A special place in history

Freshmen at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College have ties to St. Theodora Guérin

By John Shaughnessy

SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS—For cousins Jenna Thralls and Ashley Vermillion, it’s just a short walk from their college dorm room to the site of their family’s special place in American Catholic history. At night on the campus of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College west of Terre Haute, Jenna and Ashley sometimes walk to the rock that memorializes a historic October moment from 168 years ago—the moment in 1840 when St. Theodora Guérin ended a three-month journey from France and arrived in the Indiana wilderness with a dream. Standing by that rock, the two freshmen have sometimes imagined what it must have been like in that moment for St. Theodore and the five other sisters who traveled with her from France. Even more, the 18-year-old cousins have tried to imagine what it was like for their great-great-great-grandparents as they welcomed into their home the woman who in 2006 would be just the eighth person from America to become a saint.

“If I could time travel, I’d go back to that time,” says Jenna as Ashley nods in agreement. They’re both thrilled to have earned scholarships that let them continue their education at Saint Mary’s—another chapter in the story that connects the saint and the Thralls family.

Ever since they were small children, Jenna and Ashley have heard their grandfather’s stories about that connection. They know that the future saint’s traveling group arrived in the deep forest of western Indiana on a rainy night—the end of a journey that included 40 days in a boat crossing the Atlantic Ocean, and an even longer trip by train, ferry and stagecoach across the American wilderness. They know that St. Theodora was stunned when she finally reached her isolated destination, a life she captured in her journal: “To our utter amazement, there was nothing in sight, not even a house. We went down a deep ravine and up on the other side, and through the trees we could see a farmhouse.”

Jenna and Ashley also know that the farmhouse belonged to their ancestors, Joseph and Sarah Thralls, the parents of 13 children. The Thralls family welcomed the sisters into their small, primitive home, letting them use half of its rooms. The sisters and the family shared the home until the Diocese of Providence eventually purchased the Thralls property for the Sisters of Providence.

The connection with the Thralls family is still celebrated by the sisters. “We will owe the Thralls family forever for what they did,” says Providence Sister Barbara Doherty, the director of the Shrine of St. Mother Theodore Guérin on the grounds of the college. “The attachment between the Thralls family and the Sisters of Providence is gigantic. It’s a wonderful thing that (Ashley and Jenna) are here.” The feeling is mutual for the two freshmen.

“I love it—the atmosphere, the whole campus,” Ashley says. “I

Archdiocese honors pro-life supporters for their work

By Mary Ann Wyand

The founder and director of Birthright of Terre Haute, a crisis pregnancy assistance ministry started in Vigo County 34 years ago, and a home-schooled Nashville teenager, who volunteers for a variety of pro-life causes, will be honored by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis on Respect Life Sunday.

Cecelia Lundstrom

Cecelia Lundstrom of Terre Haute will receive the 2008 Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Respect for Life Award, and St. Agnes parishioner Sherry Bube of Nashville will accept the 2008 Our Lady of Guadalupe Pro-Life Youth Award at the conclusion of the Respect Life Sunday Mass.

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein is scheduled to be the celebrant for the archdiocesan pro-life liturgy at 1 p.m. on Oct. 5 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis.

Sherry Bube

The annual Central Indiana Life Chain, a one-hour prayer vigil dedicated to ending abortion, will follow the Respect Life Mass from 2:30 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. along North Meridian Street between Ohio and 40th streets.

Life Chains also are scheduled in the archdiocese on Respect Life Sunday in Bloomington, Columbus, Connersville, Green castle, Greenfield and Terre Haute. “Hope and Trust in Life!” is the theme for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ national observance of Respect Life Sunday. The theme was inspired by Pope Benedict XVI’s homily on Dec. 31, 2007, when he said a lack of hope and trust in life is “the ‘obscure’ evil of modern Western society.”

Servants of the Gospel of Life Sister Diane Carollo, director of the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, will be the celebrant for the liturgy at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral.

By William J. Levada

Cardinal William J. Levada, prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, made the comments in an interview in San Francisco with the newspaper of the archdiocese, Catholic San Francisco.

The cardinal, who is the former archbishop of San Francisco, was in town to dedicate a replica of St. Francis of Assisi’s tiny Porziuncola church that now graces a building adjoining the National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi.

“For all the rekindling of the love for Scripture that [the Second] Vatican Council proposed, I would say that perhaps we have not integrated” the study and appreciation of the Bible into the daily lives of average Catholics as much as the Church would hope, he said.

Cardinal Levada is one of three delegate presidents who will take turns presiding over the synod’s daily sessions on Oct. 5-26 at the Vatican.

“I am speaking in generalities,” he said, “but there are sources that indicate that a lot of people perhaps do not have their own Bibles, that they have not learned how to use it every day and make it part of their spiritual nourishment.”

“The pastoral implications of the Second Vatican Council, particularly ‘Dei Verbum’ [the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation], still need encouragement for fuller implementation,” Cardinal Levada said.

He also said it “would be one of our great hopes” that the synod might provide “a great point of connection” with other Christian communities and stimulate...
wouldn’t want to go to any other school.”

The cousins weren’t sure they would be able to attend their “dream” college when they were seniors at West Vigo High School in Terre Haute last year. They knew they would need scholarships to help make their dream a reality. They sweated through the application process into the spring. Then came the news. A Shirley had earned a Top Ten scholarship, and Jena had received a scholarship named in honor of St. Theodora.

“I was so anxious all year long,” Jena recalls. “When I got the phone call that I got the scholarship, I was almost in tears. It was so exciting!”

Jena’s scholarship cements her bond with St. Theodora, a bond that began for her and Shirley when they were 6 and they performed in a Bible-school play at their parish, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. The play was about the saint and her ancestors.

“It’s inspiring for me that she’s a saint and a leader,” Jena says. “She was very brave. She came over from France to open this institution. She never put herself first. It’s comforting to me knowing she walked these grounds with my family. I take random walks out there. I try to imagine what it looked like then, what it felt like, what she could see. It’s a blessing.”

A Shirley and Jena have tried to follow her example in sharing their blessings. They are committed to community service, especially helping families in need and children in hospitals during the Christmas season. It’s just one of the bonds that the cousins share. They both have jobs to help pay for their college education. They also are roommates.

A Shirley, the cousins didn’t ask to be roommates, instead, they each filled out the survey that the college uses to try to determine compatibility for incoming freshmen. From the survey results, the college matched them as roommates.

“We’re inseparable,” Jena says. “Ever since we were born, we’ve been best friends.”

A Shirley smiles and adds, “We do everything together. If she’s in trouble, I’m in trouble.”

Their relationship with God binds them, too. While A Shirley describes her faith as strong and committed, Jena says, “When I became confirmed last year, I realized how different the Catholic Church is from other faiths. I like it. That makes it me feel strong in my faith.”

There’s one thing that ties the cousins to the saint. In coming to Indiana, St. Theodora made educating others her life’s mission. A Shirley hopes to become an elementary school teacher while Jena is considering becoming an English teacher.

The connection between the saint and the family is strong after 168 years. “I always think about her when I’m having struggles,” A Shirley says. “She went through a lot. I think about her strength and that helps me be strong.”

She pauses before she adds, “It’s really important to me, knowing that our family helped a saint. Not many people can say that.”
Blessed Mother played key role in priest's conversion

By Mike Krokos

Don Calloway’s life of pornography, sexual promiscuity and drug use led him to run away from home as a teenager in the late 1980s. He was, at the time, 16, when his mother and naval stepfather were stationed in Japan, where he was placed in a rehabilitation center. He was only 16 at the time.

