Full-court faith

Catholic upbringing is at the heart of Pacers’ coach Jim O’Brien’s life

By John Shaughnessy

Indiana Pacers’ head coach Jim O’Brien smiled and shook his head in awe as he told a revealing story about his father—the same story he shared recently with his fellow parishioners during a Sunday Mass at St. Mary Church in Indianapolis. O’Brien noted how his father, Bill, supported his wife, Sis, and their eight children by working as a police officer for 22 years in “the toughest precinct” in Philadelphia. “He saw a lot of bad things,” O’Brien recalled about his late father.

Yet even with the horror and tragedy that he witnessed on a daily basis, his father was one of the most joy-filled people that O’Brien has ever known.

“My father just had a way of appreciating all the little gifts from God in life,” O’Brien noted. “He was very Christ-centered. His joy came from the fact that everything in his life revolved around Christ.”

And because he saw his life as a gift from God, Bill O’Brien never faltered from sharing his gifts with the Church.

“My father never made more than $22,000 a year in his whole life,” O’Brien said. “And we had a household of 10 people. He always joked that if he died, we’d have enough money to last until next Tuesday. But he always believed that you really needed to support your parish. The Church always got 10 percent of [his income]. He never talked about it, but it just was obvious in his actions how he felt about it. He was a very generous guy.

The story of his father’s influence on him is one of the insights that the 56-year-old O’Brien shared in an interview with The Criterion. O’Brien also talked about his faith, his Catholic education, his marriage, his efforts to change the make-up of the Pacers, and the way that his youngest child, who has Down syndrome, has touched and changed his family’s life.

Here is an edited version of the conversation with O’Brien, who is starting his second season as the head coach of the Pacers.

You graduated from Roman Catholic High School and St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia. You were also a heck of a basketball player at Wheeling Jesuit University and the University of Dayton. All Catholic schools. What impact has Catholic education had in your life?

O’Brien: It’s been my whole foundation. When I grew up, I was one of eight children who lived three blocks from our parish, St. Stephen’s in Philadelphia. And my parents were very much into their faith and made sure all eight of their children grew up knowing how important our Church was. And they made sure the sacraments were a huge part of our lives. It’s really the center of everything that is important in my life.

You mentioned your mom and dad. Do you think you learned from your parents about your faith and making it a part of your life?

O’Brien: My mother was one of 11 children. She had a teacher’s aide for Kids Care at the parish.

Sister Juliana Nwokoro, a member of the New Evangelization Sisters of Mother of Perpetual Help from Nigeria, reads one of the general intercessions during the archdiocesan World Mission Day Mass on Oct. 19 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Her order’s convent is located in St. Lawrence Parish. She ministers as a teacher’s aide for Kids Care at the parish.

World Mission Sunday Mass has multicultural flavor

By Mary Ann Wyand

Many countries. Many cultures. One faith.

Catholics from Vietnam, Myanmar, India, the Philippines, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, France, Mexico and the United States offered prayers of thanksgiving for the evangelizing efforts of missionaries abroad and in Indiana during the archdiocesan World Mission Sunday Mass on Oct. 19 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

Many people came to worship God dressed in colorful costumes from their homeland. During the liturgy, prayers were offered in Spanish, Burmese, French, Tagalog, Igbo and English.

Brightly colored banners symbolized the World Mission Rosary introduced by Archbishop Fulton Sheen in 1951. Green represented the forests and grasslands of Africa. Blue was a symbol of the ocean surrounding the Pacific islands. White was chosen for Europe, the Holy Father’s home continent. Red called to mind the fire of faith that brought missionaries to America. Yellow was a reminder of the morning light of the East for Asia.

Benedictine Father Julian Peters, administrator of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish, invited the gathering to “come together [in prayer] to celebrate many cultures—the diversity and breadth of the human experience—all made holy, all created

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Vol. XLIX, No. 4 73¢

October 24, 2008

Synod on Bible can ‘change Catholic culture,’ says archbishop

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The world Synod of Bishops on the Bible “is meant to change Catholic culture,” said Archbishop Terrence Prendergast of Ottawa.

All Catholics should have a Bible, all Catholics should read the Bible and all Catholics need to have regular prayer experiences where they “open the book and let it become the word of God” speaking to them, he told reporters on Oct. 21.

The archbishop met journalists shortly after the synod leadership had presented the first draft of propositions the synod members will ask Pope Benedict XVI to consider when writing his traditional post-synodal document.

Synod officials said the 253 members of the synod, working in small groups with experts and observers, had written 254 separate propositions. By dropping repetitive suggestions and combining related texts, the first draft contained 53 proposals.

The 53 draft items, Archbishop Prendergast said, included the needs to promote closer collaboration between Scripture scholars and theologians, to improve homilies, to strengthen relations with the Jews, to promote “lectio divina” (a process of praying with and reflecting on Scripture), and to support the translation and distribution of Bibles.

The draft will be discussed in the synod’s small groups and amendments may be suggested before the final list is drawn up and put to a vote on Oct. 25.

Synod members also will vote on Oct. 24 on the final version of their message to Catholics around the world. Archbishop Prendergast said it is likely to include a simple, one-page preamble and a longer, more detailed treatment of the synod’s theme, “The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church.”

Archbishop Prendergast, a member of one of the synod’s three French-speaking groups, said his group has decided to begin its meetings with a half-hour of “lectio divina,” listening to a passage of Scripture, reflecting on it, praying about it and sharing what it meant.

“It was a very interesting experience for me,” he said. “Bishops find themselves listening to the word of God and called to...”
in the image and likeness of God.”

In his homily remarks, Father Julian reminded the people that, “The Holy Spirit dwells within us— as we gather today on this World Mission Sunday—to renew us in faith [and] in our mission as disciples.”

During his homily, he noted that many Catholics grew up with the concept that the missionary work of the Church only happens in exotic places, and missionaries are brave souls who move far away lands to proclaim the Gospel, teach people about God and show them how to pray.

Today, our global society is much more interconnected, he said, and our Church is much more in communion and communication with people in distant places.

“We... understand that the missionary work of the Church isn’t just... far away,” Father Julian said. “...A hundred years ago... the United States was mission territory. We were the [recipients] of the riches of civilization, the material and spiritual riches of distant lands, who supported the preaching of the Gospel and the building of the Church in this country.”

Catholics must continue the mission of the Church, he said, by supporting missionaries abroad with prayers and donations as well as engaging in missionary work in our neighborhoods and communities.

“The mission, the challenge, of discipleship calls each one of us, in our own way, in our own place and situation, to teach children how to pray, to hand on our tradition of faith,” Father Julian said, “to break open the building of the Church in this country.”

Catholics must continue the mission of the Church, the archbishop said. 

The synod wants Catholics to realize that the word of God is God speaking to them and listening to them, he said. To speak about the word of God is to speak about a call to a relationship of listening to God and speaking to him through prayer, he said.

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“If that happens, it would be a big, big step,” the archbishop said.

During his homily, he noted that many

Church, or if you know of anyone

such misconduct, please contact

the archdiocesan victim

assistance coordinator.

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The Synod continued from page 1

conversion.”

One bishop actually said he might have to change how he relates to some aspects of his ministry, he added.

A archbishop Prendergast said the most basic message he expects to come from the synod is that “the word of God is not an aspect of the mission of the Church. It is the foundation and the guiding principle of all that we are about.”

“God reveals himself to us in his word, not in a book, but in a word that speaks to us,” he said.

“The written text we have of the Scriptures is a privileged locus [place] for that,” but the word of God became incarnate in Jesus Christ, speaks through the tradition and teaching of the Church, cries out to us from the word through the poor, and is even echoed in creation and art, the archbishop said.

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“Dr. Dahl maintains that she would not want someone else to raise her child—so she chooses to have them killed. This is hardly in the best interest of her offspring,” Hogan added.

The Catholic Church’s teaching is that life begins at conception, but from a legal perspective, when life begins became muddled with Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton. In those 1973 rulings—which legalized abortion virtually on demand—the majority of the U.S. Supreme Court justices said they did not know when human life begins.

