill 1001 which was adopted and passed the full House in late January. The Indiana Catholic Conference supported the amendment.

Rep. Day’s amendment increases the EITC from 6 percent under current law to 9 percent.

“The Earned Income Tax Credit is designed to help lower to moderate income families, especially those with children,” Rep. Day said. “Over 450,000 families in Indiana have benefited from it. For a poor person, a tax credit is almost always better than a deduction.

“On a credit, if the credit is greater than the taxes owed on the income earned, the person gets a refund. For example, a family of three with an income of $15,000 would get approximately $250 back at the current 6 percent EITC,” Rep. Day said. “Under the House version of House Bill 1001, that same family would get about a $400 credit at the proposed 9 percent credit.

The Earned Income Tax Credit is a very targeted, focused tax credit to benefit the families who really need it—the working poor.

“Tax policy should be fair,” Rep. Day said. “It should be based on ability to pay and should help those like the elderly on fixed incomes, the working poor and anyone that is struggling to get by. In hindsight, the U.S. bishops got it right in their 1986 pastoral letter, Economic Justice for All, when they specifically mention tax fairness and that the tax code should reflect a sensitivity to the needs of the poor.”

House Bill 1001, which contains significant portions of the House Democrats’ property tax plan, passed the full House in a bipartisan vote of 93-1 on Jan. 24.

The primary components of the House Democrats’ plan include: 1) Homeowners would pay property taxes based on income, and caps the maximum payment of homeowners’ property taxes to 1 percent of household income beginning in 2009; 2) Increases the renter’s deduction from the current $2,500 deduction to $5,000; 3) Eliminates township assessor positions statewide; 4) Excludes instruction school building projects from voter referendums; and 5) Excludes local debt from the cap.

The Republican-controlled Senate amended House Bill 1001 and ties property tax relief to assessed valuation of property rather than to household income.

The Senate Republicans’ plan also includes a property tax cap of 1.5 percent of a home’s assessed value in 2009 and 1 percent of a home’s assessed value in 2010, excludes the earned income tax credit, increases the renter’s deduction from the current $2,500 deduction to $3,000, and allows for voter referendums on all building projects.

Senate Democrats offered several amendments on the floor to help low to moderate income earners in Indiana, to no avail. Sen. Broden offered an amendment to tie property taxes to one’s ability to pay, which paralleled the House Democrats’ plan. His amendment would cap property taxes to a maximum 1 percent of household income.

“One with the lowest income would receive the highest property tax credit,” Sen. Broden said. “Households with an adjusted gross income [AGI] of $35,000 and below would get a 90 percent credit, $35,000 to $50,000 get a 75 percent credit, $50,000 to $75,000 get a 62 percent credit, $75,000 to $100,000 get a 52 percent credit and those with incomes over $100,000 would get a 40 percent homestead credit.

“The problem with the Senate version of House Bill 1001 is [that] people’s homes with an assessed valuation of $200,000 or more are getting the lion’s share of the property tax relief,” he said.

Sen. Broden explained that because the House and Senate version increase the sales tax from 6 to 7 percent, which disproportionally burdens lower to middle income families, the Senate version doesn’t offer poorer families any way to offset the higher taxes they will pay.

Under the House Democrats’ plan, which in part was contained in Sen. Broden’s amendment, “The big winners would be the widow or older couples that have a lot of equity in their home, but are on a fixed income,” Sen. Broden said. “Local governments and schools are very nervous about the Senate version of House Bill 1001 because they are not sure where they are going to get the money to fill the shortfall. The House Democrats’ plan allows local governments the flexibility they need.”

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WASHINGTON (CNS)—Poverty, both domestic and global, has shown itself to be persistent, but successes have been made in ridding the world of some of its worst scourges and there is much yet to be accomplished, said speakers at a Catholic conference in Washington.

“The reality of global poverty is getting closer” to individuals’ lives, said Lesley-Anne Knight, the first woman secretary-general of Caritas Internationalis, but “its sheer persistence means it can all too easily slip from our conscience.”

Still, Knight said, targeted efforts have made inroads. Ghana is implementing a school nutrition program with locally grown foods. Burundi has established free medical care for mothers and children. And in Mozambique, insecticide-treated mosquito netting has halved the rate of malaria.

Knight made her comments on Feb. 25 at the annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Washington, attended by 70 Catholic foundations from across the nation and co-sponsored by 20 Catholic organizations.

On the other hand, Knight said, the cost of providing a basic education to those children who still lack it would come to about $10 billion a year—or what Americans spend on ice cream annually.

Nutrition-based health care, she added, would run about $13 billion a year, about two-thirds of what Americans and Europeans spend each year on pet food. Child nutrition, according to Knight, would cost $12 billion a year, the equivalent of U.S. and European annual expenditures on perfume.

The Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty, which is being spearheaded by many Caritas agencies, focuses not only on aid, but also on trade and debt.

“Trade rules are stacked in favor of rich countries and multinational companies,” Knight declared, and against the citizens in developing countries, “most of whom make their living from agriculture.”

Meanwhile, African nations are seen as failures, she said, if they do not live up to their end of the Millennium Development Goals, a series of eight objectives to be reached by 2015, ranging from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education.

“It is not a failure for that nation. It is a failure for all the developed countries,” said Knight, who urged greater debt relief for poor countries.

Norman Francis, president of Xavier University of New Orleans, said on Feb. 25 that poverty should not still persist in the United States.

“It is immoral for the United States, for its place in the world, to have the extent of poverty it has,” he said.

“Everybody knows education is the key to eradicating poverty,” Francis told his audience.