Getting out of rehabilitation a month later, Calloway admitted he was “an uncaged animal” and went back to doing heroin, cocaine, LSD and other drugs. His continued sexual promiscuity led to his contracting a sexually transmitted disease. He was arrested for stealing from a Piggly Wiggly supermarket.

To top it off, his parents had converted to Catholicism while he was in rehabilitation. His sex, drugs and TV mentality that had started at age 11 continued for a time, but finally, one night, Calloway had a crisis of being.

“I came to the conclusion that life sucks,” he told the nearly 900 men who attended the third annual Indiana Catholic Men’s Conference on Sept. 27 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

“I wanted to die.”

At his parents’ house that evening, he found a book on Marian apparitions, opened it and absorbed its message.

Though he thought the Catholic Church was a cult, “the way the children [in the book] described her [Mary] was fascinating to me.” Calloway said.

“I was so attracted to her. Here was a beauty I had never encountered before,” he continued.

“She was pointing me in the direction of Jesus. If anyone really knew him, it would be his mother.”

That powerful experience helped lead him to attend his first Catholic Mass and began his journey to becoming a priest.

Calloway went home and threw away all his pornography, drug paraphernalia and music, he said. “I found God’s rehabilitation center, the Catholic Church. “Jesus is the divine physician.”

Ordained a member of the Congregation of Marians of the Immaculate Conception in 2003, Father Donald Calloway encouraged the nearly 900 men at the third annual Indiana Catholic Men’s Conference on Sept. 27 to have a relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

“Jesus is the divine physician.” he said.

“Catholicism is the defender of beauty,” he said.

“He who seeks beauty finds God.”

“Catholicism is the defender of beauty,” he said.

“You’re called to be defenders of beauty.”

Sponsored by the Marian Center in Indianapolis, the title of the conference was “Lions Breathing Fire: Christ Our Hope.” Taken from a homily by St. John Chrysostom, a fourth-century saint, it describes what people should look like after receiving Communion.

Father Donald, 36, who lives in Stowbeden, Ohio, where he serves as vocations director for his religious order, admitted he is still “a man under construction” and told those in attendance that they need to become men of sacrifice. He added that humility needs to be a part of their lives, and encouraged them to have a devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

“Share your wounds with a brother, go to frequent confession,” he said. “No man truly becomes a man without a woman in his life, especially this woman.”

Later during Mass, Father Donald reiterated his call for men to have a relationship with the Blessed Mother.

“You have to be on the side of this holy woman to crush this enemy [Satan].”

“She is the mother of all the living. Without her, we cannot have life.”

He also encouraged them to pray the rosary daily.

“Allow God’s holy mother to be your mother.”

Father Donald said in his homily. “Don’t be afraid to pray the rosary with your brothers. Surrender to the fullness of the mystery.”

Wanted: Readers’ memories to help celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

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Economic crisis is a failure of responsible stewardship

The U.S. bishops’ 1992 pastoral letter "Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response" reminds us of the importance of good stewardship. "We are called to give back with increase. We are called to another." Then it’s time to return to basics of care that are prudent, effective and just, duty—to develop and oversee standards expected. Responsible stewards have a right to should be enough to protect what we judgment and responsible stewardship good. Regulatory agencies fail to be responsible charged with the responsibility to serve poor stewardship—by banks and other God’s gifts. Designed to take care of and share all judgment and standards of care that are most stringent ethical, legal and fiscal.

Most Rev. Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B., Mike Krokos, Editor John F. Fink, Editor Emeritus

Letters to the Editor

Reader: All innocent in society should receive equal regard

To expand on the remarks of Father Ladeusz Paczycki in his "Voting to make a difference" column in the Sept. 26 issue of The Criterion, I totally agree that "absolute protection for the life of the life is the foundation of all the other goods ..." but would add to his list other "innocents" whose lives deserve protection and our consideration when voting. Iod warms, unlike those of the past, the love of money is the root of all evil. Scripture says you cannot serve both God and money. On the other hand, money makes the world go round. Money is a blessing when you have it and a curse when you don’t. Giving it away is a sign of generosity. Money is the fruit of our labors just as water and wheat are the fruit of labor in the Bible. The average Catholic pastor or bishop spends a lot of time worrying about and managing money. Unfortunately, we get absolutely no training in this temporal concern.

When I was in the seminary, they devoted not one single minute to parish administration. You would have thought that priests administered themselves and bills were paid miraculously. Moot dioceses are no better. They don’t do anything to train pastors in money management. So we learn on the job.

Fortunately, I recove help from my parishioners. My motto is "delegate or die." I have a part-time bookkeeper and an accountant. We have volunteers who count money and make deposits. We also have a financial council that is required by the Church’s canon law. Members give good advice, but they meet only once a month. They can’t help with the day-to-day decisions.

Ultimately, the buck stops with me. Canon law makes the pastor responsible on money matters. However, good spiritual principles are also good financial principles. The virtues of frugality and prudence make us cautious. I think that most of the financial ills of the developed world come from: flat taxes, lack of personal accountability, avarice, pride, sloth and envy. That seems to be something that Wall Street has taught us.

The spectacular failures of Lehman Brothers and its fellow travelers have their roots in sin, especially greed. Being good stewards in this world means storing up your treasure in heaven. (Father Peter Daly writes for Catholic News Service.)
La formación de conciencias es un reto que enfrentamos en preparación para el sufragio

Por eso volvemos por aquellos que gobernamos y también por nosotros. Tal como lo han demostrado las experiencias anteriores, los parroquianos de nuestras parroquias y de otras de todo el país han salido a manifestarse porque no estaban contentos con el gobierno. Incluso hubo una marcha del pueblo en Washington D.C. y un gran número de personas participaron en ella. La moralidad de nuestra sociedad es un tema muy importante y no podemos seguir permitiendo que los politiqueros se desgasten día tras día en el escenario de los medios de comunicación.

La formación de conciencias como se apropiaron por nuestros amables y valerosos pastores ha sido un tema que ha causado mucho debate en nuestro país. Los pastores y los dirigentes parroquiales han jugado un papel fundamental en la formación de conciencias. No podemos seguir permitiendo que los políticos y los periodistas que se acerquen a nuestras iglesias para hacer declaraciones ofensivas y denigrantes.

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October 3
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. Lumen Dei meeting, mass, 6:30 a.m., breakfast, and program at Priori Hall, “A Look at Tomorrow by Looking at Yesterday,” George Maly, presenter, 150 guests. Information: 317-919-5316 or lumen@dioceseofindy.org.

Retreats and Programs
October 7-9
St Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. “Habitation for Happiness: God’s Logic in the Beatitudes,” Benedictine Father Vincent Tobin, presenter. Information: 812-855-3610 or M.Zoeller@saintmeinrad.edu.

October 9
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Mary: A Woman for Now,” Franciscan Sister Olga Wittkeindt, presenter, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Information: 317-899-8103. This event is free and open to the public.

October 10-12
St Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. “Praying with Icons,” Benedictine Brother Thomas Gricoski, presenter. Information: 812-933-6435 or M.Zoeller@saintmeinrad.edu.

October 12
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Evensong Scripture,” 4:30 p.m. Information: 317-876-8150.

October 16

October 18

October 19
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 553 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Pre Cana Program,” marriage preparation program for engaged couples. Information and registration:

www.archindy.org/family/marriagecounseling.html

October 20

October 25
Benedictin Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. “Spa Day,” 8 a.m.-4 p.m. $100 per person, includes lunch. Information: 317-788-7581.

