A way to say thanks

Celtic cross honors Christ and commemorates former pastor’s service

By Mary Ann Wyand

DANVILLE—Carrying his oxygen pack, Father Charles Chesbrough walked outside Mary, Queen of Peace Church in Danville after Mass on April 27 to admire an ornately carved Celtic cross created to honor Christ.

The 7-foot Irish cross also commemorates Father Chesbrough’s 12 years of service to the Indianapolis West Deanery parish.

“It’s beautiful,” Father Chesbrough said of the Bedford limestone cross after Father Bernard Cox, pastor of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish, dedicated it in gratitude to God, the former pastor and the donors who helped build the church.

Father Chesbrough served at the Danville parish from 1983 until 1995, and supervised the construction of the parish’s fourth church when its rapidly growing membership needed a larger worship space a decade ago.

“We wanted to do something for Father Charlie, and I thought it’s more important that we do something for a priest who was his alive,” Father Cox said. “He’s been a great influence in my life, and I felt it was the very least we could do.”

Father Cox said he is grateful for the generosity of Gary Evans, one of two brothers who own Architectural Stone Sales in Bedford.

Both Father Chesbrough and Father Cox have served as pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford and Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville.

Above, stonecutter Matthew Bruce of Bedford, left, poses for a photograph with Father Charles Chesbrough, center, and Father Bernard Cox on April 27 outside Mary, Queen of Peace Church in Danville. Bruce works for Architectural Stone Sales in Bedford. Both Father Chesbrough and Father Cox have served as pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford and Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Danville.

Right, stonecutter Matthew Bruce of Bedford uses more than 100 chisels and a pneumatic air hammer to carve intricate details into this limestone cross.

75 percent of Americans surveyed read Bible passage in last year

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—In a survey conducted in nine countries in anticipation of the October world Synod of Bishops on the Bible, 75 percent of U.S. residents interviewed said they read a Bible passage in the previous 12 months.

In Western and Eastern Europe, the percentage of Bible readers ranged from a low of 20 percent in Spain to a high of 38 percent in Poland.

The study, commissioned by the Catholic Biblical Federation, began with 13,000 interviews in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Poland, Russia, Spain and Italy in November 2007.

The president of the federation, Italian Bishop Vincenzo Paglia of Termini Imerese and Amelia, presented the initial results of the survey on April 28 during a Vatican press conference and said a second stage of the survey was being conducted in Argentina, South Africa, the Philippines and Australia.

The majority of people in the first nine countries—including 90 percent of Polish respondents—said the Bible is an important source of truth, but more than 50 percent of those interviewed in each country said the Bible was difficult to understand.

Bishop Paglia said, “Despite secularization and little openness to religious experience ... the sacred Scriptures are looked upon with great respect by everyone.”

But the fact that the majority defined the Bible as difficult to understand challenges the Church to help people learn to read it and see how it applies to their lives, particularly through improved homilies, the bishop said.

Luca Distelheijer, the Rome sociologist who coordinated the survey’s working group, said that, while the study found the Bible to be important in the lives and cultures of those interviewed, there was a huge difference between Bible reading in the United States and in the other countries.

The most relevant factor in promoting Bible reading, he said, was having a Bible in one’s home; 93 percent of the U.S. residents interviewed said they had one and 56 percent said they had given someone a Bible as a gift.

He said he was struck particularly by the elements that seemed to predict a higher level of individual reading of and
that cross and remember how much Christ suffered that we might have eternal life. This is the whole point of it. It’s also our way of saying thanks to Father Charlie and that we love him.

Bruce recalled, “I’ve never heard voices or words to come [to me] it had to be divine. He saw me, and he was right. All I had to do was carve it. You can imagine having to be nailed to it? And only so I can be forgiven, and I’ve had a lot of shortfalls.”

Hayes said, noting that even though the pope is “not a sound-bite guy” his directness is “very direct, telling people, ‘This is where we need to be’.”

As the hours of work carving the ornate cross increased, Bruce recalled, “I never heard voices or anything like that, but I was startled by the words, ‘My son, all you have to do is carve this cross. I had to hang from it.’ And then my eyes welled up with tears,” he said. “I finished the cross in about a week after that happened. I shamefully finished it. It really humbled me. I don’t speak eloquently, and for these words to come [to me] it had to be divine. I saw me, and he was right. All I had to do was carve it. You can imagine having to be nailed to it? And only so I can be forgiven, and I’ve had a lot of shortfalls.”

Bruce kept the cross at his work station at the mill from December until it was installed at Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in April. The cross stands more than 7 feet high and weighs 156 pounds per cubic foot. It took four men to load the cross by hand into a truck for delivery to the parish.

“The pope also left behind an improved image of himself among U.S. Catholics. Just two weeks before his arrival, only 18 percent of the general public and 37 percent of Catholics said they knew a lot about Pope Benedict. If the poll were redone now, Father Reese said, “the pope’s approval rating should skyrocket.”

“Busted Halo.com is the managing editor of the Paulist online site Young Adult Ministries in New York and pointed out, many young adults have read the Bible contains important truths and identifying oneself as Christian did not correlate as closely with reporting actually reading the Bible on one’s own, he said.”

“The Bible is seen by the vast majority of the population as a source of truth, as the source of a message that has something to do with one’s life,” he said. The other interesting thing, he said, is that those who took a "fundamentalist" approach to the Bible, affirming that it is the “direct word of God” and must be taken literally, were not those who knew the Bible best. And, Distallevi said, the U.S. residents who reported reading the Bible most often did not have a significantly greater knowledge of its contents than those who did not read the Bible often.

Biblical knowledge was tested by asking these questions: Are the Gospels part of the Bible? Did Jesus write one of the books of the Bible? Was Paul or Moses a figure from the Old Testament? Which of the following wrote a Gospel: Luke? John? Paul? Peter?"
New agency director is embracing Church’s mission of helping others

By John Shaughnessy

From the first day, Mark Casper knew that he had made the right decision in taking his new job.

“My first day on the job, a young couple picked up a baby they were adopting,” Casper recalls. “All you have to do is see that and you know the work you’re doing is rewarding. You see a baby go to a good home and a young couple happy, and you know it’s been a good day.”

Since that memorable start on April 7, the other days have also been going well for Casper, the new agency director of St. Elizabeth-Catholic Charities in New Albany. Among its many missions, the agency offers a residence and counseling to women who are experiencing crisis pregnancies. It’s also a licensed adoption agency in Indiana and Kentucky.

“It’s critical that the quality of our services be top-notch,” Casper says. “We’re dealing with a whole lot of people who are our future. Children are our future. They’re the ones you want to make sure you’re helping and protecting first.”

Working in a setting marked by young mothers, babies and diapers is a change for the 47-year-old Casper. He previously spent most of his career in the area of manufacturing management. Yet his connection to St. Elizabeth kept growing deeper and deeper during the year he served on the advisory council for the agency that also provides counseling and supported living for developmentally disabled people.

“[I was] looking forward to doing something different than manufacturing and this was a good fit,” he says. “The mission appealed to me. The work we do here is great work—helping others who are less fortunate and often can’t help themselves.”

It’s an approach to life that Casper learned from his parents. It’s an approach to life that he and his wife, Cindy, try to model for their 14-year-old twin daughters, Katie and Kassie.