He said he would return from time to time a 25-year-old federal report on education, “A Nation at Risk,” on the need to improve the nation’s schools.

“It still applicable,” Francis said. “If a foreign nation had done to us what we had allowed to happen in our nation’s high schools, we would have declared it an act of war.”

Despite the nation’s shortcomings in educating its people, “we have enough educational water in this country to give every child a full glass of water,” Francis said.

“Yet we’ve found situations for our schools to stem the dropout rate,” he added.

Although generations of young black men have been lost because of subpar education, “the children of the poor have succeeded despite the odds,” Francis said.

New Orleans’ reconstruction has come along more slowly than anyone would have hoped, but since Hurricane Katrina devastated the city in August 2005, some critics say “blame the victim,” but “they never knew” the extent of the devastation, he added.

“Xavier was under five feet of water during the hurricane and, in trying to do a good turn for its university employees, housed them in trailers supplied by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, only learning recently that the trailers were riddled with formaldehyde, a carcinogen.

But New Orleans will not be rebuilt to what it was, said John Carr, the U.S. bishops’ secretary for social development and world peace, said that, with John Edwards having bowed out of the Democratic presidential primaries, “the mantra seems to be ‘whatever you do until the middle class, that’s what you do unto me.’”

Catholics are a mixed lot politically, caring for both human life as well as human dignity, and caring for the Earth as well as ‘the wretched of the Earth,’ ” Carr said.

He added that Catholics have to press lawmakers to recognize the connections Catholics have made on the political issues of the day, although it may not be an easy thing to do.

Reminiscing on his own failed try for elective office decades ago, Carr said, “There are worse things you can do than to stand up for what you believe in and lose.”

Archdiocesan parishes schedule annual Lenten penance services

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. The following is a list of penance services that have been reported to The Criterion. Due to space constraints, penance services scheduled during Lent or Easter 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.

Indianapolis East Deanery
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 South Deanery
March 8, 9:30 a.m. for St. Anthony of Padua, Morris March 10, 7 p.m. for Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood March 11, 7 p.m. for St. Mark the Evangelist March 12, 7 p.m. for St. Joseph and St. Ann at St. Ann

Indianapolis West Deanery
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 Deanery
March 8, 9:30 a.m. for St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs

March 7, 7 p.m. at St. Bridget, Liberty

Religious Gift Shop
Jewelry • Cards • Books • Music • Bibles

† Weddings
† Baptism
† Confirmation
† First Communion
† RCIA
† Confirmation
† Baptism
† Weddings

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Batesville Deanery
March 12, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptistist, Osgood 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 Deanery
March 11, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville

Connersville Deanery
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

Indianapolis East Deanery
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March 8, 9:30 a.m. for St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs

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, Floyds Knobs March 16, 4 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany

Tell City Deanery
March 9, 2 p.m. deanery service at St. Paul, Tell City March 11, 6:30 p.m. deanery service at St. Meinrad, Tell City March 13, 7 p.m. at St. Meinrad

Angels' Corner
Religious Gift Shop
Memorable Gifts for Special Occasions
First Communion
RCIA
Confirmation
Baptism
Weddings

Lenten activities are available online

Be sure to visit The Criterion’s Lenten Web page at www.archindy.org/lent. The page consists of links to daily readings, a Lenten column by Archishop Daniel M. Buechlein, a full list of communal penance services taking place at parishes and other features. †
‘Walking to Jerusalem’

Lenten journey takes Holy Spirit students thousands of miles

By John Shaughnessy

When they began their walk of more than 6,000 miles, the students, teachers and staff members at Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis never expected how much their Lenten journey would lead them to places that would make them smile, shape their faith and even break their hearts.

Before the journey began on Ash Wednesday, Holy Spirit principal Rita Parsons just wanted to create a Lenten theme that would connect with the students, and make them focus more closely on the challenges and sacrifices that Christ endured in the days leading to his death and resurrection.

So she and parish nurse Joannie LeBeau came up with the idea of “Walking to Jerusalem,” a 6,236-mile journey from Indianapolis that they hoped would also tie in with the school’s efforts toward improved health and fitness.

Everyone at the school was given a pedometer and divided into three teams so there would be some friendly competition as the miles accumulated while they walked at school and at home. Everyone was also encouraged to pray and think about Lent as they walked.

“When we kicked it off on Ash Wednesday, we told the children that Jesus made many sacrifices for us,” Parsons says. “We told them to challenge themselves in their walking. The faith connection comes in how they talk about it and pray about it. You’ll find [students in] many classes walking around the campus with their rosaries. They see how walking can help them and how prayer can be done at the same time.”

The faith connection was also developed as students were encouraged to give up treats and use the saved money to contribute to service projects that would help others. One of the service projects especially touched home with the Holy Spirit community—a fundraiser for the Leukemia Foundation.

On Feb. 9, three days after Ash Wednesday, the school community was devastated when a student teacher named Michelle “Shelly” Sharp died of the disease.

“She had made such an impression on the fifth-graders and the kindergarteners,” Parsons says. “She meant a lot to them. We had a fundraiser. Pennies for Patients, for the Leukemia Foundation. Our goal was $1,100. And we raised more than $3,200. We felt that it was a tribute to her.”

Most of that money came from the students’ pockets and their hearts. That same sense of caring has marked the students’ approach to the figurative walk toward Jerusalem.

“I think it’s a really good idea,” says Rachel Clark, 12, a sixth-grade student at Holy Spirit. “When we walk, we pray the Our Father and the Hail Mary.”

“I think it’s pretty cool that we’re doing this,” says Lindsey Newhart, 12, a seventh-grade student. “We usually do it in religion class. It’s getting us to walk around the whole Jerusalem and resurrection theme. It helps us understand Lent more.”