October 27-31
St Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. “Priests’ Retreat-Pprechaching the Gospel of Mark,” Benedictine Father Eugene Hagemeyer, presenter. Information: 812-501-6605 or M.Zoeller@saintmeinrad.edu.

VIPS
Kenneth and Virginia (Hagens) Hugenard, members of St. Lawrence Parish, Indianapolis, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 27 with a Mass followed by a dinner. The couple was married on Oct. 4, 1958, at St. Mary’s Church, Nashville.

Conversion of Ven. Elizabeth of the Holy Spirit
St. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

11th-century nun to become saint
The archdiocese announced the canonization of Ven. Elizabeth of the Holy Spirit, the first known nun to become a saint. Pope Benedict XVI approved the canonization of Ven. Elizabeth, who is to be known as Elizabeth of the Holy Spirit.

The canonization of Ven. Elizabeth was officially announced on June 21 by the archdiocese, which has been working to have her declared a saint.

Ven. Elizabeth, also known as Bl. Elizabeth of the Holy Spirit, was a 12th-century nun who established a community of nuns in France.

Her feast day is Sept. 27.

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Archbishop O'Meara will address the assembly.

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Americans live in a nation blessed with diverse gifts, abundant resources, and a democracy and political system that are strong and stable. At the same time, the U.S. is home to 37 million people who live in poverty and 47 million people who live without any kind of health insurance. For these people, obtaining medical care can be nearly impossible.

And when the uninsured do receive medical care, they tend to seek treatment in the most expensive and least effective place for non-emergencies—the hospital emergency room.

A consensus is emerging that the U.S. has both the capacity and compassion to correct this moral lapse by creating a health care system that works for everyone, offering medical and preventive care without exceptions and excuses.

Catholic social teaching says that health care is a matter of human dignity, and that the health and well-being of each of us is connected with the health and well-being of the broader community.

Health care is, in fact, an essential element contributing to the common good alongside education, employment, and a safe environment.

Through the Catholic Health Association’s “Covering a Nation” initiative, staffs at Catholic hospitals and nursing homes nationwide helped develop our ministry’s “Vision of U.S. Health Care.”

This is an outline of the health care system that is possible with all the stakeholders—those who need care and those who deliver care—having a voice in determining it.

The vision states: “Health care is fundamental to a healthy, flourishing society—it is not a product or commodity. When people have unmet health needs, it is difficult for them to fully function as members of their families, their workplaces or their schools, which then affects the broader community and economy.”

To guide the dialogue on health care reform, the vision statement names several values, among which are human dignity as well as concern for the poor and vulnerable.

These values are followed by six principles that should be considered when developing a future system.

These principles state that health care in the U.S. should be:

• accessible to everyone, the poor included.
• health- and prevention-oriented, sufficiently and fairly financed.
• consensus-driven in the allocation of resources, organized for cost-effective care and administration.
• patient-centered, designed to address health needs at all stages of life from conception until natural death, safe and effective, delivering the greatest possible quality.
• safe and effective, delivering the greatest possible quality.
• productive in the allocation of resources, organized for cost-effective care and administration.

The American people will get health care that is accessible to everyone, the poor included, health- and prevention-oriented, sufficiently and fairly financed, and consensus-driven in the allocation of resources, organized for cost-effective care and administration.

If the moral argument is not compelling, there are other important reasons for making health care reform a top priority. The effect on the U.S. economy and productivity is perhaps the most urgent.

A recent study by the New America Foundation, U.S. firms spent twice as much on health care in 2005 as their foreign competitors.

Overall, the U.S. is spending some $6,000 per person per year on health care while other nations spend half as much and get better quality for their dollar.

Health care is, in fact, an essential element contributing to the common good alongside education, employment, and a safe environment.

The Catholic Health Association is asking Catholics to help make the case that health care change must happen by doing things such as canvassing meetings in their parishes to discuss the matter, writing their congressional representatives and urging them to prioritize health care reform, writing letters to the editor of their newspaper, and displaying the “Our Health Care Values” reform posters to engage employees and community members in health reform dialogue.

The Catholic Health Association has posters, meeting guides and other information to help raise collective voices for reform.

Opinion research conducted by the Catholic Health Association confirms that voters believe their own voices are the best way to facilitate real change.

The American people will get health care reform worthy of their dignity when they demand it.

(Sister Carol Keehan, a member of the Daughters of Charity, is president and chief executive officer of the Catholic Health Association of the United States.)

Discussion Point

Medical insurance is top priority

This Week’s Question

How much of a priority is medical insurance for you or someone you know?

“Pretty high, personally. We have two college graduates with lots of loans and we wish, like Minnesota, our state could extend health care coverage under the parent’s policy while they’re still looking for jobs or until their own health care kicks in.” —Donna Nash, Bothell, Wash.

“It is on top of the list for me. With medical costs so high, you just have to have good medical insurance.” —Jeanine Brest, Billings, Mont.

“I think it’s quite essential. We have a daughter with chronic headaches so without health insurance we would find it very difficult.” —Leaann Grff, Riverton, Wyo.

“It’s the top priority. My husband was a teacher and had good insurance, but a few years ago he started his own business. We have three school-age children so the first thing we did was go shopping for insurance.” —Mirae Pratt, Eakenfield, Calif.

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: The Pew survey says more than one in six American adults are not currently affiliated with any religious group. How can Catholics reach out to them?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to cpres@catnews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 321 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1190.
Faithful Lines/
From the Editor Emeritus/
several parishes in New York.
entered the novitiate at St. Bonaventure Friary
in Detroit in 1981.

A bottomless well of love
While attending a fundraising dinner for Catholic Charities Terre Haute in September, I had the pleasant experience of hearing the story of a woman named Gina. Gina and her husband, David, had already raised five of their seven children. David’s brother and his wife were in the midst of raising the fifth child—very unsuccessfully.
The couple became involved with the drug methamphetamine. Like most people who take this hideous drug, they began to neglect every other aspect of their lives—including their children. The neglect and abuse of the children led to their removal and placement into foster care by Child Protective Services. After their father served a jail sentence, he attempted to resume his duties as a father but was released into his old way of life. So that Child Protective Services would not have to intervene again, and to guard over the children of the brothers to Gina and her husband, David began working two jobs seven days a week, so that Gina could quit her job to attend to the children’s vast needs.

I am inspired, humbled and in awe of their incredible unselfishness.
Their ability to summon the love in their lives is needed to give the self-sacrifice required for this journey is a testament to the fact that love knows no boundaries.

To demonstrate her commitment to the children, Gina began to take them to Ryves, a day nursery program of Catholic Charities Terre Haute—every day after school, where they had found refuge when they were small. Ryves just happened to be located two blocks from the children’s original home and, during the difficult times at home, they would go to the youth center, where they could participate in various sports, scouting, tutoring, and other activities. They spent much of their time in foster care, they were not able to attend Ryves and felt a great void in their lives.

Gina started a 4-H Club at Ryves Hall and began serving meals to the children and families that show up every day after school to find a safe place to be until 9 p.m. She now volunteers at Ryves 40 to 45 hours per week. She has been able to assist nearly 250 people at the fundraising dinner and used the occasion to thank the staff, volunteers and supporters of Ryves Hall.

Her gratitude is understandable, but the youth center is just doing what it has done for decades. Time and time again, it is the young men and women who run the center who are responsible for the amazing work that the youth center does, but who signs on to raise another set of kids—very successfully. Not only have Gina and David remained free from relapse, but their seven children have been able to begin attending school.