The Synod continued from page 1

Longtime Cathedral Kitchen and Food Pantry volunteers Bruce Schaller of Indianapolis and Dolores Morley of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg accept distinguished service awards for their home mission work from Benedictine Father Julian Peters, administrator of St. Peter and Paul Catholic Parish, at the conclusion of the World Mission Sunday Mass on Oct. 19 at the cathedral.

and Food Pantry volunteers. St. Mary’s parishioner Dolores Morley of Brownsburg and Bruce Schaller of Indianapolis were recognized for more than 10 years of volunteer service to the Cathedral Parish food ministry for homeless people in Indianapolis.

Latinos seen as voting group key to outcome of presidential election

WA SHINGT ON (CNS)—As pollsters and political analysts try to predict the outcome of the election, Latino voters have become a target for intense attention—by tea-leaves readers as well as the candidates.

Latinos have been swing voters in the last several elections—with majorities supporting Democratic Vice President Al Gore in 2000 and Republican President George W. Bush in 2004.

With population growth, Hispanics’ percentage of the electorate has steadily risen. Frustration over the failure of Congress to pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill also has led many longtime legal permanent residents to become aware of issues that are affected by immigration policy, she said. For instance, “one community meeting in South Bend, Ind., drew 700 people, all immigrants, about half of them children,” she said in an interview with Catholic News Service.

"Deportations, funding for public transportation, housing, these issues really affect immigrants," Barrett said.

The Republican presidential nominee may be an Arizonan, but Elias Bermudez, director of Immigrants Without Borders in Phoenix, which helped run the registration drives targeted at immigrants, said when the work first started, “We thought we would register about half as many people as we did.”

Hundreds of paid staff people, largely funded by grants from foundations, such as the Carnegie, Ford and Four Freedoms organizations, have been assisted by thousands of volunteers around the country, she told CNS.

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TheNationalCouncilofLaRaza(“It’s time. See and vote!”) is registering millions of voters through Web sites, newspaper inserts, door-to-door campaigns, and programs in churches and community centers.

One week this fall, nearly 1 million copies of Spanish-language newspapers across the country included a voter registration form and instructions on how to file it.

Democracia USA, a nonpartisan Hispanic voter registration and civic engagement organization, reported substantial percentage increases in the number of registered Hispanic voters in states where it was organizing the registration drive. For instance, the number of registered Hispanic voters in Nevada has more than doubled, bringing the group to 11 percent of the population.

What will bring all those new voters to the polls is another matter.

That is what the Gamaliel Foundation, a nonpartisan organization focused on organizing the faith communities, has been trying to do with the Hispanic voter. The foundation has been working on helping voters become aware of issues that are affected by elections, such as housing, transportation and immigration policy, she said.

Nonpartisan public meetings, follow-up phone calls, help getting to the polls and information, such as what ID they will need to vote, are the kinds of help Gamaliel is offering in many places, Barrett said. Response has been unexpectedly strong, she said. For instance, “one community meeting in South Bend, Ind., drew 700 people, all immigrants, about half of them children,” she said in an interview with Catholic News Service.

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In Maricopa County, which encompasses the Phoenix metropolitan area, he said there are 169,000 new Latino voters since 2004. 

“In the last three months, my organization alone has registered over 4,000 people,” he said.

Holli Holliday, executive director of the We Are America Alliance, which led some of the registration drives targeted at immigrants, said when the work first started, “We thought we would register about half as many people as we did.”

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The art of making decisions in a presidential election year

Responsible stewardship means making decisions to develop, use and share the gifts that God has given us. How we spend our time, exercise our talents, and save and spend our money.

Stewardship requires that we discern God’s will for our development and the use of all his gifts—material and spiritual.

It also means that we have to make decisions in circumstances that are not always clear. God gives us the gift of freedom. We are called to use this gift maturely, knowing that we will be held accountable for our decisions.

How do we make responsible choices in an election year? How do we exercise the precious gift of freedom wisely and responsibly— as good stewards of all God’s abundant blessings?

Our choice is a difference: Who and what we vote for matters.

A knowledge of this is the first step in responsible decision-making. When we realize that, our humanity is diminished and society suffers. When we fail to choose, even among imperfect options, we abandon our freedom to the decree of fate. Justice is impaired, and freedom loses something of its luster.

The great German Catholic philosopher Josef Pieper, in his book The Four Cardinal Virtues, points out that prudence (the art of making the right decisions) is “the molder and mother of all virtues, the circumplex and resolute shaping power of our minds which transforms knowledge of reality into realization of good.”

This means that all other virtues—including justice, courage and temperance—exist only because of prudence, “the precondition of all that is ethical good.” In other words, unless we make good decisions, we cannot be done. Courage is impossible and everything is interuretate (out of balance). But how do we make right decisions?

The key to right decision-making is realizing what we are doing—realizing the truth and separating substance from “spin.”

According to Pieper, “If you do not know how it is with things, how they stand, you are practically unable to choose what is ethically good. And it is easy to have a ‘good intention’ to be just, for instance, does not suffice at all.”

It is essential to right decision-making.

The first step is to be informed—about the issues, about the candidates’ positions, and about the likely consequences of actions proposed by political parties and their nominees.

Making decisions in an election year would be a lot easier if everyone told the truth. If there were no spin doctors or attacks. If campaign papers and political parties communicated clearly and unambiguously where they stand on things. And if all the issues were completely “black or white.”

Making decisions based on campaign slogans, media images and sound bytes is irresponsible. It is also not good stewardship of the responsibilities that we have as citizens in a free society.

The second step in responsible decision-making is to make sure we have an informed conscience. Catholics who truly understand the teaching of our Church, and who strive to integrate these principles into their daily lives, are called upon to make difficult, often unpopular, decisions based on fundamental moral principles.

To be good stewards of our civic responsibilities, we need principled thinking, sound judgment, and an authentic understanding of who we are as a nation governed by the rule of law and dedicated to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Every Catholic voter should read the U.S. bishops’ 2007 publication Faithful Citizenship. In this very helpful guide to election year decision-making, the bishops outline the rights and responsibilities of “faithful citizens” who seek to make right decisions.

A clear understanding of Catholic teaching on issues of morality and social justice is needed to make responsible decisions. The challenge of all of us, especially in an election year, is to reconcile what we believe as individuals with the common good.

If there is a genuine conflict between our individual consciences and the authentic teaching of the Church, it is our responsibility to seek reconciliation—through careful thinking, prayerful examination of conscience and the willingness to make tough decisions.

We hope that in this election year, as always, faithful citizens throughout the United States will use all their God-given gifts and talents to wrestle with the vitally important issues facing our nation and the world at large, and make decisions that are wise, faithful, just and clearly beneficial to the common good.

May Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, pray for us and intercede for us during this time of national discernment and inspire us by her faithful witness to the truth.

—Daniel Conway

Letters to the Editor

One party has a plan to protect unborn children

Sen. Barack Obama has never been introduced to a pro-life law that he could tolerate. His voting record for life issues is a big zero.

And during his brief career as a state senator in Illinois, he managed to make a name for himself by voting against the Born-A-Live Infant Protection Act—four times! He actually gave one of his famous speeches in defense of his vote.

The Born-A-Live Infant Protection Act A pparently, at Christ Hospital in Chicago, abortions were being performed on mid- to late-term pregnant women. Some of the babies actually survived the abortion, which, of course, means that the procedure “failed.”

Nurse Jill Stanek described how she and other nurses desperately tried to find time to save these infants until they died but, more often than not, they were simply thrown in a garbage pail and left to die.

Stanek’s testimony led to the law that would protect these innocents if they manage to survive. Obama voted against it.

He later claimed that his vote was procedural, and that he intended to protect Roe v. Wade. Several versions of this bill passed statewide and federally, and Obama voted against life every time.