“I was born and raised Catholic, one of nine children,” Casper says. “My parents were very active in the Church and the community. We lived in a house where we were shown to give back whatever you can to help others. It’s something my wife and I have always tried to show our children through our work in our parish.”

The Caspers are members of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville. The twins are in the eighth grade at the parish school. Their father received a different kind of education through one of the parish’s programs.

“A few years back, I went through a challenging time of my life,” Casper says. “I was looking forward to doing something different than manufacturing and this was a good fit.”

The new agency director is embracing Church’s mission of helping others. He already recognizes his staff as the most valuable resource he has.

“We want to be good stewards in using the resources we get,” he says. “We care about people. It makes all the challenges of raising funds worthwhile.”

Casper will make a difference as agency director, according to David Siler, executive director of the archdiocese’s Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries.

“He knows the agency.” Siler says. “He knows the opportunities and the challenges ahead of him. He brings an experience in fundraising that’s a much needed asset of the job.”

Casper realizes he’s at a time and a place in his life where his work and his faith intersect.

“Being a Catholic isn’t just about going to church on Sunday,” he says. “It’s about taking the gifts God gave you and using them to help others.”

Mark Casper

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Nearly 600 students to graduate at Catholic colleges in archdiocese

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In my first parish, there was an elderly lady who always stopped on her way out of Mass to give me her opinion of the liturgy. If she liked it, she said, “That was Catholic!” The night before the papal Mass in Washington, I didn’t much feel like going. I was tired from cold and allergies. But I figured that if the 81-year-old successor of St. Peter could come up with ways to move the Advent anan visit us, the least I could do was go 50 miles up the road to say hello. I am very glad that I did. This was not my first papal liturgy. I was in Washington in 1979 when a young Pope John Paul II arrived like a rock star and celebrated Mass on the National Mall. As a seminarian in Rome in the early 1960s, I saw many a papal liturgy. Later, as a student priest, I assisted with Communion at papal Masses. I have been to World Youth Day events. But seeing the pope is always a thrill.

My parishioners at St. John Vianney Parish were very excited. We had 175 tickets distributed by lottery. When we boarded the buses at dawn, they were chatty. I was sleepy. On the way up, we prayed the rosary. I perked up at the stadium. It was the music that got me excited.

The sight lines from my seat in left field were poor. The canopy over the altar platform blocked my view of the big screen. I could barely see the pope between the heads in front of me, but the sound system was great, and the choirs were just to my left.

The music was perfect. It was a mixture of old and new, from the spectrum of liturgical music from Gospel to Gregorian chant, merging to Mozart. Its variety reflected the diversity of the Catholic Church in America.

In Washington, we have a large African-American Catholic community. The Gospel choir started off with the great spiritual “Pretty Good Room in My Father’s Kingdom.” They were right. There was plenty good room for every race, nation and tongue. The liturgy was basically Pentecost.

There were lots of Holy Spirit songs, including several versions of “Veni Creator Spiritus” (“Come Holy Spirit”). The best rhythm was at the preparation of the Eucharist when the choir sang in Spanish “Vos Esperita Santo” by Jaime Cortez. It had a complicated Afro-Caribbean-Latin beat. Even an aging Irishman like me could not sit still.

As the bishops entered, the choir sang “Away From Me” by Mozart. I always cry when I hear this. It was time. This epoch.

The pope entered the stadium to the great German hymn “Grouser Gott,” known to us as “Holy God We Praise Thy Name.” Everybody sang. With 45,000 voices, the Spirit was definitely “in the house.”

After Communion, Placidio Domingo sang “Painas Angelicas.” The audience fell silent. Priests around me welled up with tears. Even the pope stood and gave Domingo an ovation and blessing.

The pope struck exactly the right tone in his homily. He was encouraging and correcting, pastoral and probing. His mention of the victims of child abuse by the clergy was necessary. It was an important step toward healing an open wound.

The fact that he spoke in Spanish as well as English was an appropriate recognition that the U.S. Catholic Church is truly American.

When I walked out of the stadium, I was transformed. Even the weather was perfect.

It was a celebration, not a burial, of that elderly first parish and said, “That was Catholic!”

(Peter Daly writes for Catholic News Service.)

Letter to the Editor

**Restoring priorities will help the Church move forward in its mission**

During his recent visit to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI showed us what it means to stand on principle and speak the truth in love. Though he radiated joy and inspired millions with his quiet charisma, he didn’t hesitate to express his most urgent pastoral concern. Quite simply, he wants no more priestly sex scandals.

Summing it up for reporters, he said, “I am deeply ashamed, and I will do what is possible so this cannot happen again in the future.” He also made clear that, as Catholics, we are all in this thing together. So we are faced with a question: What should we take to honor the Holy Father’s wishes? First, we have relied on and, it seems, plan to continue with what strategists call the “juridical” approach. Some, for example, are recommending changes in canon law to give victims more opportunities to come forward. Others are asking for more sophisticated laws and treatments.

To be sure, these are important steps, but are they enough? More to the point, whatever happened to the “preventative” approach?

Let’s not kid ourselves. Our clergy did not fall from grace because administrators were incompetent or even because the world intruded itself and its perverse values on an otherwise innocent Church. It happened because the vast majority of Catholics, including a sizable number of lukewarm bishops, either ignored or de-emphasized the Church’s teaching on sexual morality. To put it bluntly, we allowed chastity to take a back seat to social justice.

If misplaced priorities are the problem, we are supposed priorities are the cure. That is why we should worry less about managing the effects of this crisis and more about confronting its causes less about imposing bureaucratic initiatives after the fact and more about establishing original versions of “zero tolerance” for the fact.

An ounce of faithful teaching in our homes, schools, churches and parishes is worth a ton of zero tolerance policies. That should not surprise us. We are, after all, supposed to be in the business of saving souls and building saints. If we can reeducate ourselves to that notion, we will have little cause to worry about sex scandals.

Stephen L. Russell

Indianapolis

(Editor’s Note: For more information about the Archdiocese of Indianapolis is doing to protect children, log on to http://archindy.org/abuse/ )
Los sacerdotes y decidí que yo quería un sacerdote; observaba lo que hacían me ayudó a cumplir con mis deberes. Pero a lo largo del día también rezo qué quiere Dios que hagamos en la vida. Seth. A menos que recemos, no sabemos por preguntar, Alan.

El estudio del Orden de los alumnos de quinto grado genera muchas preguntas.

Seth pregunta: “¿Qué tan frecuentemente rezo?”

Tu pregunta toca la esencia del asunto. Seth. A menos que recemos, no sabemos qué quiere Dios que hagamos en la vida. Rezo todos los días: una hora en la mañana y otra hora media en la noche. Pero a lo largo del día también rezo pequeñas oraciones pidiéndole a Dios que me ayude a cumplir con mis deberes. Elise pregunta: “¿Cómo se dandan cuenta de que Dios quiera que hagan en la vida?”

De dos formas, Elise. Primero, como mencioné anteriormente, reza para obtener orientación. También habló con un sacerdote; observó lo que hacían los sacerdotes y decidió que yo quería hacer eso. 

Madde pregunta: “¿Cuántos años tenía cuando decidió dedicar su vida a Dios?”

Madde, cuando finalmente me decidí tenía 21 años, pensé en el sacerdocio un cuarto de siglo antes de eso. Eran preguntas: “¿Por qué eligió ser sacerdote?”