I am inspired, humbled and in awe of their incredible unselfishness. Their ability to summon the love in their lives is needed to give the self-sacrifice required for this journey is a testament to the fact that love knows no boundaries.

Now that I will you that you will want to join me in praying for Gina and her family.

Davie Siler is executive director of the Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries. E-mail him at dssiler@archindy.org I
The first section of the Book of Isaiah is the source of this weekend's first reading. The prophet speaks directly to the people. He is God's mouthpiece in the first person.

In this reading, the prophet employs an image with which his contemporaries would have been familiar, the image of the vineyard. The prophet describes the land of God's people as a vineyard. The vineyard belongs to God, who tends the land of God's people as a vineyard. The landowner has planted a vineyard. That theme was also restated in the Old Testament to describe the nation of Israel. The vineyard belongs to God. Those who occupy the vineyard merely are tenants. God protected this vineyard by surrounding it with a wall, and then God went on a journey, leaving the tenants to tend the vineyard.

In due course, the landowner sends his servants to the tenants to collect the yield. However, the tenants have turned against God. The tenants kill these servants. God sent more servants. They, too, were killed. Then, the Son of God was sent, also to be killed. Finally, God drives the tenants from the vineyard.

Reflection
The Church has called us to discipleship during these weeks. It repeats this call in these readings.

Ultimately, today’s lesson is not about doom and destruction, although both Isaiah and Matthew feature dire warnings and death. Rather, the message is of salvation and hope.

By disobeying or ignoring God, we bring chaos upon ourselves. God does not hurt thunderbolts of anger and revenge at us. Instead, we create our own eternal situation. We choose to sin. We choose to be with God or to be without God. Salvation is not forced upon us. We choose our plight of death and hopelessness.

All is not necessarily lost. The wonder, and great opportunity, in all this is that God accepts us back if we repent.

My Journey to God

Day of Silence

Why would anyone want to spend a day in silence and still? What would really be the point anyway?

I only know that even grass needs water to grow now and again, and the sun’s light for it to recognize and see that everything around it is beautiful.

By Cathy Lamperski

Dearing

(Cathy Dearing is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. She wrote this poem before spending time with Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis for one of the monthly silent days of reflection. Quoting from a meditation by an unknown source found on the Internet, Dearing said, “The opportunity, or rather this gift, that Fatima offers allows me to make time for the quiet moments—for God’s whispers and the world is loud.” This first reading of Our Lady of Fatima is displayed inside the front entrance of the archdiocesan retreat center.)

Daily Readings

Monday, Oct. 6
Bruno, priest
Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher, virgin
Galatians 1:16-12
Psalm 111:1b-2, 7-9, 10c
Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday, Oct. 7
Our Lady of the Rosary
Galatians 1:13-24
Psalm 139:1b-3, 13-15
Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday, Oct. 8
Galatians 2:1-2, 7-14
117bc, 1b
Luke 11:1-4

Thursday, Oct. 9
Denis, bishop and martyr
and his companions, martyrs
John Leonard, priest
Galatians 3:1-2
(Response): Luke 1:69-75
Luke 11:5-13

Question Corner/ Fr. John Dietzen

Catholic Church recognizes validity of baptisms in Protestant Churches

Q

The son of a Methodist couple, friends of ours, is preparing to marry a Catholic girl, and wanted to join and be baptized in the Catholic Church before their marriage.

Supposedly, he was told that since he had been baptized in the Methodist Church that he could not be baptized in the Catholic Church.

Can this be true? I’ve never heard of such a thing.

My husband was Presbyterian, joined the Catholic faith 45 years ago, and was baptized in the Catholic Church at that time. Has something changed? (M (Issouri))

A

Yes. The Catholic understanding of Protestant baptisms and the Church’s practice concerning re-baptism of converts to Catholicism is different now than it was some decades ago.

In fact, the change began long before your husband became Catholic. He would encounter a much different situation if he were joining the Catholic Church today.

The simple answer is that the Catholic Church recognizes the validity of Protestant baptisms much more commonly now in the past.

The first major Catholic statement assuming the validity of most Protestant baptisms came in a reply from the Holy Office, the predecessor of the present Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on Dec. 28, 1949.

The document resulted not only from a better awareness by the Catholic Church of the nature of baptisms in these other Christian traditions, but also from a more developed theology and practice of baptism in some Protestant traditions.

Formerly, converts to the Catholic faith who had been baptized in other Christian communities were baptized “conditionally,” meaning that, whether or not they were truly baptized before they are now.

Today, conditional baptism, or as it is sometimes erroneously called, re-baptism, is relatively rare.

Usually, if a convert has been baptized in one of the major Protestant communities, conditional baptism occurs only if that person’s baptism is uncertain or if the individual himself or herself has a serious reason to doubt the validity of the previous baptism.

Present regulations of the Church, in fact, forbid conditional baptism of converts without a reasonable doubt and serious investigation of the previous baptism.

These policies are found in the Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic Church (#45), the 1933 Vatican directory on ecumenism (#45 and #54), and the Code of Canon Law (#45).

The reason, therefore, that your friend’s son cannot be baptized Catholic is that, as far as the Catholic Church is concerned, he is already baptized.

When the time comes for him to enter our Church, he will make a profession of Catholic faith, receive the Eucharist and at some appropriate time receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

A recent religious program used the phrase “Hebrew Catholics.” Who are they? Do they believe the same Church teachings as other Catholics? (New York)

A

Sometimes that name is used for any Jewish person who joins the Catholic faith. There is, however, an Association of Hebrew Catholics, whose members are Catholics of Jewish or non-Jewish origins. Founded in 1979 by a Carmelite priest, the group proposes to preserve the identity and heritage of people of Israel who are now members of the Catholic Church.

The association has been recognized by Rome and by the Archdiocese of St. Louis, where its headquarters is located. It is totally Catholic in its teaching and practice. You can learn more about the organization by checking its Web site by logging on to www.hebrewcatholic.org.

(A free brochure in English or Spanish, answering questions that Catholics ask about the organization and its sponsors, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 3139, Peoria, IL 61612. Or call 309-673-3139, or visit their Web site at a different address or by e-mail in care of dietzen@arol.com)
How can we feed Christ today? How can we serve Him?

We can share our food and our blessings with hungry children like Santos Mendoza, who arrived at a nutritional center in Guatemala weighing just 4 pounds.

Food For The Poor provides lifesaving food to countless hungry children and families throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. But we can only save these precious lives with the help of people like you. A gift of just $45 will feed 15 children for a month. Please, send a gift for food today.
Catholics say impact of ‘Faithful Citizenship goes beyond Nov. 4

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Across the country—in group discussions, adult education programs, diocesan conferences, DVD presentations and Sunday Mass homilies—U.S. Catholics are taking a close look at the bishops’ 2007 document intended to help Catholic leaders form their consciences on a variety of issues. Even though there is a push to review the document, “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility” during the election season, many Catholics do not plan to put it aside after Nov. 4.

“Voting isn’t the end of being a faithful citizen. It’s really about continuing to advocate for our visions and values,” said Barbara Budd, director of the parish social ministry office of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Austin, Texas.

“The bishops are starting to turn our attention toward after the elections,” she told Catholic News Service Sept. 26, noting that Catholic leaders are making sure people are knowledgeable about issues that might come up in the Texas Legislature and in Congress.