In April 2007, Obama was a co-sponsor of the “Freedom of Choice Act” (FOCA), which would wipe out all state regulations and laws concerning abortion. If he is elected, and the Democrats retain control in Congress, FOCA is a very real threat to a pro-life candidate.

Make no mistake about it: States that have chosen life and voted for pro-life politicians have saved lives.

Mississippi reduced its abortion rate by 50 percent when it enacted three pro-life laws in the 1990s. They actually had to vote for pro-life politicians to get this done.

President George W. Bush has appointed two pro-life Supreme Court justices. Obama has promised to appoint only Supreme Court justices who will support Roe v. Wade.

Any would-be pro-lifers like to defend their votes for pro-abortion candidates by dictating other problems they are concerned about. Somehow, the mass slaughter of unborn children every single day does not trouble them, or the Iraqi war, or the environment.

I have even been accused by a relative of pandering to the Sen. John McCain campaign by spreading falsehoods about Obama. I don’t need to spread falsehoods about him. His record on abortion could not be clearer, and it is a matter of public record. Why do you think every pro-abortion group known to man wholeheartedly endorses him?

The Republicans and Democrats both have a plan for the economy, the environment, gas prices and the Iraqi war. However, only one of these parties and its candidates has a plan to protect unborn children.

Choose life because it is right this November!

Joyce Deltz

Richmond
Catholic faith is a stable and unchanging support for us

Seventy-five years ago on Oct. 24, my Mom and Dad were married at St. Joseph Church in Jasper, Indiana. They were married at 6 a.m. weekday Mass by the pastor, Benedictine Father Basil Heuser. It was a simple wedding because of the economic conditions of the time. And if you wanted Father Basil to witness your marriage, you went to the 6 a.m. Mass as that was the pastor’s Mass.

Mom died shortly before the 50th anniversary of their marriage. It was a simple wedding, yet Mom and Dad’s commitment in marriage was profound and that was evident throughout the years. Their life together was simple, even in their more prosperous years. They were only able to have two children, and that was a disappointment.

Once my brother and I were on our way to the Jasper Elks Club for a seminary—Mom resented teaching at Holy Family School, and Dad continued being active in the Boy Scout movement and in the St. Vincent de Paul Society. They were active in Holy Family Parish. When all is said and done, both parents ended up serving a lot more children than their own.

I mention the simple way in which they lived. I was a senior in high school (seminary) before they bought a television. I recall in their later years they loved to watch virtually all televised sports. Enjoyed “The Lawrence Welk Show” on Saturday nights.

Their Sunday treat was to go to a local restaurant for lunch followed by a Sunday drive. In October, they would pick me up at Saint Michael and we went to the south of the county, followed by a stop at a nearby apple orchard. Their life was simple. They did trade Ford cars on occasion, but that was the big purchase.

Their lives were simple, yet they were content. My folks placed a high value on working hard. They provided a simple but good life for my brother and I, and they expected us to work hard as well. We both grew to appreciate their example and what they did for us.

Both Mom and Dad had a certain serenity about them which I always admired. And so did other folks who knew them well. All through the years I could count on their calm manner, even when times could seem tough or kind of dark.

This calm spirit was also true during the evening of their lives when illness began to set in.

I think of Mom’s determination to do the rehabilitation after hip replacement, despite the pain and slow progress. I have mentioned my Dad’s gentle smile old age before.

Faith in God and love for the Church had been a part of their lives since they were young. The pressures on our children and young folks, including young adults, are certainly greater than what my brother and I experienced. It is not that there weren’t the usual stresses associated with growing up and maturing in our day, but society was more supportive of spiritual and moral values. Parenting today is all the more challenging.

Faith as a way of life in our German Catholic community was taken for granted. Maybe faith and simplicity were more feasible because the waves of materialism and secularism had not washed over our society to the degree that it has in recent decades.

I think it is fair to say that you married couples live in substantially more difficult times. Simplicity as a way of life is more difficult to sustain. It is certainly not fostered as a value in society.

Faith in God is virtually privatized by our culture; that is to say that God is often dismissed from public life, perhaps acceptable for weekend piety but that’s about it.

The pressures on our children and young folks, including young adults, are certainly greater than what my brother and I experienced. It is not that there weren’t the usual stresses associated with growing up and maturing in our day, but society was more supportive of spiritual and moral values. Parenting today is all the more challenging.

My Mom and Dad lived in a time when the spiritual values of the family were taken for granted. It worked.

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

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

La fe católica resulta un apoyo estable e inmutable para nosotros

El 24 de octubre hace setenta y cinco años mis padres se casaron en la iglesia de San José de Jasper, Indiana. Se casaron en una misa entre semana a las 6 a.m., celebrada por el pastor, el padre benedictino Father Basil Heuser.

Fue una boda sencilla debido a las condiciones económicas de la época. Y si se quería que el padre Basíl celebrara el matrimonio, debía ser en la misa de 6 a.m., porque esa era la misa del padre.

Mamá murió poco después del aniversario número 50 de su matrimonio. Fue una boda sencilla y sin embargo, el compromiso matrimonial de mamá y papá era profundo y se hizo evidente a lo largo de los años.

Su vida juntos era sencilla, incluso en los años más prósperos. Sólo pudieron tener dos hijos y eso fue una decepción.

Una vez que mi hermano y yo nos entregamos al servicio de la iglesia, sobre todo como sacerdotes y religiosos.

Esta calma espiritual también prevaleció en sus últimos años de vida. En nuestra comunidad católica alemana no se daba el justo valor a la fe como estilo de vida. Quizás la fe y la sencillez eran mucho más valiosas ya que las olas de materialismo y secularismo no habían inundado nuestra sociedad del modo que lo han hecho en décadas recientes.

Considero que es justo decir que las parejas de casados viven hoy en día en tiempos mucho más difíciles. La sencillez como estilo de vida es mucho más difícil de preservar. Ciertamente nuestra sociedad no la fomenta como un valor.

La fe en Dios está prácticamente privatizada por nuestra cultura; por lo general se elimina a los de la vida pública, quizás es acceptable para la devoción del fin de semana, pero nada más.

Las presiones que sufren nuestros niños y jóvenes, incluyendo los jóvenes adultos, son definitivamente mucho mayores que las que experimentamos mi hermano y yo. No es que en nuestra época no existieran las presiones comunes asociadas con el crecimiento y la madurez, pero nuestra sociedad no valoraba tanto los valores espirituales y morales. La crianza de los hijos hoy en día es mucho más difícil.

Rezo mucho por los padres y especialmente por las jóvenes parejas de casados. Tal vez los valores culturales hayan cambiado, pero recordemos que nuestra fe católica resulta un apoyo estable e inmutable para ustedes.

Los exhorto a valorar la fe como una ayuda necesaria para la travesía de la vida en cualquier circunstancia.

Tal vez no siempre tengan ganas de participar en los sacramentos porque la sociedad no los toma como algo importante.

Pero créanme, la fidelidad a la Eucaristía y el sacramento de la penitencia hará la diferencia en sus vidas. Ruegué por ellos que tengan la oportunidad de probarlo.

Funciona.

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

Arzobispo Buechlein
Arquidiócesis de Indiana
Leavenworth, seguido de una parada en un campo de manzanas. Llevaban una vida sencilla. Ocasionalmente intercambiaban coches Ford, pero esa era una compra temporal.

Sus vidas eran sencillas y sin embargo estaban contentos. Mi padrastro les daba gran valor al trabajo arduo. Nos proporcionaron una vida sencilla pero buena, a mí hermano y a mí, y esperábamos que nosotros también trabajáramos arduamente. Ambos crecimos y a mí, y esperábamos que nosotros también trabajáramos arduamente. Ambos crecimos y a mí, y esperábamos que nosotros también trabajáramos arduamente. Ambos crecimos y a mí, y esperábamos que nosotros también trabajáramos arduamente. Ambos crecimos y a mí, y esperábamos que nosotros también trabajáramos arduamente. Ambos crecimos y a mí, y esperábamos que nosotros también trabajáramos arduamente. Ambos crecimos y a mí, y esperábamos que nosotros también trabajáramos arduamente.