Me hizo sacerdote porque creía firmemente que Dios quería que lo fuera. En verdad, muchas veces me pregunté si Dios y la Iglesia quieren que haga el sacerdocio. 

Madison pregunta: “¿Cuánto tiempo tomaría recibir el Orden sagrado?”

Madison, el Papa puso a los sacerdotes para que se conviertan en obispos. Cuando el Papa Juan Pablo II me pidió que me convirtiera en obispo me preguntó si era lo que Dios y la Iglesia quiero que haga el sacerdocio. Michele pregunta: “¿Cuántos veces se puede recibir el Orden sagrado?”

Michele, al que el bautismo y la confirmación, sólo podemos recibir el Orden sagrado una vez. La ordenación en el sacerdocio nos une a Cristo de una forma especial que es irreversible. 

David pregunta: “¿Cuántas veces se puede recibir el Orden sagrado?”

David, al igual que el bautismo y la confirmación, sólo podemos recibir el Orden sagrado una vez. La ordenación en el sacerdocio nos une a Cristo de una forma especial que es irreversible. 

Kelly pregunta: “¿Por qué decidiste convertirte en obispo?”

El trono del Papa en la Iglesia está protegido por el Papa. Cuando falleció el Papa Juan Pablo II, fui nombrado por el Papa Juan Pablo II, estaba sorprendido pero decidí que eso debía ser lo que Dios quería en ese momento para mi vida. 

Rachel pregunta: “¿Cuando era pequeña, ¿quería ser obispo?”

Para ser, realmente, Rachel, no. Nunca había pensado que el Santo Padre me nombraría obispo.

Sam preguntó: “¿Qué pensaba ellos de ti?”

Sam, luego de ordenarme como sacerdote, sirvi durante 23 años antes de que el Santo Padre me pidiera que me convirtiera en el obispo de Memphis. Después de ser nombrado como obispo, me pidió que me convirtiera en el arzobispo de Indianapolis. Corbin pregunta: “¿Cuánto tiempo tomó recibir el Orden sagrado?”

¡Que ellos sean fieles a la oración y estudien, y continúen en su deseo de servir a Dios y la Iglesia como sacerdotes!
Christian unity prayer services to be held in Indianapolis

The Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis is sponsoring a week of prayer for Christian unity in early May during the days leading up to Pentecost.

Prayer services will be held each night from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on May 5-9 at churches in Indianapolis.

Each prayer service will focus on different issues around which Christians from various traditions can find common growth.

On May 5, the prayer service will focus on education, educators and students, and take place at Catholic Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis, 56th & Cooper Road, in Indianapolis.

On May 6, families and at-risk children and youths will be highlighted during the prayer service at the Church of the Acts, 3740 St. Dearborn St., in Indianapolis.

On May 7, the prayer service will focus on property ownership. The service will take place at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, 5011 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

On May 8, the prayer service will focus on the family. The service will take place at St. John the Evangelist, 12150 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

On May 9, the prayer service will focus on health care. The service will take place at St. John the Evangelist, 5745 S. Harding St., Indianapolis.

On May 10, the prayer service will focus on poverty and take place at Chapel Hill United Methodist Church, 963 N. Girls School Road, Indianapolis.

On May 11, the prayer service will focus on youth. The service will take place at St. John the Evangelist, 9836 S. Harding St., Indianapolis.

For more information about the week of prayer for Christian unity, call 317-526-5371 or send an e-mail to churches@churchfederatoindiany.org.

Catholic chaplains’ conference

Bishop Randolph Calhoon of Reno, Nevada, episcopal liaison to the National Association of Catholic Chaplains, greets newly certified chaplains and clinical pastoral education supervisors during a Mass as part of the新款的 installation service held in Indianapolis. Catholic chaplains from throughout the U.S. have converged at St. Vincent-Carmel Hospital in Carmel, Ind., for conference liturgies.
Teenager creates commemorative DVD for parish’s 150th anniversary

By John Shaughnessy

When they hear the story of what 17-year-old Ben Droll has done for his parish, nearly everyone views it as a remarkable example of the way many teenagers today use their gifts for their faith. Just don’t expect that reaction from Ben. Blessed with a sharp sense of humor, Ben uses that approach to downplay anything special he has done. Instead of emphasizing his story, he prefers to focus on the stories he captured and recorded while creating a tribute to a faith community that has lasted 150 years. The reality is that both sides of the story are special.

Like most American teenagers, Ben lives in an age where cell phones and computers are considered to be necessary and vital parts of life. “Walking around with your cell phone, you’re never separated from the world,” says Ben, a senior at Batesville High School. Yet, beginning in late 2006, Ben was asked to help with a project intended to make a deeper connection—a connection that would cross time and generations for a heartfelt story of faith.

In 2006, St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Morris in the Batesville Deanery celebrated its 150th anniversary. As part of the celebration, parish leaders wanted to create a DVD that would capture and preserve the history of the parish. It was an effort that required a range of responsibilities, from copying photos from the parish’s past to recording interviews with many of the older members of the parish. Parishioners turned to Ben, a teenager known for his talents in computer technology. He completed the project earlier this year.

“He accepted a huge responsibility and he never disappointed us,” says Joanne Schrimpf, the chairperson for the 150th anniversary celebration of the parish. “Ben scheduled multiple interviews with parishioners. He was gathering a unique collection of stories from the parish’s past. Ben’s mother, Carolyn Doll, noticed the impact the project had on her son. “He’d talk about the people and what they said and did,” she recalls. “You know how you know people in your parish. You talk to them, but you don’t hear their stories of growing up. It was wonderful for him. When he got to interview these people, he’d come home and say, ‘Mom, this is so cool.’”

Ben especially remembers talking to some of the Sisters of St. Francis who taught at the parish school. “They talked about how they were inspired by God to do their work,” he says. Ben shares that same sense of faith. “Everything comes from God,” he says. “I think people are forgetting that today. They’re forgetting who gave them their gifts. That’s where I get my ability for technology. The biggest thing is to keep God in your mind.”

He also credits the faith influence of his parents, Jake and Carolyn Doll. They set the example for putting their faith into action. He tries to follow it. “I serve at Mass. I help at the festival. I help whatever way I can,” says Ben, the eldest of six children. “We scraped sidewalks when there was ice. It’s the things that keep a parish running.”

As for the DVD, it runs 2½ hours long, offering a view of a small parish in a small town that has left a large impact on its parishioners, past and present. Every parishioner has received a free copy.

Schrimpf says Ben “has made a wonderful contribution to the preservation of the American Catholic experience.” Ben prefers to give the credit to all the people who have contributed to the faith life of the parish for 150 years and counting.

“We wouldn’t have anything if it wasn’t for the hard work of the people from our past,” he says. “We think it’s important to preserve this piece of history. We’re looking back 150 years. It’s something we want to be around forever.”

(“The DVD about the history of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Morris costs $8. Those interested in purchasing a DVD should call the parish office at 812-934-6218.”)
White House summit examines plight of urban, faith-based schools

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Educators, school lobbyists, and business and government representatives gathered at a White House summit on April 24 to examine ways to reverse the trend of faith-based schools being closed in U.S. cities.

Although the term “faith-based schools” was used throughout the day, the president said, noting that he hoped the summit would highlight the problem and let people know “it’s in the country’s interest” to help these schools stay open.