Four years ago, Catholic leaders in Austin were urging people to vote and conducting frequent parish voter-registration drives. Now, Budd said, with people in place, the current focus is on “forming consciences.”

Although “Faithful Citizenship” was first published in 1975, the bishops produce a new version of it about every four years to coincide with the presidential elections. The document for the 2008 election was overwhelmingly approved by the bishops last November. Since then, Joan Rosenhauer, associate director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development, has been giving talks about the document across the country. In various workshops and group discussions, she said, she has seen how Catholics are “taking very seriously the bishops’ message that forming one’s conscience is critical as we make decisions in political life.”

“Part of this process involves studying Scripture and the Church’s teaching,” she said. “Catholics are reading and reflecting on the document carefully to learn what is involved in forming one’s conscience, and to learn about the basic principles and ideas from Catholic teaching that should shape decisions in public life.”

Rosenhauer said the document’s emphasis on having a well-formed conscience seems to “strike a chord with many people.”

Vatican official: Death penalty support denies basic Christian belief

ROME (CNS)—Support for the death penalty is a denial of the basic Christian belief that God can turn any person from a life of sin, a Vatican official told a group of justice ministers, judges and lawmakers examining positions on capital punishment.

A archbishop Agostino Acquaviva, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers, spoke on Sept. 25 at the conference “No Justice Without Life” which gathered representatives from 16 countries in Rome for a daylong meeting. The conference, sponsored by the Sant’Egidio Community, included government officials from Rwanda, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Kenya, Benin, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, M erico, the Philippines and Kazakhstan.

A archbishop Mario Zenari, United Nations’ 2007 resolution urging a moratorium on the use of the death penalty was the “first necessary step” to abolishing capital punishment completely.

The moratorium, he said, should give countries who still have death penalty laws time to “adopt appropriate instruments of law” to ensure that those who commit serious crimes are not a threat to society and to increase the foundations of “a culture of life,” paving the way for the abolition of the death penalty.

“Despite everything, the Church has always and will always defend the sacredness of human life from conception to natural death as a universal value,” the archbishop said. “If one accepts that respect for human life reflects the reality that God created people in his image and likeness, he said, then “the death penalty in itself appears to be an unacceptable instrument even more than being a useless and dangerous one.”

“As Christians, how can we accept that someone be denied the hope of redemption?” the archbishop asked. “A man or a woman who made a mistake, who committed a crime, no matter how brutal, must have the possibility of being forgiven—while serving a tough sentence— and of living in hope.”

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What matters most in life is how you live it.
Voice of the poor is missing in the climate change debate

By Cecilia Calvo
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Climate change is a hot topic this election year.

A growing majority of Americans believe that climate change is real, and that steps must be taken now to address it. This is one reason that climate change has become a key issue in this election.

The Catholic bishops of the United States insist in "Global Climate Change," a statement released in 2005, "that we are our brothers and sisters' keepers.

New Orleans (CNS)—It took the worst natural and man-made disaster in American history—Hurricane Katrina and the levee breaches that inundated New Orleans with water in August—to expose previously hidden levels of poverty in the richest country in the world, a Catholic bishop said on Sept. 23.

Retired Auxiliary Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan of Brooklyn, N.Y., made the comments at the 2008 annual gathering of Catholic Charities USA.

In accepting the Vision Award from Catholic Charities USA for his four decades in Catholic social services, the former president of Catholic Charities USA praised the response of the U.S. Church to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 and to Hurricanes Gustave and Ike this September.

But having 37 million Americans living below the poverty line is unacceptable and represents a clear imperative for change, he said.

Citing the Rev. James Forbes, the retired rector of Riverside Church in New York, Bishop Sullivan said "Lady Katrina revealed, as no other event in recent history, the shocking confluence of racism and poverty that exists in our nation's cities.

Katrina was not just a revelation of poverty in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, it was "a symbol of what the deeper reality is in the country," Bishop Sullivan said after his talk.

Bishop Sullivan, 78, said while 8 percent of white Americans live below the poverty line, 24 percent of African-Americans, 22 percent of Hispanics and 23 percent of Native American are poor.

He said the Catholic Charities USA report, "Poverty in America," refers to poverty as an "unnatural disaster" created by individuals and society.

"Lady Katrina challenges us to wake up to acknowledge the reality and injustices of poverty in our country and, together with the poor, to take action to shape the social and economic policies that will reduce poverty by half by 2020," he said.

"This is not a pipe dream. We have the resources, experience and knowledge to virtually eliminate poverty," he continued. "What we need is the political will.

"We don’t need a storm, a tragedy, a series of shocking events to shake us out of our lethargy."

Hurricane Katrina exposed ‘two Americas,’ Bishop Sullivan says

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"We don’t need a storm, a tragedy, a series of shocking events to shake us out of our lethargy."

Athough President Bush’s war on poverty in the 1990s, been commendable, he said, was "a pipe dream.

"God was in all the good will and practical responses of those who reached out to express their conviction that ‘we are our brother’s and sister’s keepers.’

Father Larry Snyder, the president of Catholic Charities USA, asked the 700 people attending the Sept. 24-25 conference to remember their colleagues who were helping storm victims in southwest Louisiana and south Texas, and could not attend.

"I think [natural disasters] has increased geometrically," Father Snyder said. "Three years ago, the greatest catastrophe our country had known to that time hit, and we didn’t have any storm victims.

"We learned much from that bitter experience and built a network that could respond in a quick and effective way. We didn’t continue to call that network. The future is only challenged by limited resources.

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With God’s help, we can transform our nation and build a culture of life and hope for all

By the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities

In a April 2008, the United States was blessed by the pastoral visit of Pope Benedict XVI.

Amercians discovered in our Holy Father a man of immense intellectual gifts, great wisdom and an unparalleled knowledge of today’s geopolitical, social, and cultural realities.

They also discovered a kindly, gentle priest imbued with humility, holiness and love. Still, he would be the first to say that the trip was not about him.

God sent Pope Benedict to us with a message, one that doesn’t tend itself to the 30-second sound bites and rapid-cycling images of today’s media.

We Christians in the United States can benefit greatly from carefully reading his talks and homilies, reflecting on his message and asking ourselves: “How does this message apply to my life?”

In his meeting with the U.S. bishops, Pope Benedict affirmed that our country “is marked by a genuinely religious spirit,” but this spirit is all too often confined to our places and times of worship.

The subtle influence of secularism, he said, can color the way that people allow their faith to influence their behavior.

Is it consistent to profess our beliefs in church on Sunday then during the week to promote business practices or medical procedures contrary to those beliefs?

Is it consistent for practicing Catholics to ignore or exploit the poor and the marginalized, to promote sexual behavior contrary to Catholic moral teaching or to adopt positions that contradict the right to life of every human being from conception until natural death?

The answers to these questions are obvious. But we have really considered the consequences of this gap between our profession of faith and the ways that we are living it out?

Under America’s brand of secularism, Pope Benedict explained, “Faith becomes a passive acceptance that certain things ‘out there’ are true, but without practical relevance for everyday life. The result is a growing separation of faith from life, living as if God did not exist.”

“This is aggravated by an individualistic and eclectic approach to faith and religion,” the pope emphasized. “Far from a Catholic approach to ‘thinking with the Church,’ each person believes he or she has a right to pick and choose, maintaining external social bonds but without an integral, interior conversion to the law of Christ.”

Consequently, rather than being transformed and renewed in mind,” the Holy Father noted, “Christians are easily tempted to conform themselves to the spirit of this age [cf. Rom 12:2].” We have seen this emerge in an acute way in the scandal given by Catholics who promote an alleged right to abortion.