There have been moments of humor, too. In the front section of the school’s main hallway, a huge map has been placed on the wall, starting with the United States on the left and extending to Israel and beyond on the right. A young child looking at the map noticed the huge blue area marking the Atlantic Ocean. He innocently asked Parsons, “How are we going to walk on water?”

Without missing a beat, Parsons answered, “Jesus walked on water.”

Her answer seemed to satisfy the boy, at least for the moment.

“The school is also using the map and the ‘Walk to Jerusalem’ as tools for teaching social studies. Each Wednesday, the three teams turn in their mileage for the past week. Teachers then pinpoint on the map where the teams are in their imaginary trip to Jerusalem. When one team landed in Hershey, Pa., teacher John O’Hara pointed out that the city is the home of the Hershey chocolate company.

When another team’s mileage landed it in New York City, O’Hara noted that it has been the city with the largest population in the United States since 1790.

“They are getting into it,” Parsons says. “It’s great. I see the pedometers on them. The other day, the volleyball team was running before practice. They said they were getting their miles in.”

Parsons says that research has shown that if people do something for 30 days, it becomes a habit. She believes that their “Walk to Jerusalem” in the 40 days of Lent will have a lasting impact on the students.

“The walk is integrating everything,” Parsons says. “It’s integrating their lives. It’s integrating cities and maps. It’s integrating their health and their faith. They’re going to remember this and it’s connected to their religion.”

Shared values of Christianity, Islam guide believers, say officials

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—By emphasizing their teachings about faith in God and the obligation to love one’s neighbor, Catholics and Muslims can promote respect for one another and joint actions for peace and justice, said Vatican and Muslim representatives.

The spiritual and moral values shared by Christians and Muslims are important for forming consciences and guiding the behavior of believers, said a statement issued after the annual meeting of officials from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and from al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt.

The Feb. 25-26 meeting in Cairo focused on the theme “Faith in God and Love of Neighbor as the Foundations for Interreligious Dialogue.”

The theme is similar to that which 138 Muslim scholars proposed as the basis of dialogue when they wrote to Pope Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders in October.

The al-Azhar meeting was chaired by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the pontifical council, and by Sheikh Abd al-Fattah Alaam, president of al-Azhar’s permanent committee for dialogue with the monotheistic religions.

The meeting’s final statement said Christians and Muslims must get to know each other better, and that identifying common spiritual and moral values is important for increasing cooperation and improving relations.

The statement also said that Islam, Christianity and Judaism provide firm foundations “for the values of peace, truth, justice, right behavior” and cooperation in protecting the environment.

“It is important that these noble principles and exemplary values guide human behavior, especially at the present time when boundaries and distinctions between peoples are decreasing and the phenomenon of violence, extremism [and] terrorism is increasing, together with contempt for religions, religious values and everything that is considered sacred,” the delegates said.

Members of the dialogue group also called for respect for religious symbols and personalities, and for the media “to be vigilant that freedom of expression not be taken as a pretext for offending religions.”

In mid-February, a Danish newspaper reprinted cartoons that many Muslims found offensive, and that sparked outrage and protests in 2006.

The Vatican and al-Azhar representatives also encouraged members of all religious groups to “respect the dignity and honor of the human person without consideration of race, color, religion or conviction,” and to “condemn any offense against personal integrity, property and honor.”

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You are an evangelizer,” said Bishop Jacobs with gusto. “You are to proclaim the word of God. You are to proclaim the Good News of salvation.

“You are to announce what God has done for you in baptism, and how he has brought you into the fullness of his life. And then, when we’re confirmed and hands are laid upon us by the bishop and he anoints us with the sign of the cross, he’s empowering us to be evangelizers. He’s empowering us to be witnesses.”

Bishop Jacobs explained how an ordinary conversation we have with another person can be a real moment of evangelization.

He called such an opportunity “a divine appointment” where God has brought the journeys of the two people in the conversation together at a specific time and place.

“From all eternity, God has willed that you and that person intersect at that moment,” Bishop Jacobs said. “That’s not an accident.”

“That divine appointment might be as simple a thing as listening to another person. It might mean nothing but just being a friend to another person until that person is ready to hear the Good News of salvation.”

In her presentation titled “Being More Effectively Evangelistic,” Sister Nancy noted that the Greek used in Acts 1:8 to describe the power that God gave to the Apostles to work wonders and to preach the Gospel is also the root for the English word “dynamite.”

“I think we’re still playing with little sparklers,” Sister Nancy said. “[God] wants to make us explosive through the power of his Holy Spirit.

“The power of the Holy Spirit was not given to make us comfortable. It was given to make us missionaries. And one of the things that can stifle the gifts of the Holy Spirit is that if we do not say ‘Yes’ to our mission.”

At the end of his presentation, Bishop Jacobs presented a challenge to his listeners to use the gifts given in the Holy Spirit for the sake of the Gospel.

“If not you, who? If not now, when? If not the truth of the Gospel, what? If not in the power of the Spirit, how? If not in your home or school or place of work, where?

“God needs us to do our part to help others to know his great love.”

Bishop Jacobs said. “Has God loved us? Yes. Now what are we going to do with God’s love? Go and make disciples of all the nations.”

†
Breaking down barriers

Teens celebrate God’s infinite love and mercy at Archdiocesan Youth Rally

By Bryce Bennett

The music to the song “Sanctuary” faded out, but the voices of the youths only grew louder.

With eyes closed and hearts open, these 550 teenagers prepared themselves for the message of Jesus Christ during the annual Archdiocesan Youth Rally held on March 1-2 at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis.