According to the National Catholic Educational Association, enrollment in Catholic elementary schools has dropped 15 percent nationwide since 2001-02, and more than 212 U.S. Catholic schools were closed or consolidated during the 2006-07 school year. White House officials noted that from 2000 to 2006, nearly 1,200 inner-city faith-based schools closed, displacing about 425,000 students.

In his half-hour address, the president outlined ways that the federal and local governments could help faith-based schools, and also stressed the need for community and business support.

He mentioned a program that he proposed in his State of the Union address in January that would provide $300 million in scholarships to “children trapped in failing public schools.”

Bush said the program, called Pell Grants for Kids, would be similar to grants offered to college students. He stressed the importance of continuing the federally funded school choice program in Washington, which requires reauthorization by Congress in 2009. The president also called attention to tax credits, particularly Pennsylvania’s Educational Improvement Tax Credit, a program in which businesses can contribute to school scholarship programs for low-income students.

The president also highlighted innovative Catholic school programs already in place, such as Cristo Rey schools, which provide a work-study program where high school students help pay their tuition; Jubilee Schools in Memphis, Tenn., where eight Catholic schools that had been closed have recently reopened; and the University of Notre Dame’s Alliance for Catholic Education, known as ACE, which places college graduates as volunteer teachers in Catholic schools.

At panel discussions later in the day, representatives from these programs said they were glad to get recognition and further explained the work their programs have done.

When asked by a moderator how they would explain their success, Mary McDonald, superintendent of Catholic schools in the Memphis Diocese, said donors came forward to help Catholic schools in Memphis because they remembered what Catholic schools in the center-city of Indianapolis through the six schools that make up the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies (MTCA): Central Catholic School, Holy Angels School, Holy Cross Central School, St. Andrew and St. Rita Catholic Academy, St. Anthony School and St. Philip Neri School.

Connie Zitman, director of the MTCA, attended the White House summit. Zitman said she came away from the summit encouraged because both Bush administration and congressional leaders “understand the struggle that we are in, not just here but across the United States, to remain in urban areas,” and are “aware and have done extensive research into the success that we have had with our children in the urban setting.”

B.J. Cassin, founder and chairman of the Cassin Educational Initiative Foundation, a major supporter of Cristo Rey schools, noted that there is “a reservoir of people” who are willing and “ready to invest” in schools that help children in inner cities.

“Every school has a story behind it,” he said of the 19 schools that are currently part of the Cristo Rey Network, including Providence Cristo Rey High School in Indianapolis, re-emphasizing the “wellspring of people” supporting the endeavor.

While some focused on the need to tap into other funds either through businesses or private philanthropists, Holy Cross Father Timothy Scully, founder of Notre Dame’s ACE program, likened the work of finding creative alternatives to keep Catholic schools open to a spiritual quest.

“The Holy Spirit will not be thwarted,” he said to applause. “People will always be hungry for God.”

President George W. Bush delivers remarks during a White House summit on inner-city education and faith-based schools on April 24 at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington.
New parish hall is dream come true in Harrison County

By Patricia Happel Cornwell
Special to The Criterion

CORYDON—On April 13, a dream of two decades became reality during a groundbreaking ceremony at St. Joseph Church in Corydon. A long-awaited parish hall is finally being built to serve the Harrison County tri-parish Catholic community.

Despite the cold and rain, 200 people were on hand to see the first symbolic shovelfuls of dirt turned. Father Daniel Atkins, pastor, said completion is expected by the end of 2008.

“People were on hand to see the first symbolic shovelfuls of dirt turned,” Father Atkins said.

One parishioner told him as he left, “When you get home, you won’t recognize this place!”

“Unfortunately,” Shireman said, “inflation and major increases in the costs of copper, steel and other building commodities have pushed our project total to $1,812,000. However, the decision has been made not to postpone the project any longer.”

In addition to individual contributions, funds were raised through spaghetti dinners, style shows, Mardi Gras lip-sync shows, card tournaments, a book sale and a golf tournament.

Ironically, most of these events had to be held in other facilities in Corydon and Lanesville because of the lack of space at St. Joseph. For several years, even luncheons following funerals at St. Joseph have been held at a Methodist church a mile away.

Mike Bennett, a member of the fundraising committee, told the jubilant crowd, “Turn to the person next to you and thank them every here made this happen.”

Parishioners’ sacrificial giving has been sufficient to finish the building, but they need to raise $300,000 more for new kitchen equipment, blobchers and an elevator. The hall will have four multipurpose meeting rooms with retractable walls, a kitchen, storage areas, handicap-accessible restrooms and a gymnasium.

The new facility will connect the parish school and church. St. Joseph Principal Heidi Imberi said, “The children are excited because now they will be able to go to church or to lunch without wearing coats!”

Joining Father Atkins on a rainy Sunday to turn the first clumps of sod were Shireman, Bennett, Imberi, parish finance chairman Ed Hoehn, parish council president Teresa King, and Heidi Imberi, the principal of St. Joseph School, fundraising committee member Ron Casabella and architect Larry Timpeman.

Father Atkins has returned to Guadalajara, Mexico, where he is studying Spanish and serving as a sacramental minister until July.

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—

Pope Benedict XVI has praised a Vatican initiative to encourage eucharistic adoration for the holiness of priests, and recruit “spiritual mothers” to pray for priests and for vocations to the priesthood.

In an undated letter sent to the Vatican’s Congregation for Clergy, which is promoting the initiative, the pope said he is “grateful for the thoughtful gesture” and for suggestions the congregation has put forward.

In the letter, posted on the congregation’s Web site, the pope said he hoped “the love and devotion to the eucharistic Jesus and devotion to Mary...may give new force to the life and apostolate of priests.”

The clergy congregation released to the public a letter dated Dec. 8, 2007, from Cardinal Claudio Hummes, congregation prefect, and Archbishop Maurizio Piacenza, congregation secretary.

The letter details the intentions of the World Day of Prayer for the Sanctification of Priests on May 30 as well as some prayers that priests have been invited to say.

The project, launched on Dec. 8, 2007, aims to highlight the link between the Eucharist and the priesthood as well as Mary’s special role as the mother of every priest.

Cardinal Hummes and Archbishop Piacenza had said that as a part of wider effort to address the challenges which priests are facing today, they wanted to promote perpetual eucharistic adoration “for the reparation of faults and sanctification of priests.”

That includes the spiritual reparation for the damage caused by the sexual abuse of children by priests and to uphold the dignity of the victims, the cardinal said in a Jan. 4 interview with the Vatican newspaper, L’Osservatore Romano.

One of the prayers released in mid-April invokes God’s support so that the priest’s commitment to celibacy is “a joyful and happy affirmation and a total dedication of myself to others.”

Another prayer calls on Jesus, “the most powerful doctor of souls,” for healing, “so that I may not fall back into evil, that I may flee from every sin” and “preserve my chastity unaltered.”

A daily prayer asks sinning priests to show remorse and “weep bitterly over the evil we have done.”

Catholics are asked to pray for priests, that they may speak God’s words, be courageous in service and do good for all people.

The Vatican’s clergy office emphasized the importance of prayer and eucharistic adoration in being able to live in “full configuration to Christ.

“We cannot live, we cannot look at the truth about ourselves without letting ourselves be looked at and generated by Christ in daily eucharistic adoration,” said the letter.