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en octubre

Youth Ministers: that they may always encourage youth to consider service in the Church, especially as priests and religious.

(Archbishop/Arzobispo Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.)

LEVENWORTH, KANSAS

The Criterion  Friday, October 24, 2008

P. O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en octubre

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

(Archbishop/Arzobispo Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.)

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Oct. 24
Thurs. of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, 1401 N. 31st St., Indianapolis. Creche sale, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Information: 317-251-8250.

Oct. 25
Sun. 2 p.m., Cherry Street Baptist Church, 100 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. Celebration of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus. "Eating Our Traditions," Mass, 9 a.m.; children's Mass, 11 a.m.; breakfast following Mass, 11:15 a.m.; vespers service, 6:30 p.m.; dinner, "Expanding Our Tradition," 5-7 p.m., $8 adults, $4 children, no charge. Information: 317-571-9886.

Oct. 26
Sat. 6:30 p.m., Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. "Celebrating Our Legacy," alumnas, teachers and alumnae, Mass, 10:30 a.m. Information: 317-927-7845 or www.catholiccemeteries.cc.

Oct. 27
Wed. 6:30 p.m., St. John the Baptist Parish, 1720 E. Harrison St., Indianapolis. "Holiday Bazaar, Cookout and craft show, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Information: 317-342-4504.

Oct. 28
Sat. 6:30 p.m., St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, 2081 E. County Road 820 S., Greensburg. "Communion Meal," county fair food and drink, "Begin the Journey," Mass, 9 a.m.; Mass, 10:30 a.m.; vespers service, 6:30 p.m.; dinner, 4-7 p.m., $8 adults, $4 children, no charge. Information: 502-842-4545.

Oct. 28-29
Pray to Our Lady of Fatima to prepare for her canonization. Nov. 11-12. Information: 317-888-1892 or spirituality@thedome.org.

VIPS

William Joseph and Mary Gayle (Leban) Beckman, married, 175 years ago.

St. Pius X Parish Indianapolis, All Souls Day, 3:45 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439.

Nov. 4
Sun. 11 a.m., St. James Church, 616 S. Missouri Ave., Indianapolis. "Election night spaghetti dinner," 4-7 p.m., $5 children 6-12, $2 children under 6, $5 children 6-12, $2 children under 6, $20 per family. Information: 317-826-6000.

Nov. 5

Nov. 9
Sat. 10 a.m., Holy Redeemer Church, 2822 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. "Navigating Life's Changes," workshop, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Margaret Pike, R.N., and Benedictine Sister Maria, presented, $50, includes lunch. Information: 812-367-1411 or spasotti@archindy.org.

Nov. 10
Sun. 11 a.m., St. Pius X Parish Indianapolis, All Souls Day, 3:45 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439.

Thur. 2:30 p.m., St. John the Baptist Parish, 1720 E. Harrison St., Indianapolis. "Election night spaghetti dinner," 4-7 p.m., $5 children 6-12, $2 children under 6, $20 per family. Information: 317-826-6000.

Nov. 17
Thurs. 6:30 p.m., St. Thomas More Parish, 4050 E. 38th St., Indianapolis. "Folks and Fun" party, 4-7 p.m. Information: 317-353-0899.

Nov. 21
Sun. 9 a.m., St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, 2081 E. County Road 820 S., Greensburg. "Communion Meal," county fair food and drink, "Begin the Journey," Mass, 9 a.m.; Mass, 10:30 a.m.; vespers service, 6:30 p.m.; dinner, 4-7 p.m., $8 adults, $4 children, no charge. Information: 502-842-4545.

Nov. 26
Sun. 10 a.m., St. Pius X Parish Indianapolis, All Souls Day, 3:45 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439.

Events Calendar

Oct. 24

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Archbishop Chaput criticizes Obama for his stand on ‘abortion rights’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Denver has called Democratic Sen. Barack Obama “the most committed abortion rights” candidate to lead a major party’s presidential ticket since the U.S. Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision in 1973.

At the same time, Archbishop Chaput accused Democratic-friendly allies of Obama of “believing in abortion as a ‘right’ of women.”

The archbishop refuted the arguments advanced by the likes of Catholic Douglas Kmiec, a constitutional law professor at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., and former legal counsel to Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

Kmiec has been a vocal supporter of Obama since last spring. His book, Can a Catholic Support Him?: Asking the Big Question About Catholic Social Teaching and the Democratic ticket for repackaging their arguments in an attempt to “neutralize the witness of the bishops and the pro-life movement by offering a ‘Catholic’ alternative to the Church’s priority on sanctity of life issues.”

“Frankly, I just got tired of hearing outsiders and insiders tell Catholics to keep quiet about our religious and moral views in the big public debates that involve all of us as a society,” the pope said.

There was another reason for the book as well, Archbishop Chaput said.

“Fundamentally, I just got tired of hearing outsiders and insiders tell Catholics to keep quiet about our religious and moral views in the big public debates that involve all of us as a society,” he said.

The archbishop also addressed widespread questions about his book Render Unto Caesar, which was published in August 2008 and was frequently cited by Kmiec in his defense of Obama.

“Unfortunately, he either misunderstands or misuses my words, and he couldn’t be more mistaken,” the archbishop said of Kmiec.

Archbishop Chaput said that the book had its origins after the 2004 election when he was approached by a young attorney who ran for office as a pro-life Democrat and nearly won in a heavily Republican district. The lawyer asked the archbishop to put his thoughts about faith and politics into a form that other young Catholics could use.

“For his part, Kmiec in his defense of Obama, unfortunately, he either misunderstands or misuses my words, and he couldn’t be more mistaken,” the archbishop said.

Archbishop Chaput said that the book had its origins after the 2004 election when he was approached by a young attorney who ran for office as a pro-life Democrat and nearly won in a heavily Republican district. The lawyer asked the archbishop to put his thoughts about faith and politics into a form that other young Catholics could use.

“The goal of Render Unto Caesar was simply to describe what an authentic Catholic approach to political life looks like and then to encourage American Catholics to live it,” he explained.

There was another reason for the book as well, Archbishop Chaput said.

“Frankly, I just got tired of hearing outsiders and insiders tell Catholics to keep quiet about our religious and moral views in the big public debates that involve all of us as a society,” he said.

That’s a kind of bullying, and I don’t think Catholics should accept it.”

Pope urges doctors to respect patients’ value and human dignity

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Whether a patient wants physicians to do everything possible to save his or her life or simply wants ordinary care, doctors must form a “therapeutic alliance” with each patient, Pope Benedict XVI said.

So many diseases today are treatable and even curable that there is a risk of abandoning patients “the moment one senses the impossibility of obtaining appreciable results,” the pope said on Oct. 20 in a meeting with the Italian Society of Surgeons.

The society met the pope during its annual convention in Rome.

Pope Benedict told the surgeons that every patient, even those who are incurably ill, have value and have a dignity that must be honored.

“Respect for human dignity, in fact, requires unconditional respect for every single human being, born or unborn, healthy or ill, in any condition,” the pope said.

Pope Benedict said that the patient’s life is a gift God gives to the doctor at the beginning of life. The doctor’s role is to help the patient to see the value of life and the value of helping others.

The pope said that a doctor must always have the patient’s best interest in mind and must never be guided by personal interests or by the demands of the patient’s family or others.

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WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Catholic Campaign for Human Development suspended funding a nationwide community organizing group after it was disclosed on Oct. 15 that ACORN founder Wade Rathke, had embezzled nearly $1 million from the organization and its affiliates in 1999 and 2000.

Dale Rathke stepped down from his position with the organization in June when the matter became public; no charges were filed against him. Wade Rathke stepped down as the group’s lead organizer at the same time, but remains chief organizer for ACORN International LLC.

The suspension covers all 40 ACORN affiliates as the group’s lead organizer at the same time, but remains chief organizer for ACORN International LLC.