The 2008 theme of the rally was “Infinite.” What became apparent from the moment the youths came to the rally was the infinite eagerness, anticipation, and longing they displayed for the Good News.

Father Jonathan Meyer, archdiocesan director of youth ministry, touched upon this longing during his homily at Sunday Mass.

“We need to break down the barriers and manifest what God wants for us,” he said.

Festivities started on March 1 with the pre-rally at Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, where youths were invited to socialize and play basketball and volleyball. They also had the option of playing board games, video games, corn hole or watching a movie. The evening ended with the Stations of the Cross and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Youth rally participants also welcomed Steve Angrisano as the keynote speaker. Angrisano is known for his ministry as a Christian recording artist and motivational speaker as well as serving as master of ceremonies for the 2005 and 2007 National Catholic Youth Conferences. He said he noticed something special about this group of young people.

“They areGod's children and desire for God is something that was really special to see,” Angrisano said. “This group has thrown themselves into God for truth.”

Brian Hanley of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, recognized Angrisano and was happy to see him as the keynote speaker.

“I attended the 2007 National Catholic Youth Conference and was blown away by his message as well as his singing and guitar playing,” Brian said.

Angrisano’s keynote address focused on the youths beginning to recognize that God is in everything they do.

“We have a God of miracles, not just a God of stained-glass windows. . . We have a God who is in this room with us right now,” Angrisano said.

After the March 2 morning keynote address, the youths separated into smaller groups by grade levels, where they listened to presentations by other speakers who gave personal testimonies and advice focusing on themes such as love, bullying and friendship.

Jeremy Reiss gave a talk to high school seniors on the importance of love, chastity and marriage.

“I was amazed at how everyone was able to share my story in order to help you in your struggles,” Jeremy Reiss explained.

“Where I have been from the darkness to the light, I can now be the light for others,” Reiss said.

A key component to Jeremy Reiss’ talk on marriage focused on the commitment to spouse in marriage.

“Love in marriage is about making yourself, as well as your partner, a better person,” he said.

Joseph Lorentz, 15, of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, attended the group session on friendship. He said he came away with a more comfortable sense of who he is.

“The youths then divided into even smaller group sessions to focus on topics that are at the core of teenage life. These smaller group sessions allowed the youths to talk one-on-one with each other about the issues of drama/stress, voting, fitting in and what God has planned for them.”

Joe Connelly, youth minister at St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, and Janet Roth, youth minister at St. Ann, St. Benedict and Sacred Heart parishes in Terre Haute, hosted a breakout session on the effects of drama and stress in teens’ lives.

Roth reminded the teens to ask for God’s intercession.

“Remember that you are not alone. Remember to pray every day and use God as your strength,” Roth said. “We do not get God heavier.”

The youth rally participants then gathered for Mass at Christ the King Church.

It was a true celebration of music, prayer and faith centered on God’s infinite love and kindness.

Father Meyer asked the youths to extend this enthusiasm into their everyday lives.

“We need to know Christ on the inside, but we also need to let everyone know on the outside,” he said.

The youth rally concluded with a spirited adoration session and closing ceremonies in which the Archdiocesan Youth Council members were recognized for their hard work in planning the weekend event.

Kirk Meyers, 18, a member of Annunciation Parish in Brazil in the Terre Haute Deanery, was among those who served as an Archdiocesan Youth Council member. He admitted the work was hard, but ultimately fulfilling.

“I was amazed at how everyone was able to come together and worship God in our own way,” he said.

Pat Jensen, 18, a member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, who also served as an Archdiocesan Youth Council member, said he came away with a greater confidence in himself and a greater understanding of God’s presence.

“I received so much guidance and advice from other Archdiocesan Youth Council members on how to speak in front of crowds of people,” Pat said. “Spiritually, I have learned this weekend that, no matter whatever I do, I know God will be there for me.”

By Bryce Bennett
Sisters of St. Benedict to host four-day ‘Triduum Retreat’

For more than 50 years, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove have invited guests to join them for Holy Week liturgies at the monastery chapel. The sisters offer a four-day “Triduum Retreat” at the monastery for hot cross buns, Easter eggs, the Sisters of St. Benedict’s special ham bread and drinks. “On Easter Sunday,” Sister Mary Luke said, “the community gathers once again for Mass in honor of the Resurrection and in thanksgiving for the sacrifice made by our Lord and Savior. The monastery’s bell choir and schola add to the assembly’s voices raised in praise.” The “Triduum Retreat” includes lunch and dinner with the sisters, opportunities for spiritual direction, and time to walk the grounds as well as pray at the outdoor labyrinth and Stations of the Cross.

St. John the Evangelist parishioners John and Eileen Ahrens of Indianapolis have enjoyed participating in Advent and Lenten retreats with the sisters since December 1996. “We find it very worthwhile,” Eileen Ahrens said. “It’s been a very good experience for us. I think, especially at the Triduum, it’s nice to have the quiet time, to keep the silence and be able to pray with the sisters. … It’s a time of quiet and prayer to focus on God.” John Ahrens said he has meditated on the Passion narrative during Holy Week for years. He finds it more contemplative and meaningful at the monastery.