The letter highlighted Mary’s special role as the mother of every priest and said priests “cannot do without a spiritual motherhood for our priestly life.”

It called on the support of all Catholics, and encouraged married, single and consecrated women to become “spiritual mothers” and pray for priests and for vocations to the priesthood.

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Architectural plans are unveiled for St. John Vianney Parish in Fishers
By Caroline B. Mooney
The Catholic Moment
FISHERS—If prayers are answered, 109 acres that are now an empty field will become home to a magnificent church and campus complex over the next 20 years.

St. John Vianney Parish, established in 2005, unveiled architectural plans at an evening celebrating the parish vision on April 19. A medieval-style church building and parish life center joined by cloistered walkways, a youth center, pre-kindergarten through grade-eight school, a high school, rectory, convent and athletic complex are part of the plans revealed to 260 parishioners and supporters of the parish. The site is at State Road 238 and 126th Street in Fishers.

“I’m excited to see Al Atherton, a founding member of the parish,” he said. “This is a big milestone. The plans look great, like a lot of Catholic churches [that] I remember from when I was young.”

When St. John Vianney Parish was established, people met in homes for weekday and Sunday Masses. The parish moved into a converted office building at 14500 E. 136th St. in December 2005, and Father Brian Dudzinski was formally installed as pastor on Jan. 8, 2006. There were 70 people at the first Mass, and now there are 900 people at an estimated cost of $2.5 million.

“I have been inspired by Father Dudzinski’s faith, passion and commitment,” Godfrey said. “The Catholic identity and presence will be strong as you enter the campus. The location of the church needs to be highly visible and reinforces the idea of entering into a state of worship. Plans include walkways with Stations of the Cross that will terminate into a grotto. We want to create an opportunity to have moments of reflection, spiritual thought and prayer.”

Ethan Arneson, HDDA/Cram & Ferguson, an architectural company from Boston, designed the renovated 1,500-seat church.

“The site plan concentrates on the church, it is the center around which everything else is formed,” Anthony said. “The parish life center and the church will be connected by cloistered walkways that go back to early monastic architecture. The church design is in a cruciform, or cross shape, like that used during the medieval period. You enter into the church, you are entering into the body of Christ.”

The first time that Anthony went to the site of the new church with Father Dudzinski, “there was still a lot of corn there. Father Dudzinski pointed and said, ‘there’s where I want the church.’ He wanted to be sure that as you drive in from [State Road 238], the first thing you see is the church.

“We want a very high elevation—55-foot high vaulted ceilings will allow thoughts to go upward to heaven,” Anthony said. “The traditional idea of the front of a church is a gate to heaven, and the church will have a sense of elevation, a sense of the exalted.”

The church plans include a circle of devotional chapels, an adoration chapel, a balcony and a lower level with a walkout to a lake, meeting spaces and a kitchen.

“The church plans include a circle of devotional chapels, an adoration chapel, a balcony and a lower level,” Anthony said. “The architects have taken what the building committee proposed and made it reality. The church will have a sense of elevated space, a sense of the exalted.”

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“Certainly, if we’re going to see the culmination of the plans, this will be one of the most beautiful churches built in 20 years,” Felix said. “The layout and design is phenomenal. You couldn’t ask for more in a church—I hope it gets built like this.”
Caring for the Earth

Serve God, Save the Planet

author calls for action

By Mary Ann Wyand

Instead of just worrying about the environment, Sleeth said, he and his wife, Nancy, and their children, Clark and Emma, are doing positive things to care for the Earth and educate others about the critical need to protect its natural resources.

"Seeing a need and acting to meet it is the central theme of this book," Sleeth explained in his Earth Day talk mixed with sober facts and humorous anecdotes.

"The Earth is our ship, an ark for everything that lives," he wrote in his book. "It is the only vessel available to carry humans through the ocean of space, and it is rapidly becoming unseaworthy. God created the world to sustain all living creatures. . . . He designed this elegant system to function naturally, but our ark of life is changing rapidly."

Our grandparents could drink water from a stream or lake without concern, Sleeth noted, and "the bounty of nature seemed inexhaustible." Now, however, the water in rivers and lakes harbors dioxin and fish are contaminated with mercury, he wrote. The air we breathe is polluted, and there is an alarming increase in the number of people who are diagnosed with asthma and a variety of cancers.

“Our generation consumes five times more energy than my grandfather’s,” he noted in the book. “How can I live a more godly, equitable and meaningful life? How can I help people today and in the future? How can I be less materialistic? How can I live a more charitable life? How can I become a better steward of nature?”

The Sleeth family answered those questions by moving into an energy-efficient home the size of their former garage, and significantly cutting their energy usage to lower their “carbon footprint” and reduce damage to the planet.

“Because of these changes, we have more time for God,” he wrote. “… We have found His Word to be true. He has poured blessings and opportunities upon us. When we stopped living a life dedicated to consumerism, our cup began to run over. We have seen miracles. Today I preach about God and his creation. . . . The Earth was designed to sustain every generation’s needs, not to be plundered in an attempt to meet one generation’s wants.”

We can all help save the Earth’s resources, Sleeth told Immaculate Heart of Mary parishioners, by educating ourselves about stewardship of the Earth and making dramatic changes in our daily lifestyle as consumers.

Sen. Sam Brownback of Kansas read Sleeth’s book then his family made environmental changes in their lives. The senator also invited Sleeth to speak on Capitol Hill.

“There’s no blue hike in the Great Lakes, and that was the most numerous fish,” Sleeth lamented. “Every year, we cut down an area of forest the size of Washington state. . . . The Amazon rain forest is being destroyed. . . . When I began [practicing] medicine, one in 19 women in the United States died of breast cancer. . . . Now it’s one in six [women].”

Sleeth said he “was really in turmoil” and “kept thinking about how the world is dying, how there is evil in the world.” Then he “came to believe that only the Gospel, only Christ, had the answer to this . . . scary problem.”

The Criterion  Friday, May 2, 2008   Page 11
Mooresville specialty hospital expands to full-service facility

The building that formerly housed the hospital’s operating rooms will be demolished this summer to create additional parking for the new medical office building under construction.

Six new surgery suites offer the newest developments in surgical technology, including a high-tech video and photography system in every operating room. The system is used for viewing X-rays during surgery; printing or copying photos to a CD, flash drive or patient chart for later reference; and teaching demonstrations as well as information-sharing with other physicians.

The operating rooms are equipped with laminar airflow and ultraviolet light technology for sterilization, which is critical in preventing infection. A major piece of the hospital’s expansion is the development of an emergency department scheduled to open in October 2008.

“We realize community members are eagerly awaiting the opening of our emergency department later this year,” said Keith Jewell, senior vice president and chief operating officer of St. Francis Hospital and Health Centers. “When St. Francis-Hospital-Mooresville’s emergency department opens later this year, it will provide community members [with] high-quality emergency care close to home as well as peace of mind.”
Volunteers honor women in nursing homes one flower at a time

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (CNS)—Maria Meneses has a vision, but in order to see it through she needs help.

The vision: to deliver a rose to all female patients in nursing homes on Mother’s Day. Her inspiration came from a desire to pay tribute to her late mother, Eneyda Meneses, who cared for a sick aunt in a nursing home for many years.