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Gay marriage: Locating the question for the common good

By H. Richard McCord
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Gay marriage is a significant question that needs to be discussed, and most important in the discussion is how the issue is framed. The U.S. bishops, in "Forcing Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," urge people to study the issues before they vote in the coming elections. Whether homosexual persons should be allowed to marry each other is one issue." The central issue is about the nature and purposes of marriage as fundamental social structure and civil institution. It is not first a question about civil rights or discrimination or achieving the full social ends for homosexual persons but about stabilizing a lifestyle. The Church position begins with the teaching of the natural law and the related truths about human nature, the nature of persons, and the nature of relationships. The central theme of the teaching about marriage starts with this understanding of the basic purpose of marriage. The Church teaches that marriage is a theological, social, and natural institution that is both a divine vocation and a human institution, with both divine and human purposes, such as the procreation and education of children. Thus, the Church teaches that marriage is a two-person, heterosexual union, and that the purpose of marriage is to complement and enrich the love and union between the spouses and the procreation of children. No other human relationship, no matter how loving or caring or generative it might be, can make this claim or deliver it. Marriage is the union of a man and a woman. This is a truth discoverable by human reason. It is written in the law of nature, and in the language of the human body and spirit. It is a truth enshrined from the beginning of time. Church teaching about marriage starts with this truth. Since marriage is a fundamental social structure based on human nature, neither the Church nor the state can change it at its core. "Marriage, and the family it produces, is a society that precedes all other societies. It is an institution we don't own, but rather one that we receive. This does not mean that the Church and state cannot regulate marriage, for example, placing minimum age limits, but it does mean we are not free to alter its basic structure. Marriage of a man and a woman makes a unique contribution to society. It is the fundamental pattern for male-female relationships. It models the way women and men live interdependently and commit, for the whole of life, to seek the good of each other. The union also serves the common good of society. It brings forth the next generation and does so by providing the best conditions for raising children, namely, the stable, loving relationship of a mother and father present only in a marriage. Other relationships can and do build up the common good, but they don't do it in a complete sense what marriage does. Should there be same-sex marriage? The Catholic Church frames this question in terms of the nature of marriage and its contribution to the common good. As a result, the Church concludes that same-sex marriage is, by definition, an impossibility, a contradiction in terms. Some people seek to locate the issue of same-sex marriage in terms of the nature of marriage and its contribution to the common good, but they don't do in a complete sense what marriage does. This means, among other things, that the state may fashion laws to protect the rights of these individuals and to provide social benefits. Examples include access to employment, housing, health care, joint ownership of property, and the ability to make medical decisions for another. There are social benefits and rights to be guaranteed for every individual. But the remedy for specific cases involving injustice—the lack of benefits or rights—cannot be an even greater injustice, namely, to change the definition of marriage. Marriage is oriented to serving the common good, not to providing rights and benefits to individuals within that relationship. It is not necessary or even desirable, therefore, to tamper with a fundamental social structure in order to protect individual rights and to grant all citizens their legitimate social benefits. The only question that must be understood as a question about marriage is has it been received from the Creator; subsequently received from each generation throughout history. To perceive it as a question of justice for individuals begins the conversation on the wrong path. (H. Richard McCord is executive director of the Secretariat of Lailty, Marriage, Family Life and Youth of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.)

Bishops establish new ad hoc committee to promote, protect marriage

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A new ad hoc committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will work to raise awareness of the "unique beauty of the vocation of marriage" and the many threats it faces today, according to its chairman. Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., said Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, U.S. Conference president, asked him to chair the committee, whose work is being funded by the Knights of Columbus. In addition to its educational component, the committee's work will involve public policy advocacy efforts against moves to redefine marriage through legislation or the courts. In a telephone interview from Chicago on Oct. 14, a archbishop Kurtz said precise details about the committee's strategies, whether its membership will be expanded and how long its work will continue remain to be determined by its members, who have only held one conference call thus far. "Cardinal George felt it was important to begin with a small group that can move quickly," said the archbishop, who also chairs the USCCB Subcommittee on Marriage and Family Life. Other ad hoc committee members are Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport, Conn., chairman of the bishops' Committee on Doctrine, and Auxiliary Bishop Gabino G.quispe of Columbus, who serves as a consultant. Other plans include the redistribution of the 2003 USCCB statement "Between Man and Woman: Questions and Answers About Marriage and Same-Sex Unions" to networking sites. In a letter to his fellow bishops announcing the initiative, Archbishop Kurtz said the conference wants to "make known the Church and for society." †

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House

An evening with
Tony Avellana
December 11, 2008
Dinner 6:30 pm • Concert 7:30 pm

Christian music artist Tony Avellana returns to Fatima Retreat House for a beautiful and inspirational mini-concert for the Advent season. Join us for this 3rd annual dinner and concert.

$35 per person
Register online at www.archindy.org/fatima
Find out more about Tony at www.journeysong.net

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...
Without conception, there is no life

When does life begin? That seems to be the question at the heart of the debate for those who are wanting to lead our country. We are asked to put people into high positions who do not honor precious, innocent life. When does life begin? At conception, of course. Without conception, there is no life.

It is naïve to think the abortion problem can be solved by legislating as if it were a public health matter. It is like putting a bandage on a wound that has already caused a tragedy.

But we should not lose sight of the strengths of the U.S. health care system. We may or may end with something worse. And we need to have all the facts. Sen. Barack Obama, if elected president, will legalize abortion on demand. This means there will be no restrictions on abortion. A woman at any time can get an abortion, even without parental consent for young girls, and from conception to birth.

In an article I read recently, it brought to light that if every Catholic in the U.S. voted for pro-life politicians, Roe v. Wade and stop this war on the innocents.

Pray for the wisdom to change what we can change.

I am not against helping our elected leaders to improve our health care. But it is important to note that perhaps one-third of the uninsured—many of them young and healthy—could afford coverage, if only we paid for it. Another third of the uninsured are already eligible for existing government programs, such as Medicaid.

Yes, there is a problem, but there are many things we can and should do to extend coverage without requiring a government-run system for all. Other countries may have universal coverage, but these countries do not have better access to care. Countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom have not solved their health care problems. They also have less access to new medicines. The U.S. spends more per capita on health care for the uninsured than most other developed countries spend on care for those with insurance.

The way that government systems ration health care should cause Catholics to stop thinking in terms of 'political correctness.' The document goes on to point to the statistics that 47 million Americans have no health insurance.

Dr. Janey Mersch
Brookville

Sisters' statement in line with Church law

Sister Marilyn Campbell, a member of the Sisters of Social Service, expressed support for Senator Barack Obama.

Voting our conscience in this election

In the Oct. 10 issue of The Criterion, an editorial by John F. Krik on page 8, entitled "Abortion and Politics," it was stated that "Sister Simone's statement was not in the 'image and likeness' of a loving God, and that we are endowed by that same God with the 'right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'" These points listed above are not my opinion, simply the facts. The following is my opinion.

As Catholics, we have a moral obligation to stand up for the right to abortion. We should accept the fact that we are not going to win every battle, but we should be willing to fight for the "least of these." I hope you will be comfortable with your answer.

Jerry Hersch
Brookville

The letter writer hopes to end abortion by making it illegal while ignoring the infant. Mortality rate due to lack of funding for health care and nutrition among the poor.

The way that government systems ration health care should cause Catholics to stop thinking in terms of ‘political correctness.’

An analysis of reforming health care is naturally going to focus on the problems, and the health care system surely has room for improvement, the U.S. health care system is not by any means close to providing the kind of care our citizens need and deserve.

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The letter writer hopes to end abortion by making it illegal while ignoring the infant. Mortality rate due to lack of funding for health care and nutrition among the poor.
brother that was a priest and two sisters that were nuns. At points in their lives, both were missionaries. One was a missionary in Peru. The other was a missionary in India. They were always around our house and they had a really positive impact on all of us, as well as my parents did.

My father was a devout Catholic, but was not a person that beat you over the head with his religion. He was more of a guy who let you feel your own way. It was interesting. Sometimes I get talks and I talk about my parents. My mom was the dean of discipline and my dad was the dean of happiness. Even though my parents were very Catholic, they would just try to pass on the joy of the Catholicism and why the sacraments were so important to all of us.