“WASHINGTON (CNS)—Mercy Sister Sharon Ewart has been named executive coordinator of the Canon Law Society of America, effective on Aug. 1. Sister Sharon is the first woman to hold what is the society’s chief administrative officer position. She was president of the organization in 2004-05. Sister Sharon has been a member of the Canon Law Society of America since 1984, and was a consultant to its board of governors in 1995-97, a member of the organization’s publications task force, and served on the Committee on the Canonical Aspects of the Sexual Abuse of Minors. She also was a member of the special task force that drafted a guide to the implementation of the U.S. bishops’ essential norms for diocesan and episcopal policies dealing with allegations of clerical sexual misconduct. A former associate general secretary of the U.S. bishops’ conference, Sister Sharon serves as a consultant to the bishops’ Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance and to the work group on “Apostles’ Success,” the Vatican document by Pope John Paul II on the theological and juridical nature of bishops’ conference.

Serving as a consultant to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate’s board of directors and a member of the Catholic Common Ground Initiative. Currently, she is a canon law consultant and visiting canon law instructor at The Catholic University of America in Washington. She has a doctorate in canon law from Catholic University and master’s degrees from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. The Canon Law Society of America has more than 1,500 members. †
Learning about the early Christians and how they responded to persecution and challenges is a bit like tracing one’s family tree. In looking back, we rediscover not only how the first Christians lived, but also how their example helps us to be better Christians today.

Looking back gives us fresh insight into the present and the future of Christian faith. But why, after almost 2,000 years, does the witness of early Christianity remain relevant?

Much of what we know about the first Christians comes to us from the New Testament. Scriptures were born out of the heart of the early Christian communities, and the experiences of those men and women who were privileged to walk, talk and eat with Jesus.

As we hear God’s Word proclaimed at each Sunday Eucharist, we are reminded of the unique place that those first Christians hold in the history of the Church. The early Christians lived in a cultural and social climate unlike our own. They were often misunderstood, frequently misrepresented, and both subtly and overtly persecuted for believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

Yet, within a span of four centuries, the witness of the early Christians converted the whole Roman Empire. This remarkable historical fact carries timely lessons for us as we reflect on how we are to live the Gospel in contemporary culture.

The Acts of the Apostles offers us one of many biblical descriptions of the daily life of the first Christians. In the second chapter of Acts, we read that, “They devoted themselves to the teaching of the Apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.”

... That meditation helps me to remember what happened to Christ, and makes my eyes widen and see more around me.” (Betty Ahler, Pierce, Neb.)

**Faith, Hope and Charity/David Siler**

**Law of love is greatest**

Since Congress failed to pass comprehensive immigration reform last year, many citizens are scrambling to write their own legislation.

TheCriterion has joined with other Catholic organizations in Indiana, and I have been saddened to see that attempts for consideration are hostile to immigrants here.

This “separation theology” flies in the face of the Catholic principle of solidarity—that we are all members of the same body of Christ, interconnected from you, and you are not separate from me. No man-made law can change this principle.

In the immigration “debate,” we have a number of laws converging. I most often hear that immigrants have broken our laws.

It seems to me that when many laws converge in a certain way, that is the greatest of all laws—the law of love.

Should we not ask, “What would love have us do?” In lieu of a phrase started several years ago, “What would Jesus do?”

We, my wife, and I have five children, and if my own country’s laws, conditions, etc., did not allow me to provide adequately for my family, would I not be acting wrong in leaving you, and I have been saddened to see that attempts for consideration are hostile to immigrants here.

Immigrants to our country do not infringe upon us, but rather add tremendous value to our country. Our current laws are simply not responsive to our own country’s need for workers nor are they kind to those who desire the life that our country affords.

Catholic Charities’ programs in the area also serve as an example of a loving response. We serve anyone who comes to us in need, regardless of their race, sex, religion, or sexual orientation. Our staff and volunteers seek the face of Christ in those they serve, hoping to hear the voice of Jesus say, “Yes, I am a stranger, you welcomed me.”

(Cynthia Dewes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, is a regular columnist for *The Criterion.* )
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 9, 2008

• Ezekiel 37:12-14
  • Romans 8:9-11
  • John 11:1-45

One of the major Hebrew prophets, Ezekiel, provides this Lenten weekend’s first biblical reading. Ezekiel lived and wrote during the period known as the Babylonian Captivity. Many Hebrews who had survived Babylonia’s conquest of the Holy Land were living in exile in Babylon, the imperial capital, located in today’s Iraq. While these exiles were not enslaved, life for them was miserable. They yearned to return to their homeland. Years passed. Four generations passed, and their exile did not end. Their yearnings grew in intensity. Surely, many prayed for relief. Likely, many scorned God for not rescuing them. Still, they held on for God—and calling the people to renewed devotion to and trust in God—was no easy undertaking for Ezekiel. Nevertheless, he promised the people that if they were faithful to God then a new day would come for them. In this reading, Ezekiel uses the imagery of death and resurrection. He equates life in Babylon with being in a grave. He describes God’s rescue as opening the graves and bringing the dead back to life. Ezekiel forcefully declares that God will rescue the people. God will be true to the Covenant, as always.

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans is the first biblical reading. Paul wrote this letter to the Christians of Rome. When he wrote it in the latter part of the first century A.D., Rome literally was the center and heart of the western world. It was the cultural capital, and it was then estimated to have been at least one million people, a number far exceeding any other community then known to exist. It was the world capital. The emperor resided in Rome. The government and major courts were seated in Rome. It was the world’s commercial center. It was also the center of the pagan Roman religion. Christians in Rome had to face challenges rushing at them from all sides. Paul encouraged them and urged them to be even more followers of Christ in the midst of all these challenges. In so doing, Paul reassured the Roman Christians that earthly life passes. Only the spiritual endures. Paul urges them to be strong now and earn an everlasting reward. St. John’s Gospel tells the story of the Lord’s visit to Bethany. In the first century A.D., Bethany was a community just a few miles from Jerusalem. Now it is a community completely enveloped by metropolitan Jerusalem.