We are called to proclaim and embody a world where self-centeredness, greed, violence and cynicism so often seem to choke the fragile growth of grace in people’s hearts.

Our Holy Father urged us to let our daily prayer to the Father—“Thy Kingdom come”—bear fruit in the way that we lead our lives, and how we build up our families and communities.

“Praying fervently for the coming of the Kingdom … means overcoming every separation between faith and life, and countering false gospels of freedom and happiness,” the pope said. “It also means rejecting a false dichotomy between faith and political life.”

Through the sacraments and meditative prayer, we can rediscover the truth and joy of Christian life fully lived for God and for others. By letting the love of Jesus Christ permeate our lives and actions in defense of our vulnerable brothers and sisters, we can transform our nation, building a culture where all people can again hope and trust in life!

Adult stem-cell therapies offer hope for many patients

By Maureen Condic, Ph.D.

When researchers first identified adult stem cells, there was a great deal of excitement.

Adult stem cells were regarded as a “goldmine” for regenerative medicine. Unlike embryonic stem cells, adult stem cells are obtained from readily available sources such as bone marrow, skin, teeth, or blood. Since they are less specialized than embryonic cells, they can give rise to a much wider range of tissue types. Moreover, because they do not arise from zygotes, they can be collected without sacrificing an entire embryo.

Now, however, adult stem cell research is facing hurdles that researchers had not anticipated. The process of converting an adult stem cell into an embryonic-like stem cell, which has little to do with the adult stem cell’s natural niche, is not as straightforward as researchers had anticipated.

Many medical researchers were excited to hear that the patient’s body would not reject the cells.

Third, despite more than 25 years of research, no one has been able to coax embryonic cells to become mature, stable cell types that are useful in the clinic. Some scientists believe that the most promising prospects may lie in the field of induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs), which can be created from an adult cell type. The most recent research suggests that iPSCs may be closer to the characteristics of embryonic stem cells, and therefore may be more useful for treating disease.

Adult stem cells have the potential to transform our nation and build a culture of life. They are able to generate all the cells of the body, and cannot be removed if the patient’s body rejects them. Third, despite more than 25 years of research, no one has been able to coax embryonic cells to become mature, stable cell types that are useful in the clinic. Some scientists believe that the most promising prospects may lie in the field of induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs), which can be created from an adult cell type. The most recent research suggests that iPSCs may be closer to the characteristics of embryonic stem cells, and therefore may be more useful for treating disease.

See STEM CELL, page 14
**Pornography harms individuals, families and society**

By Mark J. Houck  
President of Priests for Life

The starting growth of the pornography industry in the last 30 years through the advent of sexual slavery. Many social ills and behavioral disorders—teenage promiscuity, crisis pregnancy, adultery, divorce, sexual abuse, sexual deviancy, rape and incest—can be linked to the spread of pornography.

The numbers illustrate the scope of the problem:

- In 2000, two-thirds of adult pornography industry's estimated revenue was $97 billion, up from $57 billion in 2000.
- Porn industry revenues are larger than those of the top technology companies combined—Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo!, Apple, Netflix and EBay.
- An estimated 20% of adult Internet traffic is pornography.
- In 2007, an estimated 3 million Americans—of all ages, income levels, professions, and religions—have admitted to visiting an adult website for the first time.

Children aged 12 to 17 are the largest group of consumers of online pornography. It should be obvious from these statistics that many Christians struggle with pornography addiction.

**The dignity of the human person**

Our human dignity and worth come from God, not from our accomplishments or possessions. As Catholics, we understand the beautiful reality that each unique human person is a unity of body and soul, and that our human dignity includes our sexuality. "Our sexuality is more than our gender," writes Bishop Robert W. Finn of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo. In his pastoral letter titled "Blessed Are the Pure in Heart," Bishop Finn explains, "It is part of our person." "It is part of our person," Bishop Finn explains. "It gives us the ability to connect and give ourselves in love to another person. Our human sexuality is an important means by which we can share in the love and creativity of God."

Stem Cells

In the fall of 2007, three independent research groups stunned the world by showing that adult skin cells could be reprogrammed directly into stem cells having all the important properties of human embryonic stem cells. By providing patient-matched stem cells, the induced pluripotent stem cell technique solves the problem of immunorejection. Reprogrammed induced pluripotent stem cells are therefore superior to embryonic stem cells on both ethical and scientific grounds.

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**Addressing porn addiction**

There are practical measures that offer significant hope for those struggling with pornography addiction:

- Decide to get well and resolve to stop viewing all forms of pornography.
- Remove all sources of temptation.
- Be willing to change current duties or habits if necessary.
- Become familiar with the process by which the addictive behavior arises.
- Find a support group or network to help in one's recovery.

Without God's grace, those seeking freedom from pornography addiction may find these five basic steps very difficult, but all believers can seek grace by:

- Praying daily.
- Seeking education and formation in the virtuous, practicing patience and perseverance.
- Turning one's thoughts to God's merciful love when tempted during recovery with images and temptations. Additionally, Catholics are blessed to be able to partake in two great sources of sacramental grace: reconciliation and the Eucharist.

What price are we willing to pay for medical cures? On purely scientific grounds, embryonic stem cell research is not the most effective use of research money, and does not offer the greatest hope to patients. On a more fundamental level, we must not ignore the moral cost of scientific research on human embryonic stem cells, which involves the intentional destruction of human life at its earliest and most vulnerable stage.

Regardless of any potential benefit that this research may offer, as citizens and as Catholics we must ask ourselves: Can medical cures justify the price of destroying human life? (Maureen L. Cordic, Ph.D., is a researcher and associate professor in the Department of Neurobiology and Anatomy at the University of Utah School of Medicine.)

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**Pornography as addiction**

Pornography, the foremost addiction in the world today, is defined as "a psychological addiction to, or dependence upon, pornography, theoretically characterized by obsessive viewing, reading, and thinking about pornography and sexual themes to the detriment of other areas of one's life."

In his book titled Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction, Dr. Mark Lasser explains that sexual addiction is a result of trauma or wounds experienced over the course of one's life. Emotional, physical or spiritual abuse during childhood, he writes, inflicted by family and the culture at large, can trigger an addiction in adulthood.

We need to remember that pornography addiction is an intimacy disorder and that those who are struggling with it are extremely wounded people.

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**Many of the social ills and behavioral disorders plaguing our world today can be linked to the spread of pornography.**

**Pastoral ministry**

It is important for all spiritual fathers to lead their sons and daughters toward freedom and healing. First, educate the parish community about the problem. Priests must equip themselves with the knowledge to speak confidently and passionately about the issue. Two excellent resources for clergy are the pastoral letters by Bishop Loverde and Bishop Finn cited in this story. Pastors can invite men of the parish to form a weekly support group.

Priests also should encourage the parents of young people to take measures to protect their children and teenagers from pornography, especially on the Internet.

"Children deserve to grow up with a healthy understanding of sexuality and its proper place in human relationships," Pope Benedict XVI emphasized. "They should be spared the degrading manifestations and the cruel manipulation of sexuality so prevalent today. They have a right to be educated in authentic moral values, rooted in the dignity of the human person."

The sexual revolution continues to destroy millions of lives. Many marriages have been destroyed, and children have paid the highest price. Let us remember that we engage in this fight for the well-being of our culture and of all humanity, for the souls of pornography's countless victims today and in the future.