Any specific memories in your Catholic education that stood out to you?

O'Brien: I was always an altar boy. I think the turning points were around the sacraments. First holy Communion was always a huge part of our lives. In college, I was a business major but my favorite subjects were theology and philosophy, just because I liked the logic that you do with them, and to go to a deeper level than normally.

When Father Michael O'Mara at St. Mary Parish in Indianapolis and your wife, Sharon, to speak during the Mass for the parish's Legacy for Our Mission campaign, was that something you had to think about or was that something you wanted to do? O'Brien: When we were looking for a place to live in Indianapolis, we knew we wanted to live downtown. When we said it's important for us to be near a parish, we were told that we probably wouldn't want to be parishioners at St. Mary's because basketball, at least the way I go about it during the season, is somewhat all-consuming. It's challenging for Sharon and she just raised the three best kids.

We had a strong family and a strong marriage before Caitlyn and she helped solidify it even more. She's been an absolute joy for us, especially with a child with special needs is a great challenge and it was even more of a challenge for my wife because basketball, she's doing the grunt of the work. She did a brilliant job of it because Caitlyn is just a special person and she's a person to be known. She has just flourished.

A significant effort has been made to change the perception of coaching in the Pacers this year. Besides talent, what attributes do you look for in players? O'Brien: I'm trying to look at the seven habits of highly effective people. You look for people in your organization—who are the kind of people that you want to improve, who want to live the Gold Rule. It doesn't matter what you do for a living, they're the people you want to be around. Certainly, they're the kind of people we want in the Pacers' organization.

My high school coach at Roman Catholic was Speedy Morris, and Jack McKinney was my coach at St. Joe's. They were outstanding coaches and Christian gentlemen. I was also lucky enough to be married into the family of Jack Ramsay (a former Pacers' head coach and a member of the Basketball Hall of Fame), who is the same way—outstanding coach but more an outstanding gentleman. These are the guys who are the mentors in my life. If you played for Speedy or Jack McKinney, you had to be men of character. O'Brien: Especially during the season. We have a routine on game days where we practice in the morning. And because I get the afternoon off, we try to go to the noon Mass in the chapel at St. Mary's. Sharon tries to go on a fairly regular basis 12 months a year. When we have the luxury of going to daily Mass, that's the best part of our lives.

Why is daily Mass so important to you? O'Brien: It's because Christ is the center of our lives. Sharon and I are very much focused on the Eucharist. It's the center of our faith. If you can have a day where you're receiving the Eucharist, that's a good day. When we go to daily Mass together, that strengthens everything about us, including our marriage.

How much has being a Catholic defined your life? O'Brien: It's a large part of who I am. I just wouldn't be the same person without that influence. I couldn't even imagine life without having the Eucharist available. It's who we are in our marriage. I couldn't even fathom what life would be like if we weren't centered around our faith.

St. Mary's pastor says coach and his wife are 'authentic' people

By John Shaughnessy

Father Michael O'Mara laogs as he remembers the first Sunday that Indians Pacers' head coach Jim O'Brien came to worship at St. Mary Parish in Indianapolis.

A fall that Sunday Mass during the summer of 2007, Father O'Mara had been talking to different people in the church when O'Brien, his wife, Sharon, and their daughter, Caitlyn, approached the pastor to introduce themselves.

"He didn't hit me right away who he was when they said they were the O'Briens," Father O'Mara recalls. "I recognized his face but I didn't recognize the coach. In the following weeks, I read about him and put two and two together. I thought that was really neat. I cool guy. It's really neat to be with us at St. Mary's.

To pastor thought it was even more special when Jim and Sharon O'Brien volunteered to speak during recent weekend Masses about their love of the sacraments and testimonies in support of the parish's efforts to raise funds for the Legacy for Our Mission campaign. For Our Children: For Our Parish and the Future capital campaign. In its 150th year of being a spiritual home for immigrants, St. Mary Parish seeks to raise $2.2 million for building renovations, a preschool and a medical clinic.

"When you meet Jim and Sharon, you won't meet any people who are more authentic," the pastor says. "They are very sincere, they want to do their part. They are people who truly see the opportunity before us as a parish. They see us as a developing, diverse parish. Having the O'Briens here is a true blessing because of their authenticity." That authenticity shows in their love and encouragement for Caitlyn, who has Down syndrome.

"With Caitlyn, they open doors so she can have opportunities in her life," Father O'Mara says. "Caitlyn volunteers here on Thursdays with mailings and different activities in the office. She's a very special young woman. You can see her joy and Sharon in her. She are very, very special relationship. That's a commitment to their family and their family is incredible and they want to create that sense of family in the community where they live. We're going to do it with the foundation, and Sharon is part of that committee. They just participate in everything the parish has been about. They haven't traveled, they'd be at noon Mass," Father O'Mara says. "I remember the opening game of last season. Coach was here. I said to him, "Coach O'Brien, on a day like this, you know about anxiety." He said, "Oh, yes." He puts everything in perspective. When he talks, he always talks about a team effort. It's not about us. It's about us and how we work together.

That commitment to family, community and the Church makes the O'Briens powerful witnesses of their faith, the priest says. It has also made Father O'Mara a fan of the Pacers again.

"I'm not a new person in the Pacers," the pastor says. "I feel I know what it's like to be a parent watching a child play a sport. I want to see him and the Pacers do well. When I watch Coach O'Brien on the sidelines, I feel the sense of pride, a sense of unity.

"I see his passion, his faith and the way he grew up being expressed in the way he coaches. During a game, he maintains a true sense of calm, I think that's so much rooted in his faith Tuning into English. The Criterion Friday, October 24, 2008
Senior citizen, teens connect through community service project

By Mary Ann Wyand

Pansy Mitchel smiled as she watched 15 members of Roncalli High School’s varsity volleyball team scrape and then paint the peeling wood siding on her old garage.

Mitchell, who is 89, has lived in her modest Victorian house on Regent Street south of downtown Indianapolis for 62 years.

This painting project on Sept. 27 marked the first time that Angels from the Heart volunteers from throughout the city had helped her with home maintenance during Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish’s annual community service program for low-income neighborhood residents.

“She told me she was 89 years old and that she needed someone to paint her faded garage,” Mitchell said. “It’s been good to have them here.”

While the teenagers painted the garage, Mitchell said, she enjoyed listening to the girls talk, laugh and sing a variety of songs.

“I’ve lived here since 1946,” Mitchell recalled. “My husband, Charles, and I were married before World War II. He served in the Navy in the Pacific Theater during the war. We had three little kids when he went into the service.”

Health problems limit her mobility now, she said, and she could not afford to hire someone to paint the garage.

Roncalli seniors Katelyn Dawson, Ashley Holmes and Jordan Sudzina, all members of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, said the team enjoyed helping with the Angels from the Heart program.

“I’m really glad that we all came out here together to help,” Katelyn said. “It’s important to us to help others and represent Roncalli volleyball in the community.”

Ashley said this volunteer project was “a good bonding experience” for team members, who practiced that morning to prepare for the Marion County girls’ volleyball tournament before painting Mitchell’s garage.

“We had to know that we helped her,” Ashley said. “It’s cool … that a bunch of people care about helping others.”

Their coach, Missy Marsh, said it is important for the girls to “come together in their faith … and build teamwork skills in this way.”

Roncalli’s varsity volleyball team members were among 450 Indianapolis area volunteers who helped with the ninth annual Angels from the Heart program.

John Heinzelman, a St. Jude parishioner who serves on the Angels from the Heart organizing committee, said two Roncalli religion teachers, Gerard Strihy and Sean Warrington, were instrumental in getting so many Roncalli students to participate in the volunteer project.

“They truly enjoyed themselves and the experience, and grow from that,” Heinzelman said of the teenagers.