The Synoptic Gospels often present Jesus as the healer. Here the Lord confronts death. His friend, Lazarus, has died. Martha, the sister of Lazarus, tells Jesus that he who had been present earlier then Lazarus would not have died. Seeing her faith, Jesus restores Lazarus to life. The death of Lazarus, the faith of Martha and the final raising of Lazarus by Jesus are the key story. Jesus controls all things, even death. He offers life. However, humans, such as Martha, must respond by giving themselves fully to Jesus in faith. To accept Jesus is to accept God. To be with Jesus is to be with God.

Reflection
Next Sunday, the Church will celebrate Palm Sunday then lead us into Holy Week, commemorating the Last Supper, the Passion and death of the Lord, and the Resurrection. However, these events are much more than anniversaries or memorials. Jesus lives! He is in our lives now if we permit him to be with us. The Church calls us to allow the Lord into our lives. The Church invites us to participate in Holy Week with great personal commitment. Using Paul’s lesson to the Romans, it calls us to realize that all that is eternally will die. Earthly life will end. But we can live if we truly accept Jesus.

The model of faithfulness presented by Ezekiel was as well as Martha’s example, teach us what we must do to attain life in Christ. †

The Church invites us to participate in the Eucharist as Christ himself who baptizes. The Synoptic Gospels often present Jesus as the healer. Here he is present, first of all, with his Word. The word is the life-giving Word. It is God’s Word. As we read it, we can encounter Christ. He is present also in his Word. As I hope we know, when the Scriptures are proclaimed in the church, it is Christ himself who speaks to us. Christ is also present in the person of the priest or other minister of a sacrament. And he is present especially (“eucharistic”) in the eucharistic species of bread and wine. It is important to note that when the Church speaks of the Eucharist in this context it does not mean primarily the simple presence of Christ in the eucharistic species as it is in the tabernacle, for example. It means most directly and essentially the sacrificial liturgy of the Eucharist, the celebration of the Mass by the Catholic community. It is in this sense that the Eucharist is the focal point of our lives as Catholics.

As the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy explains, “Every liturgical celebration, as an activity of Christ the priest and of his body which is the Church, is a sacred action of a pre-eminent kind. No other action of the Church equals its title to power or its degree of effectiveness.” This is what it means to say that the Eucharist is the center of life and liturgical worship for us Catholics.

The lady in charge of our parish Catechism program claims that Christ is equally as present in Scripture as he is in the Eucharist. She cites parishes where the Bible is given a special place with lighted candles on either side.

I am confused. I was always taught that Christ is uniquely present, soul and divinity, in the Eucharist. Besides, isn’t the Eucharist our focal point as Catholics? (California)

The following explanations and quotations are from the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council (#7-#8), and are repeated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1084-1090).

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The Church’s ritual for the worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass notes (#2 and #5), all other aspects of eucharistic worship and prayer are an extension and reflection of this tradition.

The celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass “is truly the origin and goal of the worship which is shown to the Eucharist outside of Mass.” The “primary and original reason for the reservation of the Eucharist after Mass is the administration of sacrament [Communion to people who are dying].” The secondary reasons are the giving of Communion [in Communion services, for example] and the absolution of Jesus, who is present in the sacrament.”

All the Church’s provisions for the arrangement and conduct of liturgical worship are intended to respect and safeguard those essential doctrinal priorities. (A free brochure in English or Spanish, answering questions that Catholics ask about baptism practices and sponsors, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 3315, Peoria, IL 61612. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the above address or by e-mail in care of jdietzen@pol.com)
Priest: Stand with Blessed Virgin Mary at foot of Christ’s cross

By Mary Ann Wyand

Mary stood by the cross as Jesus was crucified at Golgotha, which means “the Place of the Skull,” near Jerusalem.

With the Blessed Virgin was her sister, Mary, the wife of Cleopas, as well as Mary of Magdala and the beloved disciple, John.

That heartbreaking image is part of our collective memory of the Passion narrative recorded in the Gospel accounts of the Crucifixion. Father Jonathan Meyer explained in his “40 Hours Devotion” sermon on Feb. 20 that the Way of the Cross is a reenactment of the Passion of Jesus.

“Our Lord is willing to bring anxiety to the heart of his Blessed Mother to do the will of his heavenly Father,” Father Meyer said, “to remain in the temple for three days at the age of 12 and at the age of 33 to die on the cross, knowing the heart that it would bring to our Blessed Mother’s heart, but also knowing the joy that it would ultimately bring.”

Yet Mary stood in vigil at the foot of the cross, Father Meyer said, knowing what would happen because Simeon had told her at the Presentation in the Temple that “the sword of sorrow would pierce her heart” (Lk 2:35).

Because of her Immaculate Conception, Father Meyer said, Mary was “a woman of faith, a woman of prayer, and a woman whose heart was completely and totally united to God.”

Even from the moment of her miraculous conception of Jesus, he said, Mary endured great sorrow because she was scarred during her pregnancy then the Holy Family had to flee to Egypt to save the life of the newborn Christ Child while King Herod’s soldiers searched for him and killed countless infant boys in the massacre of the Holy Innocents.

Throughout Christ’s life, Father Meyer said, Scripture tells us that “Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart” (Lk 2:19).

In Lumen Gentium, the Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, he said, “This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ’s virginal conception up to his death. … Thus, the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering …” (#57, #58).

The cross was the greatest pulpit that Christ would ever preach from and which brought us our salvation, Father Meyer said, and the beloved disciple who stood with Mary at the foot of the cross represents all the faithful.