(Mark J. Houck is the co-founder and president of the lay apostolate called The King’s Men. For more information about this ministry, log on to www.thekingmen.us.)

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Male grief and trauma follow abortion experience

By Vincent M. Rue, Ph.D.

Abortion has become a personal and social issue of choice for our unwanted, ill-timed and “defective” offspring.

With mainstream mental health professional associations encouraging this procedure by advising that it is psychologically safe, women and men who have embraced abortion as a stress reliever and quick solution to an unplanned, unwanted pregnancy.

Yet the evidence is mounting that abortion carries serious and significant mental health risks for many women.

What about the impact of abortion on men?

With more than 50 million abortions performed in the U.S. since 1973, this is not a rhetorical question. The sheer numbers represent a potential mental health shockwave of personal and relational injury.

Growing interest on how abortion impacts individuals, their relationships and families is evident today.

The first-ever conference on men and abortion took place in 2007, 34 years after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion.

Since then, media reports highlighting various aspects of this subject have been printed in The Los Angeles Times, The Nation and other publications.

Men’s responses to abortion are varied, like men themselves. How abortion impacts men is complicated by the decision-making that precedes the abortion. For men who pressure or encourage the women they care about to have an abortion, troublesome feelings can emerge later on.

In a national Web-based study of 135 men who have experienced an abortion, 48 percent of the men stated that they opposed their partner’s abortion and 69 percent of the men reported moderate to very high stress following the abortion (Rue, Coyle and Coleman, 2007).

While there is much we don’t know about men and abortion, there are some 28 studies on men’s reactions to abortion that are informative.

In one study, most men felt overwhelmed, with many experiencing disturbing thoughts of the abortion (Shostak and M. Clough, 1984).

Research evidence suggests that men are also less comfortable expressing vulnerable feelings of grief and loss, instead either saying nothing or becoming hostile.

A and, of course, because no abortion occurs in a relational vacuum, the consequences of these two factors have considerable implications for men’s relationships with women.

In a review of how abortion impacts relationships, Coleman, Rue and Spence (2007) reported these findings, among others:

• Men tend to exert greater control over the expression of painful emotions, intellectualize grief and cope alone.

• Men were more likely to experience feelings of despair long after the abortion than women.

• Men are more at risk for experiencing chronic grief.

• Male responses to a partner’s abortion include grief, guilt, depression, anxiety, feelings of repressed emotions, helplessness, voicelessness, powerlessness, post-traumatic stress, anger and relationship problems (Coyle, 2007).

• Psychological injury in men following abortion is likely underestimated due to men’s propensity to avoid self-disclosure.

Preliminary findings in a new study found that four out of 10 men experienced chronic post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, occurring on average 15 years after the abortion.

Certain factors predict whether men are more likely to experience abortion trauma:

• whether the pregnancy was desired by them or their partner,

• whether someone else pressured their partner into abortion,

• whether the abortion occurred against his wishes or he didn’t know about it until afterward (Rue, Coyle and Coleman, 2007).

Research evidence suggests that men are more likely to feel despair after a pregnancy loss, including a pervasive sense of helplessness, one of the signs of chronic grief (Stinson, et al., 1992).

It is apparent that men’s lives contain indelible footprints of grief from an abortion, for which he provided an apology, and both will live with the aftermath, regardless of how some may try to celebrate “choice.”

(Vincent Rue, Ph.D., is co-director of the Institute for Pregnancy Loss in Jacksonville, Fla. He is a practicing psychotherapist, researcher, lecturer, and author of a book and numerous articles in professional journals on post-abortion trauma, for which he provided the first clinical evidence in 1981.)
Abortion has decimated African-American population

By Bishop Martin D. Holley
Secretary of Life, Justice and Peace

As an African-American Catholic bishop who was born in a family of 14 children, it should not be surprising that the issue of abortion, particularly in the African-American community, is of extreme importance to me.

My knowledge that my father, mother and siblings were all baptized into the Catholic Church on the same day—June 20, 1934, while my mother was still six months' pregnant—had a lot to do with forming my pro-life attitude. The witness of my parents taught all my siblings and me to respect the dignity of every human person and always welcome the gift of life.

Over hundreds of years, African-Americans have traditionally been pro-life. A pregnant, unmarried couple could count on someone in their family to help raise, love and educate their child well into adulthood. This has happened more than once in my own family.

Today, discerning what is morally correct is a difficult challenge for many people in the African-American community because the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973 "legitimized" abortion as a legal "option." The voices that would normally alarm the community, in the pulpits of many of our predominantly black Churches, are now often silenced or muted.

In my own homilies, I have often referred to African-Americans as an endangered species. Statistics show that abortion has the greatest impact on black, unwed women who live in an urban environment who would be the most support from family, friends or social service networks.

Today, the No. 1 cause of death in the African-American community is abortion. We have lost more than 13 million lives. To put that in perspective, that is one-third of our present black population. Each day, 1,452 black children are lost to abortion.

The abortion challenge in the African-American community is deeply interwoven with many other concerns. The black family constantly strives for social justice in confronting racism, poverty, a lack of education, high unemployment, substance abuse, incarceration, AIDS, teen pregnancy, a lack of affordable housing and many other needs.

These concerns often tend to push the primary moral issue of abortion onto the back burner, when in reality it clearly must be at the heart of our discussion on the survival of African-American people.

Through evangelization, preaching and solid catechesis, the Catholic Church will need to intensify its efforts to reach the broader African-American community. Stated plainly, with abortion in the black family, there is no future, only further extinction.

What can be done?

First and foremost, the local bishop and his diocesan staff need to make the issue of abortion in the African-American community a priority.

This entails a commitment to allocate funds to conduct workshops to train the laity in Pope John Paul II's "Theology of the body" and his encyclical on "The Gospel of Life," along with the encyclicals on Population and Development.

African-American Catholic laity should be trained in the various life issues and become involved with the parish pro-life committee.

We have a profound social justice obligation to continue to provide funding and volunteer support for programs that offer assistance to unwed, pregnant teens, women and families in the black community.

Because the black family has been affected physically, psychologically, emotionally and spiritually by racism and social injustices—and is being damaged even further by the trauma of abortion—there is an urgent need to offer healing to all those involved in an abortion decision.

The invitation of Pope John Paul to women who have had an abortion to resound in every Catholic church.

"Do not lose hope," the pope emphasizes in "The Gospel of Life." "... Give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance," he writes. "The Father of mercies is ready to forgive, and, by his grace, to grant you a hope filled with salvation in his peace in the sacrament of reconciliation.... As a result of your own painful experience, you can be among the most eloquent witnesses of everyone’s right to life..." ([The Gospel of Life], #12).

In addition to caring for those wounded by abortion through the Church’s Projects with chapter ministry, greater emphasis must be placed on helping the Christian family through better catechesis, the sacrament of marriage, the gift of children and the resources of Natural Family Planning. Evangelization is truly the key because it leads to developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to a deeper understanding of his teachings.

The Church should be willing and ready to share its resources, information and catechesis within the African-American ecumenical community.

The culture of death will be defeated in the African-American community and throughout our nation when we—as individuals and as Church—proclaim and witness with our lives to God’s love, the sacredness of human life, and the meaning of human sexuality and marriage.

Let us embrace this task with the urgency and the enthusiasm that it demands!

(Bishop Martin D. Holley is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., chairman of the USCCB Subcommittee on African-American Affairs and a member of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities.)

Advance directives should indicate a will for living

By Stephen L. Mikoich
Secretary of Life, Justice and Peace

In 2005, the President’s Council on Bioethics issued a report critical of living wills in advance care planning.