“Obviously, the homeowners are just ecstatic to have this help. We had 50 service projects that we completed all over the neighborhood with 450 (adult and teenage) volunteers … The Angels from the Heart program is a tremendous opportunity for these kids to help others.”

Heinzelman said his family is from Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish and he enjoys coming back to his old neighborhood to help the residents.

“We painted four properties, did five concrete projects and had seven remodeling projects this year,” he said. “People from the Indianapolis parishes were instrumental in cleaning up the entire neighborhood— sweeping every street and cutting the grass in every front yard, literally hundreds of homes, in the Sacred Heart neighborhood—for the first time. We want to make an impression on the neighborhood residents that we are here to try to help them make this neighborhood better.”
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Refer to the above image for more details.
We are called to listen attentively to the word of God

By David Gibson

Is it possible to “hear” someone’s words without really “listening” to them? That’s an important question, Simply being present in the room while someone speaks isn’t enough to make a person a good listener.

Much is written about how to become a good listener. Listening is considered an essential skill in human relationships, especially in marriage and parenting. The concern is that weak listening skills may weaken good relationships.

Good listeners focus on the person who is speaking. This requires taking a real interest in what the other person says—taking the focus off oneself and turning attention to the other person. Experts on marriage say such listening is a way that spouses can demonstrate their respect and love. A good listener tries to hear more than words, in hopes of hearing what is present in the other person’s heart.

One obstacle to good listening is a busy mind that focuses on other matters while someone is speaking. A suspicion that the other person is talking about something unimportant is another obstacle. Or a person may quietly think, “I’ve heard this before,” or “This has nothing to do with me.”

Good relationships call for listening skills, but all communication is a two-way street. Good relationships also demand that when we speak we attempt to be clear, to make ourselves understood by others.

But what does this have to do with the Bible or eucharistic celebrations?

As the working paper developed for the October 2008 world Synod of Bishops in Rome made clear, God enters into a dialogue with people through the Scripture readings during the Liturgy of the Word at Mass. The Bible was selected as the theme for this Synod.

In every true dialogue, a point comes when someone speaks and others listen actively—not passively—in order to respond well. Wouldn’t this imply that to proclaim the Scripture fully in the Liturgy of the Word—in the dialogue initiated at that point by God—that we need to exercise good listening skills?

A good listener tries to hear more than words. The Liturgy of the Word during the Mass is less a time for meditation or catechesis than for a dialogue between God and those present.

Thus, the Liturgy of the Word clearly has a lot to do with communication. Dialogue is a form of communication. But as we’ve seen, communication is complicated for human beings. Communication makes demands on those who speak and those who listen.

The words were addressed to me,” he explained. “Today I must come to your house.”

Father Cantalamessa noted that, “It was about me that it could be said, ‘He went to stay with a sinner!’ And it was about me, after having received him in Communion, that Jesus said, ‘Today salvation has entered into this house.’”

We can be struck often by the “relevance” of the biblical readings at Mass, according to Father Cantalamessa. “It is to us, there present, that the word is addressed,” he said. “We are called to be clear, to make ourselves understood by others.”

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In every true dialogue, a point comes when someone speaks and others listen actively—not passively—in order to respond well. Wouldn’t this imply that to proclaim the Scripture fully in the Liturgy of the Word—in the dialogue initiated at that point by God—that we need to exercise good listening skills?

According to the working paper, while learning more about the Bible is vital, the Bible is not just another book to learn about.

The paper explained that:

• The Liturgy of the Word during the Mass is less a time for meditation or catechesis than for a dialogue between God and those present.

• Scripture and the liturgy converge in the single purpose of bringing the people into dialogue with the Lord. “Maximum attention” should be given “to a clear, understandable proclamation of the texts.”

• Pope John Paul II made similar points in his 1998 apostolic letter titled “Observing and Celebrating the Day of the Lord.” He wrote: “The risen Lord is encountered in the Sunday assembly at the Eucharist table of the word of God and of the Bread of Life” because Christ speaks when sacred Scripture is read.

• Thus, the Liturgy of the Word has some life today.

• Maybe we have a plan for God and find it hard to take in God’s plan for us.

• Maybe we think that we “have heard this before and don’t need to hear it again.”

Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa, known as the preacher of the papal household, spoke in February 2008 to Pope Benedict XVI and others in the Roman Curia about listening to the readings during Mass.

Fathers Cantalamessa described how what happened in biblical times can happen today. He recalled listening one day to the Gospel reading about the tax collector Zaccheus (Lk 19), who climbed a tree to see Jesus when he passed by on the road.

The preacher was struck at Mass that day by this reading’s “relevance,” which he said inspired him to take action.

“The words were addressed to me,” he explained. “Today I must come to your house.”

Faith Alive! is the digital companion to the print magazine, The Paper. For more information, visit faithalive.com.

Have you ever participated in a Bible study group? If so, how did it help you? If not, why not?

“Yes, I’ve participated in many. They’ve helped deepen my faith, and taught me how. Catholicism and the Bible are completely related. ... They go hand in hand.”

(Terry Bolduc, Manchester, N.H.)

“I’ve even led them. They have deepened my knowledge and interest, and led me to the work I do today as the RCIJA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) director at our parish.” (M’Arthyd Chase, Bakersfield, Calif.)

“... It did help, especially hearing other peoples’ perspectives. When you see how things have touched others’ lives and hearts, it opens your eyes to a whole new aspect of ... the Bible.” (Susanne Manocchia, Portland, Maine)

“In our church, it was a program called ‘Alpha.’ Our pastor has tried different programs, but this is the best.”

Any question you can think of is answered logically through the program.” (Sandy Buzby, Morrisville, Pa.)

Lend Us Your Voice

A upcoming edition asks: How is Christmas a time of light for you?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to coreen@catholincnews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C., 20017-1100. A supplement to Catholic newspapers published by Catholic News Service, 3211 Fourth Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. All contents are copyrighted © 2008 by Catholic News Service.
From the Editor Emeritus/John E Fink

Positive saints: Rose Hawthorne Lathrop

(Twenty-second in a series of columns)

Rose Hawthorne Lathrop was born in 1851, the daughter of novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne and Sophia Peabody. As a child, she traced her ancestry to the Mayflower at Pilgrim Point. In 1873, Rose married George Parson Lathrop and they had a family of four children. From 1893-1903, she became an acclaimed poet and short-story writer.

When she was 29, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. When she was 40, and George both converted to Catholicism. However, George died. When she was 40, she and George both separated from him. He died of liver disease three years later.

Through all this, Rose was searching for a greater purpose in life. Her parents had instilled in her a compassion for the poor, and she realized that she needed help so she could help others.

She went to the door and visited the homes of the poor. Not that he exactly ignored them. Even if people ignored them, she realized that she needed help so she could help others.

Now, of both these subjects were newsworthy, of course, but their juxtaposition struck me as a lesson in what human life is, can be or should be. But then, maybe I am just old and crabby. I mean, I wish we could have heard by now that Lucius Newson was a 93-year-old Catholic convert who decided his retirement years to serving the poor. Not that we would have noticed him previously since he was a Baptist minister many years before he moved to Indianapolis. Lucius Newson was a real life example of what we can do as few of us can do. Dorothy Day and Blessed Teresa of Calcutta come to mind, but there are so many more of people who have.

Lucius truly believed that when we have faith, God will provide everything we need. Not only did he believe it, he acted upon it.

He spent his days looking for people in dire straits, and he didn’t have to look far, unfortunately. He worked at providing clothing, food and clothings for them, and scavenged clothing, jobs, transportation and medical care for them. When things really got bad, he tried to provide it promptly, cheerfully and without condemnation.

Lucius was a humble retired minister, he had nothing much to share. But he had the faith of God and other people. It is the fulfillment of efforts by sports enthusiasts, business leaders, and ordinary people to help others produce the latest thing in sports palaces. It is a tribute to the pursuit of entertainment, luxury and superiority among cities, it cost a tremendous amount of money, but supporters felt it was definitely worth it. And I am not sure if I really believe it.