“Blessed Mother Teresa [of Calcutta] said, ‘No Mary, no Jesus. Know Mary, know Jesus,’ ” he explained. “Mary is essential to our spiritual life. … We need the Blessed Virgin Mary. We cannot know Christ without her. The Blessed Virgin Mary’s role [in salvation history] allows us to grow in holiness and in grace.”

As part of a Lenten observance of eucharistic adoration on Feb. 17–20, “Both in the temple at the age of 12 and on the cross at the age of 33, our Lord shows us that God’s will must reign over all human wills,” Father Meyer said, “over all human connections, over all human relationships, even the relationship with his Blessed Mother.”

Mary understood that, he said, even as grief pierced her heart.

“Our Lord is willing to bring anxiety to the heart of his Blessed Mother to do the will of his heavenly Father,” Father Meyer said, “to remain in the temple for three days at the age of 12 and at the age of 33 to die on the cross, knowing the heart that it would bring to our Blessed Mother’s heart, but also knowing the joy that it would ultimately bring.”

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Holy Family, New Albany, 89, Mother of Mary Ellen Jungels (Gerbeck) Muller, Butler. Father of Marie St. Monica, Indianapolis, Feb. 18.


BEARD, Alfred R. 


Schoentrup, Patricia Jo, 72, St. Joseph, Jennings County, Feb. 8. Great-grandmother of one.

Schoentrup-Cook. Sister of Peggy Shafer. Grandmother of seven.

Schoentrup, Patricia Jo, 72, St. Joseph, Jennings County, Feb. 8. Great-grandmother of one.

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Local Church teen leads other youth volunteers in operating ‘kiddie pack’ program

By Caroline B. Mooney
The Catholic Moment

CARMEL—Needy children in Indianapolis have the chance to pick out their own food each weekend, thanks to the “kiddie pack” food program run by 16-year-old Stephen Champlin as an offshoot of the Lord’s Pantry.

The food pantry was started 20 years ago by Lucious Newsom, 93, a retired Baptist minister who converted to Catholicism in Indianapolis. Each Saturday morning, the Lord’s Pantry is open at “Anna’s House,” named in honor of a young girl who helps Newsom feed the poor from her wheelchair.

Ten years ago, Stephen, his parents and two older sisters moved to the area and became members of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Carmel. Newsom spoke at the parish, asking for volunteers at the Lord’s Pantry, and the family began working regularly.

“Lucious has become like a family member to us,” said Mary Champlin, Stephen’s mother. “He is such a wonderful person. For anything we do to help him, we get back 100 times.”

The family has helped Newsom serve the needy each week and on holidays. “Stephen is like any other kid,” she said. “He doesn’t always want to do what you say, but he’s really faithful to Lucious. I know where he’s going to be every Saturday.”

“I used to go on fishing trips with Lucious,” Stephen said. “We’re pretty close. In September, he came up with the idea to get the kids food and to have kids serve them. He chose me to run it—he came up to me and talked to me about it.”

“Stephen’s the boss down there,” Newsom said, “and we don’t like to interfere. I told Stephen to run the kiddie packs because he’s a good kid, kind of laid back, so I gave him a job and put him in charge.

“We give the kids a job, and boy, do they do a job,” he said. “It’s the only way you can keep them out of trouble. Adults aren’t allowed in the basement with the kiddie pack line. Instead, the children choose what they want to eat by themselves. For most of them, it’s the only food they get for the weekend when they’re not in school,” Stephen Champlin said. “If they’re not in school, lots of them won’t be eating.”

On a recent Saturday, the children could select English muffins, jelly, peanut butter, crackers, pretzels, carrots, ravioli, pudding, cereal, packs of celery sticks with peanut butter, and drinks.

“When we first started the kiddie packs, every week Lucious would tell me to go find helpers, and I would ask any kids who were helping at Anna’s House to come down to the basement to help serve,” Champlin said. “Now that it’s been going on for a few months, the kids come find me. I have anywhere from 10 to 20 helpers each week.”

“I’ve known Stephen for years,” said Susan McIntosh, a St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner. “I have worked with Lucious for about 20 years, and in October I happened to go by on a Saturday. I heard about the kiddie pantry and saw tables that high school kids had set up.

“Stephen bought me into helping, and I’m sure as long as I’m in town I’ll keep coming every week.”

“The dedication and the commitment are great—and it’s such a wonderful idea,” McIntosh said. “After working with Lucious for so long, to see another portion of the program started is wonderful. The fact that a young person took it on is wonderful—Stephen is such a positive role model, and the program itself is such a positive thing.”

(Editor’s note: Anyone interested in volunteering at the food pantry can call the Champlins at 317-571-1470 or go to Anna’s House, 303 N. Elder Ave., in Indianapolis, any Saturday morning from 9 a.m. to noon.)

Proposed Jasper Catholic high school plans move ahead

By Paul R. Leisinger
The Message editor

JASPER—Two more steps have been taken by the board of directors of the proposed John Paul Great High School in Jasper, according to Dr. J.R. Hoffman. The curriculum has been approved and a location has been determined.

The school is to begin in the fall of 2009 using leased space on the third floor of the St. Joseph Parish Center.

Details have not been finalized for using the building, but the St. Joseph parish council agreed to the plan in principle on Feb. 25.

“We will start the school with one freshman class,” Hoffman said in a telephone interview with The Message on Feb. 26. “He is president of the board for what is proposed to be a private Catholic high school, not dependent on parishes for its operation. The intention is to add to the enrollment year by year and eventually have two classes for each of the four grades.

“If we outgrow the building, then Glory to God! We’ll get a shovel and break ground,” Hoffman said. “If that’s our problem, what a terrific problem to have.”