It questioned whether patients could knowingly elect to forgo life support in advance of a hypothetical future in which they might become incapacitated.

Instead, it called for greater use of proxy directives—appointing family members or friends to make medical decisions for incapacitated patients—as they offered the best hope for accommodating the known wishes and best interests of such people.

Absent from the report, however, was any discussion of the importance of a will for living.

Advance directives are declarations by which individuals may neglect to alter their living wills to reflect changes in health status and medical interventions.

The council contended that living wills could not meet the needs of patients as they become incapacitated. With the advent of life-saving technologies, people became worried that such interventions would merely prolong their dying in an undignified fashion that could drain their families' financial resources.

"The living will was advanced during the 1960s to address concerns. The council contended that living wills could not meet the legal needs their advocates set for them. They may not accurately reflect a person's preferences since individuals are asked to predict their reactions to unknown maladies and medical interventions.

Treatment choices often change over time, yet individuals may neglect to alter their living wills to reflect such changes.

There is evidence that incompetent patients often receive care inconsistent with their instructions.

The council concluded that living wills could not ensure genuinely informed consent because that requires a grasp of facts no one can truly know in advance.

The council called for patients to place their trust in another's judgment to make the best treatment decisions for them, taking their wishes and circumstances into account by means of proxy directives.

A better approach is for both disabled and able-bodied people to complete advance directives that presume in favor of life-support while permitting proxies to forgo such treatment should it become fruitless. Proxies should also consider life-sustaining measures only if death is inevitable and imminent, the measures cause intractable suffering or the financial burden the treatment imposes on families is truly excessive in light of its limited benefit for sustaining patients' lives.

A advance directives should indicate a presumption in favor of a will for living.

(Stephen L. Mikoich is a professor at Temple University Law School in Philadelphia. He is chair-elect of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, and is blind.)
Two Batesville Deanery parishes celebrate 175 years

By Sean Gallagher

NEW ALSACE—It was 1833 and German immigrants who had settled in Cincinnati were starting to move west into southeastern Indiana. Father Joseph Ferneding, himself a German immigrant who was traveling by horseback in the area and began ministering to the new settlers.

He had been ordained just the year before by Bishop Benedict Flaget, the founding bishop of the Bardstown, Ky., Diocese. Bishop Flaget had charged him with the mission of ministering to German-speaking Catholics in north-central Kentucky and southern Indiana, an area of several thousand square miles.

Father Ferneding soon made St. Paul Parish, which he founded in 1833, the base of his operations. A few years later, the town of New Alsace in southeastern Indiana grew up around it.

A few months after Father Ferneding established St. Paul, he founded the nearby St. Peter Parish in Franklin County.

Originally parishes of the Bardstown Diocese, they became part of the Vincennes Diocese when it was established in 1834.

St. Paul Parish

In this year before the archdiocese celebrates its 175th anniversary, St. Paul and St. Peter parishes are celebrating their own special milestones.

A bishop's Daniel M. Buechlein was the primary celebrant on Sept. 7 of a special anniversary Mass at St. Paul Church, which was dedicated in 1838 by the Servant of God Bishop Simon Bruté, the founding bishop of the Vincennes Diocese.

"I joined by your ancestors now in the communion of saints, we are a far larger parish family this morning than the eye can see," said A Bishop Daniel M. Buechlein in his homily. "Your family ancestors and Bishop Bruté, the long line of priests and others who have served you are surely with us in prayer on this great day."

Maxine Klump, a member of St. Paul Parish, was easily able to take the bishop's words to heart.

At 81 and as a lifelong member of the parish, she has lived through almost half of her parish's history of service that he has inherited.

But she also carries with her the memories of her ancestors.

Like the memory of her grandmother, who died in 1964. "I remember how she would help with the event when she was 47 and the mother of eight children, she received such heartfelt support when Richard, her husband of nearly 27 years, died in a farming accident."

"There were dozens of offers of somebody to come in and harvest the grain," Fussner said. "It was the support that was there that meant so much—all the hugs, just the knowledge that everybody cared."

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St. Peter Parish

Father Ferneding founded St. Peter Parish in Franklin County about eight miles from New Alsace, a few months after St. Paul Parish was started.

The descendants of many of the charter members of the parish are still parishioners. Franciscan Sister Margie Niemer, St. Peter’s parish life coordinator, said it is a “real thrill!” for her to be leading a parish that has such tangible historical roots.

She said that this history came to life for her recently when the parishioners pitched in—much like their ancestors would have done 175 years ago—to do part of the construction work for an addition to the parish’s community center.

“The parishioners did the construction of the restrooms on every Wednesday evening from the second week of September until the second week of April,” said Sister Margie. “One or more parishioners would fix supper for everybody (each time).”

For years, members of St. Peter’s have also pitched in for the parish’s annual Labor Day picnic.

Juliana Wilhelm, 60, a mother of 11 and a lifelong member of the parish, recalled how she would help with the event when she was a student at the parish’s school, which has since closed.

“Labor Day was a big day for our parish,” she said. “Then Tuesday would come along and it was back to school. We all took a break to help clean up.

“We were part of the community, and so we all helped and chipped in the week before Labor Day peeling potatoes and all that kind of stuff with our parents and our grandparents.”

St. Peter parishioners will gather on Oct. 18 to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Batesville Deanery parish.

At noon, a parade on the roads around the parish will precede a fair featuring pioneer crafts and music on the parish grounds. Food will be available for visitors during the fair. A special 175th anniversary Mass will start at 4 p.m. with Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein scheduled as the primary celebrant.

The way that St. Peter’s parishioners come together to help their parish in happy times also occurs when a parish family experiences tragedy.

As a lifelong member of the parish, Mary Jane Fussner had seen that happen on many occasions.

But in 1999, when she was 47 and the mother of eight children, she received such heartfelt support when Richard, her husband of nearly 27 years, died in a farming accident.

"There were dozens of offers of somebody to come in and harvest the grain," Fussner said. "I probably had a freezer full of food that was given to me to feed the kids.”

Then she attended her husband’s funeral at the parish’s church.

"The church was overflowing with people …,” Fussner said. “It was the support that was there [that meant so much]—all the hugs, just the knowledge that everybody cared.”

(For more information on the Oct. 18 anniversary celebration at St. Peter Parish, 1207 East Road, Brookville, call 812-623-3670.)
Father of Therese Bippus, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Sept. 7. BLEDSOE, Clinton A. great-grandfather of one. Betzner. Foster father of Lynn of Julia (Saunders) Betzner. Beech Grove, Sept. 22. Husband Most Holy Name of Jesus, J. David, John and Thomas, 84, page. connection to it; those are unless they are natives of the and religious sisters and The Criterion. Order priests before the week of publication; please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday Please submit in writing to our page.

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“My heart surgery at St. Francis was the difference between life and death.”

At 33 years old, Chris knew he would eventually need surgery to replace a calcified heart valve. However, he had no idea how urgent it was until his wife encouraged him to attend an Ask the Doc program and to have a cardiac screening, sponsored by the St. Francis Heart Center. “Your symptoms begin so gradually, you think what you are feeling is normal,” he said. With only a small incision, Chris was able to make a quick recovery. Thanks to the work of the heart team at St. Francis, Chris can rest assured he will be there to watch his three small children grow up. “I told them Daddy’s heart had a bad boom-boom before, and has a good boom-boom now.”

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- Nationally renowned heart surgeons and cardiologists that treat high-risk, complex cases
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