Now, I love to watch sports as much as the next woman (which truthfully may not be as much as some), but I found the contrast between the importance of Lucius and Lucas to be a bit disturbing. I thought, what do we find people need in our lives that are necessary for a satisfying life? With what causes do we want to share our attention and our resources?

It isn’t just about money. Certainly, the amounts spent on the stadium would have come unfurnished by the poor. But that is the same tried and tested as asking to sell off Vatican treasures to feed people. It is not a fine idea, but it is certainly not a bad idea. As Jesus noted, the poor will always be with us and their needs will not go away.

Rather, I think it is a matter of perspective. Are we more interested in serving the poor or in serving our own appetites? There is nothing wrong with enjoying sports competitions, but do we do it at the cost of neglecting what we say we believe as Christians?

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

The Bottom Line/Antoinette Bosco

Author heralds the popes who ‘revolutionized the Church’

A conversation with Catholic author Jean Malaouf quickly puts you on a spiritual journey.

Did you just read the latest of his books, "Pope John XXIII, the Pope who changed the Church," and you wanted to meet the man who could have come from the heart of the Church leader that I have most admired? A Bishop, a Pope, and yet another decision—I would join them, just to be the best possible, a Bishop, a Pope, and yet another decision—I would join them, just to be the best possible human relationships.

The major appeal that John XXIII would make as pope was to "underestimate the great urgency of world peace," Malaouf continued. "He wanted the Church to perceive its message, their minds, and their hearts, and their decisions and actions—their entire life. Only a deep transformation was capable of bringing about a new order of human relationships.

I thought, "Maalouf wanted to transform the Church as a primary concern, a belief that peace, and social justice had its precise origins in war—the horrid, forgotten World War I. The most important and great effect on Pope John was when he then was a young priest assigned to a medical unit in a primitive military hospital in Italy in 1944. He tried to comfort injured and dying men shrinking in pain.

At the age of 80, and again in 1963, according to Maalouf. He called that time the most moving experience of his life, long to work for peace in other places—was a truly holy and most moving experience of his life, long to work for peace in other places—was a truly holy and most moving experience of his life, long to work for peace in other places.

Debra Tomaselli lives in Altamonte Springs, Fla. She has several diocesan newspapers. Her e-mail address is dtomasett@diocesefl.org.
The Book of Exodus provides this weekend with its first reading. In ancient Jewish tradition, Exodus came from Moses. Through Moses, in a most special way, it is the very word of God since Moses represented God and was the link between God and the Chosen People.

Through Moses, God gave the Hebrews directions for every aspect of their lives. This weekend’s reading from Exodus addresses certain very specific realities in daily life, such as the lending of money.

Primary in the Hebrew religion from the beginning was a respect for each person, a respect founded on the notion of God as Creator and final governor of human lives. Every person has the right to be respected and treated justly. No one can be exploited or mistreated, not even strangers or enemies.

Of course, the details are important, but of even more importance is the spirit underlying human obedience to God.

For the second reading, the Church presents a reading from St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

The apostle Paul’s advice is firm. He urges obedience to God. He offers his own devotion to the Lord as an example and insists that following Jesus brings joy.

Bearing witness to Christ—evange-lization—to use a theological term often appearing in modern times, is an opportunity for Christians. Paul urged the Christian Thessalonians to be a model for all the people of Macedonia and Achaia. He exhorts the Thessalonians that their faith, their turning away from idols, was an inspiration to many people.

St. Matthew’s Gospel provides the fast reading. It is a familiar and beloved opportunity for Christians. It is a familiar and beloved opportunity for Christians.

The Lord’s reply is obvious. It is a familiar and beloved opportunity for Christians.

St. Matthew’s Gospel provides the fast reading. It is a familiar and beloved opportunity for Christians.

The prayers we used to know?

Do we see God's goodness

Though clouds have veiled our eyes

M ust there be a rainbow

Each time we scan the skies

We are aware at all

That there is much to gain

When we accept our lot

And not merely the past

What that happens to our part—

The prayers we used to know:

Do we see God's goodness

Though clouds have veiled our eyes

M ust there be a rainbow

Each time we scan the skies

By Dorothy M. Colgan

(Dorothy M. Colgan is a member of St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad. The crucifix of St. Paul Church in Pass Christian, Miss., was framed by broken glass in the heavily damaged worship space in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina in 2005. The parish is located in the Diocese of Biloxi, Miss.)
Mary and saints

Depictions of saints surround an image of the Virgin Mary in the rose window at the Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva in Rome. The Catholic Church marks the Feast of All Saints on Nov. 1. The feast commemorates all those in heaven, especially those with no special feast.

Providing Sister Mary Joana Walsh taught school for 34 years at St. Mary-of-the-Woods College, Indianapolis. She was 99.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Sept. 5 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at St. Mary-of-the-Woods. The words declared to the sisters’ cemetery.

The former Ellen Catherine Walsh was born on Nov. 24, 1928, in Chicago. She joined the congregation of the Sisters of Providence on May 24, 1934, and the former St. John Academy in 1957-58. She also served as a librarian and did clerical work before retiring from active ministry in 1989 and returning to the motherhouse. In 2006, she began the ministry of prayer full-time with the senior sisters. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876.
Vatican: Stop pressuring pope on Pope Pius XII’s beatification

The Vatican and other Church officials have reiterated their strong opposition to beatification of Pope Pius XII, saying it would set back Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

Father Lombardi emphasized that Pope Pius XII is being remembered for his wartime record, supported by some Jewish experts, have made recent highly publicized efforts to defend Pope Pius and his wartime record.

At the same time, Jewish groups have reiterated their strong opposition to beatification of Pope Pius XII, saying it would set back Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

By Octavio Hirose

The nearly 200-page hardcover, tells the story of Catholicism in central and southern Indiana from the arrival of Jesuit missionaries in the mid-1700s to the present day.

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Making history

Thomas Day is first director of religious education to take sabbatical

By Sean Gallagher

A fer being a director of religious education (DRE) at St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis for 31 years, Mary Jo Thomas Day was tired. And who could blame her? When she started her ministry at the parish in the late 1970s, she oversaw a religious education program with eight catechists and 80 students.

Three decades later, the program has 55 catechists and more than 500 students. Thomas Day also oversees a burgeoning children’s Christian initiation program that has dual tracks in English and Spanish.

Although she was making history by taking the sabbatical, Thomas Day was more interested in viewing how they would be the same for our lay ministers. “They were rich times of personal renewal, and I can see that for myself. I wouldn’t have thought of it because it hadn’t been done,” Msgr. Koetter said.

“In my 31 years as a priest, I have been blessed with two sabbaticals,” Msgr. Koetter said. “They were rich times of personal renewal, and I can see how they would be the same for our lay ministers.”

Although she was making history by taking the sabbatical, Thomas Day was more interested in viewing history and taking it into her soul.

And for a woman of faith like herself, there is no better way to bring the Bible alive, Msgr. Koetter notes, than through a sabbatical, after several years of dedicated and successful service, can provide a DRE with an even deeper well.”

Amy McClelland, a third-grade catechist at St. Monica Parish for the past four years, saw that firsthand. “People in catechetical ministry need a deep well to draw from to serve our Holy Land experiences. “There’s a greater interest in bringing the Bible alive,” Msgr. Koetter said. “And everyone told me that I didn’t look so tired. I must have looked terrible.” Thomas Day said with a laugh.

Msgr. Koetter said that, through some creativity, providing a sabbatical for a DRE is a real possibility for lots of faith communities.

“Of course, the parish would continue to pay salary and benefits, but with a proper blend of timing and volunteers, responsibilities can often be covered temporarily.”

Thomas Day gained a new appreciation for one more thing from her sabbatical—that, at 66, retirement isn’t too far away.

“I love the work, but I will know when I’m ready to retire,” she said.

Although the sabbatical helped her see the end of the road, Thomas Day said her time off helped her value the road she has left.

“I think that’s what I learned, too, in my sabbatical. Be prepared to something more?” she said.

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