“I don’t have a mom. How else can I celebrate?” said Meneses, a member of St. Patrick Parish in Miami Beach, who made an Emmaus retreat eight years ago.

One of the central themes of the retreat is service to others, and Meneses said that after she made her retreat she yearned to give something back to Jesus as a small token of thanks.

Like her favorite saint, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, also known as the Little Flower, “We change the world a little bit at a time,” Meneses said. “A little flower makes a big difference because it touches somebody’s life.”

Meneses has been delivering flowers to a nursing home near her home for the past three years. She wants to inspire others to join in her effort. She hopes that others will agree that delivering flowers to forgotten moms one day a year is an ideal form of service.

“We need to be light-bearers,” she said. “What a wonderful feeling to see Christ’s light in others. People who give have a sense of joy which is unparalleled—what a gift and a special grace that is,” said Meneses.

She said the world needs more random acts of kindness, anything from a simple smile to holding a door or allowing someone the right of way when you drive. Or giving a flower to a woman confined to a nursing home, many of whom are very lonely.

“I can’t tell you the number of patients who remember me each year when I visit. They smile because they feel appreciated and loved. The world needs more love,” Meneses said.

While no one needs to survive traumatic surgery to live life with a sense of purpose, Meneses admits that a brush with death changed her outlook. After going through spinal-nerve surgery at age 22 and emergency colon surgery more recently, she is acutely aware of her own mortality.

“I live [life] urgently and with purpose,” she said. “I’ve always wanted to make a difference in the world, even if it is in some small way. So if I can get anyone … to help out, that would be fantastic. More is better.”

One good friend and fellow Emmaus participant, Juan Llarena, has been assisting Meneses with the purchase, preparation and distribution of flowers each year. Several women also help her distribute the roses each year.

“I’ve had mothers come out with their daughters, and to have that participation is beautiful to see,” Meneses said.

She knows a vendor who sells the roses for about $8 per dozen so the investment is minimal. The only labor involved is removing the thorns from the roses to make sure they don’t prick anyone, and perhaps tying a ribbon around them.

Meneses cites the words of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta to express her feelings: “We will be your hands. We will be your feet. We will run this race for the least of these—the unwanted, the unloved. They are Jesus in disguise.”

Maria Meneses, a member of St. Patrick Parish in Miami Beach, Fla., poses at a Miami Beach flower shop on April 15. Meneses started delivering flowers to women in a nursing home on Mother’s Day three years ago as a tribute to her late mother and out of a desire to serve others.

References

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<td>Nora Chapel</td>
<td>740 E. 86th St. Indianapolis, IN 46240</td>
<td>317-844-3966</td>
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<td>Smith Carmel Chapel</td>
<td>900 N. Rangeline Rd. Carmel, IN 46032</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.leppertmortuary.com">www.leppertmortuary.com</a></td>
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<td>John T. Leppert — Parishioner, St. Luke Catholic Church</td>
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Who are the important role models in your life of faith?

My wife, May; my spiritual director, Father Larry Voelker; and my mentor, Clem Davis, the pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus. My favorite Scripture would be the Letters of St. Paul, and my favorite devotions or liturgies would be all the Holy Week services and the Easter Vigil.

How will being ordained a deacon have an impact on your life and family?

I hope that I can do this with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and all of those who have served. I look forward to sharing my life and ministry as a deacon.

Do you want to be part of a fundraising team that is going to “Make History”? Are you looking to make a substantial difference in the lives of young people?

If so, please read on:

Marian College is seeking qualified candidates for the position of development officer in the Office of Institutional Advancement. This position requires a person of deep faith to promote the goals of a Catholic liberal arts college (with emphasis on the “Rebuild My Church” program) through the identification, cultivation, and solicitation of annual, campaign and deferred gifts from various constituents. Reporting to the director of development the responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- Generate interest, support and financial commitment to Marian College’s “Make History” effort with particular emphasis on the “Rebuild My Church” program. The “Rebuild My Church” program helps students assess how their lives and vocations can be pursued in the light of the call to serve God, which can take shape within any career—lay leaders, as members of religious communities, or as ordained clergy.
- Work in conjunction with the advancement team and the president of the college to cultivate and solicit annual, campaign and deferred gifts for the college.
- Maintain an ever-changing portfolio of approximately 200 prospects.
- Assist the advancement team in identifying donors and prospects.
- Biweekly, monthly, quarterly and annual goals will be expected and tracked.
- Qualiﬁed candidates must have a bachelor’s degree with transferable fundraising skills, preferably in a college or university environment. The incumbent must have the ability to deﬁne problems, collect data, establish facts and draw valid conclusions and incorporate into strategic and tactical plans. Outstanding communication, both oral and written, is a must. Individual must demonstrate strong organization skills, be a self-starter, collaborative planner and have the capability to work in a team environment. Interested applicants may apply by submitting a letter of interest, resume and list of three references to: Anita Herbertz, Director of Human Resources, Marian College, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis, IN 46222; fax: 317-955-6428 or electronic submissions to: hr@marian.edu.

Marian College
3200 Cold Spring Road
Indianapolis, IN 46222
fax: 317-955-6428 or electronic submissions to: hr@marian.edu
The Holy Trinity is a perfect model for family life

By Joseph F. Kelly

Establishing goals is normal in all that we do in daily life, and the more important the goal—buying a house or founding a business—the more time and energy we devote to it. For believers who understand that they are created in the image of God, major goals must include a spiritual element reflecting the value of faith. That is no easy task, but God provides help for many of us via our families. The great theologian St. Augustine said that the persons of the Trinity are united in mutual love. As such, the Holy Trinity can be a model for the family—and the family can help us understand the Trinity! Trinity comes from two Latin words—‘trea’ meaning ‘three’ and ‘unitas’ meaning ‘unity.’ In the Trinity, the three are distinct, but indeed one. The same is true for the family. All of its members remain distinct individuals, but their mutual love creates a greater reality than the sum of the individuals. This may not be evident on a daily basis, but we certainly recognize this during major holidays, celebrations and periods of mourning when family members go to great lengths to be together. All kinds of families exist beyond the nuclear family of parents and children. I know many couples whom God has not blessed with children, yet they radiate as much mutual love as many larger family units.

We all have specific goals, and there is a Catholic way to give value to even secular goals. The motto of John Carroll University in Cleveland, where I teach, is “Women and men for others.” It reflects the Jesuit emphasis on social justice. This could be an appropriate goal for all Catholics who can have since it can easily carry over into specific secular goals. “Women and men for others” could be a business person who, for example, considers employment as a “grease mechanic.” Honest mechanic could render valuable service to countless people. Such a person would likely be successful in the automotive business, which presumably would please his parents. Does any parent really want a professionally “successful” son who resents his parents? As Catholics, we can never separate our goals for ourselves and others from our faith. We must have goals that will build mutual love in our family, bring happiness to its individual members, serve other people and help to strengthen the body of Christ.