With the anticipated opening of the school 18 months away, board members hope to recruit enough students to make a commitment. So far, with just a little over one month for meetings and discussion and publicity, three families have made a commitment and five more have expressed interest.

The first of a series of monthly meetings will be held on April 6 for interested families.

Hoffman said that junior high and high school students “are going to make a decision on this high school based on ‘I want to go where my friends go.’ The monthly meetings will help prospective students see what the student body would be like.

The board of directors, meeting last weekend, approved a “core 50” curriculum requiring 50 credits to graduate. Hoffman said. An honors program will also be available.

“What is exciting and unique about our curriculum is working in ‘the New Evangelization’ that [the late Pope] John Paul II taught us about,” Hoffman said.

He gave an example of a kind of “catholic environmentalism” based on the teaching of John Paul II about the cosmos.

Students would learn about the pope’s teaching, along with what they learn about Earth and space biology, and there would also be a service program for students to be involved in projects ‘that have to do with the stewardship of creation.’”

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The Criterion Friday, March 7, 2008
WASHINGTON (CNS)—About 100 students at The Catholic University of America in Washington began their spring break by praying the rosary with Pope Benedict XVI via satellite from Vatican City on March 1.

Thousands more university students from other countries joined the satellite transmission in celebration of the sixth Day of Prayer for European and American University Students. Besides Washington, participants were in Havana; Mexico City; Teolod, Spain; Aparecida, Brazil; Loja, Ecuador; Naples, Italy; Avignon, France; Bucharest, Romania; and Minsk, Belarus.

“It was beautiful to have all the college students from all over the world to be united in solidarity,” said Anne Funk, a senior majoring in social work at Catholic University, who prayed a Hail Mary that was broadcast around the world.

Washington Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl, who is chancellor of Catholic University, presided at the prayer service, joined by Vincentian Father David J. O’Connell, Catholic University’s president. Archbishop Pietro Sanbi, apostolic nuncio to the United States, also attended the prayer service, which was held at Caldwell Chapel on campus.

Before the pope arrived to pray the rosary and deliver a message, students participated in a prayer vigil that included Gospel readings, passages from Pope Benedict’s 2007 encyclical, “Spe Salvi” (“On Christian Hope”), and prayers and student testimonies of faith.

Students from each university greeted the pope, some by jumping, waving flags and with spirited applause, as he entered the Paul VI audience hall in Vatican City.

“People are ‘being driven to the edge’ by the continuing Israeli-imposed blockade, closures and roadblocks in Gaza and the West Bank,” he said. Israel says these policies are not effective, so they [Israelis] have to start looking at other options.”

“We university students should invite all to the life of hope which comes from faith and commit ourselves to working toward a new synthesis between faith and reason,” he said. A student from the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil, Daniel Fassa Evangelista, said although he grew up in a good Christian home he found it difficult to live his faith in college. But with the support of friends and professors with whom he could share his faith and pray, Evangelista said he came back to Christ.

“In our studies, at work, while we rest, in our relationships, with our colleagues, in every one of our actions, we want to give God to the world and build a civilization of love,” he said.

On April 17, the pope will visit Catholic University, and address Catholic university and college presidents and other Catholic education leaders from across the United States.

Before the prayer service, Claire Bordelon, a junior at Catholic University, said when the pope comes, he will “be in the places where we spend most of our time.” She told the Catholic Standard, newspaper of the Washington Archdiocese, that she was looking forward to sharing “the same space as the pope”.

“Many students did not know if they would see the pope in April, but they were content to see him on the satellite transmission. A freshman, Deirdre Lawler, noted the “beautiful sense of unity that we had with the satellite connection.”

Catholic University students led other participants around the world in praying the fifth glorious mystery: Mary is crowned queen of heaven and earth.

Lawler, who said she was in the presence of a pope before, called the experience “other-worldly” and “sort of mysterious.”

Israeli first-graders sit under their desks during a drill simulating a warning sirens for incoming rockets in the southern city of Ashkelon, Israel, on March 3. Israeli troops pulled out of the Gaza Strip on March 3 after 6 days of fighting that killed more than 100 people, mostly Palestinians.

Middle East

(continued from page 1)

Palestinians say at least 10 people, including civilians and children, were killed by Israeli arson on March 2, bringing the number of dead in six days to more than 100. Israel says most of those killed were armed militants.

“Israelis in the cities of Ashkelon and Netivot were put on alert after Palestinian rockets reached their cities. More than 150 Israeli civilians in the cities of Ashkelon and Netivot were put on alert after Palestinian rockets reached their cities.”

“Israel’s concern, he said, is the growing radicalization in Gaza. There is ongoing suffering here and a growing desperation and hopelessness. There is more radicalization, and this is not a healthy environment to look toward the vision of a two-state solution. We are being driven far from it,” said Zananiri. “What is happening in Gaza is beyond imagination. Instead of moving forward, and really moving backward into the circle of violence. It is very indicative of a dark future.”

People are “being driven to the edge” by the continuing Israeli-imposed blockade, closures and roadblocks in Gaza and the West Bank, he said. Israel says these measures are necessary to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks.

Currently, most Israeli military action in Gaza is from artillery and airstrikes against areas from which missiles have been fired. The Haaretz daily newspaper reported plans for ground operations. In late January, Israel instigated an embargo of supplies for Gaza in protest of the missile attacks, with limited amounts of fuel, medicine and food entering the territory. However, in late February and early March, supplies continued to move through the border crossings in controlled amounts, and Israel announced on March 4 that it had allowed 62 trucks of food and medicine into Gaza.

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