At some point, most families find themselves in a situation where members hold conflicting goals or expectations. Sometimes the conflict is minor and easily resolved by compromise. In other cases, compromise won’t work. One goal must take priority over another. Conflict between a husband and wife is particularly difficult. Marital conflict, especially if prolonged, can adversely affect the entire family. Moreover, a healthy marriage is based on mutuality, with husband and wife as equal partners. When goals conflict and compromise is not feasible, one spouse seems to “win” at the other’s expense. When these situations occur, family members might remember that conflicting goals are a normal part of healthy family life. Family members may be close to each other, but they remain individuals with their own dreams and aspirations. People grow at different rates and, as they grow, they develop new goals. A change of career or a return to school can open new and exciting possibilities that a spouse or other family member may not share. Conflict develops as one person prepares to move ahead while another

Families need to discern God’s will

By Sheila Garcia

At some point, most families find themselves in a situation where members hold conflicting goals or expectations. Sometimes the conflict is minor and easily resolved by compromise. In other cases, compromise won’t work. One goal must take priority over another. Conflict between a husband and wife is particularly difficult. Marital conflict, especially if prolonged, can adversely affect the entire family. Moreover, a healthy marriage is based on mutuality, with husband and wife as equal partners. When goals conflict and compromise is not feasible, one spouse seems to “win” at the other’s expense. When these situations occur, family members might remember that conflicting goals are a normal part of healthy family life. Family members may be close to each other, but they remain individuals with their own dreams and aspirations. People grow at different rates and, as they grow, they develop new goals. A change of career or a return to school can open new and exciting possibilities that a spouse or other family member may not share. Conflict develops as one person prepares to move ahead while another prefers the status quo.

Families of origin also shape goals. When conflict occurs, family members need to keep open lines of communication. They may not agree with another person’s goal, but should consider the motivation behind it. Families might be able to delay rather than deny the achievement of a goal. One couple, on their 50th wedding anniversary, observed that, “You can have it all. You just can’t have it all at once.” With patience and a concrete plan, families can often achieve multiple goals. Sometimes families with conflicting goals can benefit from counseling as they discern their goals. Discernment asks the question: What does God want us to do?”

When families listen attentively to God’s will as he reveals it in prayer, Scripture, human and physical nature, and the insights of relatives and friends, they are able to find answers and move beyond self-centeredness to focus on what God is asking them to do and to become.

(Sheila Garcia is the associate director of the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat for Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.)

Discussion Point

Seeking salvation is lifetime goal

This Week’s Question

What is one goal you have set for your family life?

“My ultimate goal for myself and my family is to attain the purpose of our creation: our salvation. It’s a lifetime goal.” (John Primeau, Providence, R.I.)

“When my children are adults, we will keep open lines of contact.” (Nancy Masi, Northville, Mich.)

“When my two grown sons, my goal was always that they would get a good education, follow the teachings of the Catholic Church, and have good marriages and happy families.” (Jane Parker, Kitty Hawk, N.C.)

“The eldest of our four children is 9 so our goal right now is to eat dinner together every night. During dinner, we each talk about our day and I think [this time together] strengthens our family.” (Lisa Martinsky, Monroe, Conn.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: What miracles do you believe we are witnessing today?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to sagarcia@catholicnews.org or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C., 20017-1100. 
Biblical women: Witnesses to the Crucifixion

(Thirty-eight in a series)

Who were some of the women mentioned by name who were present at Jesus’ crucifixion—blessed Jesu, Mary, and Mary Magdalene? And what did they do after Jesus went to the tomb on the following Sunday, physically present with Jesus’ body? We know, first of all, from Luke’s Gospel that those named were among the women from Galilee who followed him with Jesus and the Apostles, and supported them out of their resources. Susanna was mentioned in the Synoptics. But Luke’s Gospel is not specifically named at the Crucifixion so she might or might not have been there. Luke’s Gospel mentions Mary of Magdala (one of the Apostles) and, whom he also calls “the other Mary.” She is sometimes identified as the wife of Clopas, who might have been Joseph’s brother and, therefore, the Blessed Virgin’s brother-in-law. Matthew’s Gospel says that she went with Mary Magdalene to the tomb on Easter. They were told by an angel that Jesus had risen, went to tell the Apostles, and were met by Jesus on the way. Mark’s Gospel adds Salome, the wife of Zebedee, and mother of the Apostles James and John, both at the Crucifixion and at the tomb. We met Salome earlier, in Matthew’s Gospel, when she approached Jesus with her sons and asked him to “command these two women to which they had come, and the other at your left, in your kingdom” (Mt 20:21). (Mark’s Gospel says that the two women themselves asked him this. Mark, added Salome.) I think you’ll want to check out the four women present at the Crucifixion by name, saying only, “The women who had come from Galilee with him followed behind [while Jesus was being buried], and when they had seen the tomb and the way in which his body was laid in it, they returned (Shirley Vogler Meister, a member of Shirleys, her sister and her beloved great-grandmother, and a retired dean of women and a nun of the Discalced Carmelites, has written “The Five Great Powers of Holy Sex.”)

I can’t say I wasn’t warned—after all, I’ve lived in Alaska all of my life, and know that “spring” is a relative term. Springtime pools—boggy, muddy puddles—are notorious

For the Journey/Effie Calderala

Spring in Anchorage can be a time of gratitude.

A few years ago, I wouldn’t have written a column about sex. Traditionally, it’s generally not a topic for the open forum.

Why do so now? Because sex has been over-publicized, over-dramatized, trivialized, sensationalized, and sex has been separated from so many areas of our society that God’s plan for marriage and family needs to be re-elevated to the sacred level.


Popcak (pronounced POP-chak) is a nationally recognized expert in pastoral counseling. He has earned degrees in psychology and theology at the Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio, a master’s degree in social work and clinical specialization at the University of Pittsburgh, and a doctorate in human services with an emphasis in pastoral counseling, at Capella University in Minneapolis. He and his wife, Lisa, and their three children live in Steubenville.

The easy-to-read, fascinating book is recommended by two experts
Feast of the Ascension of the Lord/ Msgr. Owen F. Campion


The Sunday Readings

Sunday, May 4, 2008

Acts 1:11-12
Ephesians 1:17-23
Matthew 28:16-20

This weekend, many dioceses in the United States—including the Archdiocese of Indianapolis—literally celebrate the feast of the Ascension of the Lord.

Other U.S. dioceses observe this weekend as the Seventh Sunday of Easter.

The reflections will refer to the biblical readings for the feast of the Ascension.

The first reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, is from the beginning of Acts.

As with the Gospel of Luke, the author addresses Theophilus, whose identity is unclear. Was Theophilus his actual name? Perhaps it was. Perhaps it was not. “Theophilus” is also a title, meaning “friend of God.”


At some point, editors divided these books and placed the Gospel of John between them. This arrangement remains today in biblical translations.

This is important. It shows that in the mind of the holy author the process of salvation did not end with the Lord’s ascension into heaven.

After the Lord went to heaven, salvation continued as the Apostles were sent forth to the whole world. This is the Ascension. This is important. It shows that in the mind of the holy author the process of salvation did not end with the Lord’s ascension into heaven.

After the Lord went to heaven, salvation continued as the Apostles proceeded with the mission made perfect by Jesus and ordained long ago by God.

A lesson to be learned is how important the Apostles were in the daily life of the early Church. It is a lesson not presented subly.

As Acts continues, the text clearly reveals that the first Christians greatly revered the 11 surviving Apostles, that Peter led these Apostles and spoke for them, that they performed miracles just as Jesus had performed miracles, and that they exercised the very power of Jesus in calling Matthias to be an Apostle.

Still, despite all these assertions as to their dignity, they are only humans. They need the inspiration of God. As its second reading, the Church presents a selection from the Epistle to the Ephesians.

This reading is a prayer that all Christians might find true wisdom. However, true wisdom reposes only in the Lord. Earthly wisdom can be faulty, and often it is faulty. For the last reading, the Church gives us a lesson from St. Matthew’s Gospel.

Again, the status of the Apostles is the point of the reading. They are with Jesus. They have seen and heard the Risen Lord. In this sense, they have experienced the Resurrection itself.

Jesus tells them to go into the world. They should exclude no one. They should bring all humankind into God’s family by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In this last instruction from Jesus is a clear and direct revelation of the Holy Trinity.

Reflection

The Church, having proclaimed the Resurrection, now calls us to look at ourselves and our times.

Christ still is with us, it declares emphatically. As the bond between Luke and Acts tells us, salvation—perfected in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus—still is on Earth.

Jesus is with us, even after the Ascension, and is with us now in the Church because the Church stands on the foundation laid long ago by the Apostles. From them, it has received the message of Jesus. From them, it has received the power to forgive sin and to bestow the new life of grace. From them, it has received the sacraments now offered to us.

The Church brings us to Jesus, and it brings Jesus to us. However, we are not dragged kicking and screaming to Jesus. We must turn to Jesus willingly. We must humbly realize our need for Him.

As Ephesians tells us, only Jesus is the source of truth. He did not just live 20 centuries ago. He still lives. He still gives life, blessing us, forgiving us and taking us home to heaven.

Q

At the funeral Mass for a young father, the priest maintained that

the man’s death came at the time that God willed it.

It seems, if that is true, that God not merely knows, but actually determines when an individual will die.

On abortion, however, the Church seems to say the opposite. The fact that these children could be saved suggests that God does not decide when life will end.

Was the priest right? (Mississippi)

Theoretically, God’s will could work in different ways. He could decide everything on the spur of the moment, choosing whatever seems likely to make someone happy or at least less unhappy.

That would make all creation rather haphazard and unpredictable, but I suppose that it’s possible.

In the real world that actually exists, however, God’s will is most manifest in the way that God created this universe, and how from scratch he makes it “work.”

Every movement of every galaxy and every subatomic particle and everything in between takes place within the framework of God’s creative order and harmony.

The inventor of the gasoline engine, for example, created nothing new. He merely discovered—or uncovered—something that was there all the time, but we didn’t know it.

If you combine carbon atoms with atoms of other elements in a proper structure, put the results under pressure and ignite it, the mixture will explode and expand to move an engine’s piston.

This relation is not mere that. Cancer cells and the AIDS virus are disastrous for us, but when they destroy parts of our bodies they are only acting according to their nature. Like gasoline molecules, they are doing what their created makeup says they should do.

Cancer research, in fact, is based on the expectation that specific molecules and cells will act in a certain way. One avenue that scientists take is to find exactly what that way is then introduce other substances that will, they hope, attack and destroy the cancer. They have to rely on the fact that God will not intervene in his creation every so often to “fix his mistakes.”

We’re not accustomed to thinking about our Creator as a God with a purpose. But God’s will for humans and everything else is written in the way the universe is created.

It may sound unbelievable to put it this way, but when a train hits a human person God does not step in at that moment and decide it’s time for the victim to die. It’s just reality—what happens when two such bodies collide.

As I said, God could involve himself in every event in creation, manipulating cancer cells, for instance, so they don’t destroy one’s liver or ovaries. However, if God did that routinely, it would destroy all predictability in nature, all possibility of knowledge and intelligent use of the things around us on Earth and beyond.

It seems to me that we need a lot of humility here. Personal tragedies and calamities cause us great anguish, but we can come to accept and believe that God’s particular plan for placing everything in the universe is different from our own preferences.

This is prayer.

Shawn McGarry

My Journey to God

Thoughts on Prayer

Prayer I

In prayer
I come open, humble and Powerless, like a child Without formula or agenda Unscepted Entering it anywhere Because of the Presence Of an Everwonderful God Reaching Him Through love.

Prayer II

Only be with Him, to know that He is there. This, This is prayer.

By Cathy Lamperski Dearing

A free brochure answering questions that Catholics ask about Mary, the mother of Jesus, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 35135, Peoria, IL 61615. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address or by e-mail in care of jjdietzen@aol.com

Daily Readings

Monday, May 5
Acts 19:1-8
Psalm 68:2-Sadd, 6-7b
John 16:29-33

Tuesday, May 6
Acts 20:17-27
Psalm 68:10-11, 20-21
John 17:1-11a

Wednesday, May 7
Acts 20:28-38
Psalm 68:29-30, 33-36a, 35c-36b
John 17:11b-19

Thursday, May 8
Acts 22:19-30; 23:6-11
Psalm 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11
John 17:20-26

Friday, May 9
Acts 25:13b-21
Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20b
John 21:15-19

Saturday, May 10
Blessed Damien Joseph de Veuster of Molokai’s, priest
Acts 18:26-20, 30-31
Psalm 11:4-5, 7
John 20:20-25

Vigil Mass of Pentecost
Genesis 11:1-9
or Exodus 19:3-5a, 16-20b
or Ezekiel 37:1-14
or Joel 3:1-5
Psalm 104:1-2, 24, 35, 27-30
Romans 8:22-27
John 7:37-39

Sunday, May 11
Pentecost Sunday
Acts 2:1-11
Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-31, 34
1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13
John 20:19-23

FOLKER, Edward J., 85, founder of Butler University, Indianapolis, April 1. Husband of Mercedes Folker. Father of Craig and Edward Folker.


MALCOAT, Sandra, 69, St. John the Baptist, Indianapolis. Daughter of Frank and Emma Malcoat. Grandmother of eight.


Music/Liturgy Director

Saint Joseph University Parish in Terre Haute, IN, an active parish of approximately 750 households and with a substantial campus ministry, invites applications for the position of director of Music and Liturgy. The successful applicant will be a person of strong faith; have a thorough understanding of Roman Catholic liturgy; and hold a Bachelor’s degree in Music or Liturgical Music, or have comparable experience. Applicants responding by June 1st will be given preferential consideration though screening will continue until the position is filled. For a full description of the position expectations, duties and responsibilities; application requirements and additional information about the parish go to www.stjoeup.org.

Student Activities Coordinator

Bishop Chatard High School, the North Deenary Catholic high school of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, is seeking an experienced business manager to serve as its Director of Business Operations. Responsibilities of this position include property and risk management, payroll management and oversight of the accounting function, financial analysis for the sake of long-term planning, and preparing the annual budget. The person hired for this position will have excellent organizational skills, be able to work with a broad range of people and issues, have a firm foundation in reviewing and understanding financial data, and will have success in serving in a similar capacity in previous employment. Applicants for this position should possess a B.A. in business management or a related field. Interested applicants are invited to e-mail or send a letter of interest and resume to: Elberta Caito, Bishop Chatard High School 5885 Critten Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46220 E-mail: ecaito@bishopchatard.org Phone: (317) 251-1451 Ext. 2254 Deadline for submission is May 16, 2008.

Payroll Specialist

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a full-time payroll specialist to work in a fast-paced, multi-tasked environment. Significant knowledge of payroll, excellent data entry skills (speed and accuracy), and customer service skills are essential. Please send cover letter, résumé, and list of references to: Ed Irskon, Director, Human Resources eiskon@archindy.org.
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