Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Last week, the bishops of the Catholic Church of the United States met in Baltimore for an annual fall assembly. There has been much discussion about the recent election and how it might affect life issues. The bishops voiced hope for President-elect Barack Obama and his administration at our meeting, but we also pointed out possible obstacles to our desired unity. We welcome this historic moment of transition in our country’s history, and we look forward to working with our new president and Congress.

The unity that we desire will be impossible to achieve, however, if the new administration aggressively seeks pro-abortion policies. Such policies can only alienate all of those Americans who believe that life begins at conception and ends with a natural death.

As Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, said, “The common good is not the sum total of individual interests; it is achieved in the working out of a common life based upon good reason and good will for all.” I agree wholeheartedly with Cardinal George and would like to share with you a statement that the bishops unanimously approved given by Cardinal George concerning this matter.

The statement follows.

“If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do its builders labor; if the Lord does not watch over the city, in vain does the watchman keep vigil” (Ps 127, vs. 1).

“The Bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States welcome this moment of historic transition and look forward to working with President-elect [Barack] Obama and the members of the new Congress for the common good of all. “Because of the Church’s history and the scope of her ministries in this country, we want to continue our work for economic justice and opportunity for all, our efforts to reform laws around immigration and the situation of the undocumented, our provision of better education and adequate health care for all, especially for women and children; our desire to safeguard religious freedom and foster peace at home and abroad. The Church is intent on doing good, and will continue to cooperate gladly with the government and all others working for these goods. “The fundamental good is life itself, a gift from God and our parents. A good state protects the lives of all. Legal protection for those members of the human family waiting to be born in this country was removed when the Supreme Court decided Roe v. Wade in 1973. This was bad law. The danger [that] the Bishops see at this moment is that a bad court decision will be enshrined in bad legislation that is more radical than the 1973 Supreme Court decision itself. “In the last Congress, a Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) was introduced that would, if brought forward in the same form today, outlaw any ‘interference’ in providing abortion at will. It would deprive the American people in all 50 states of the freedom they now have to enact modest restraints and regulations on the abortion industry.”

U.S. bishops voice hope for Obama administration, point to possible obstacles to desired unity for all

Parishes offer practical and spiritual support for the unemployed

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The impact of the wave of layoffs in firms, factories and offices, financial companies and the automotive industry can be felt in parish halls or church basements across the country on any given weeknight.

That is where many of the newly unemployed go for practical and sometimes spiritual advice.

Just outside Detroit, at St. Andrew Parish in Rochester, a job support group began last year with about 20 participants. Now, at least 80 people attend the twice-monthly meetings, according to Betty Dobies, chair of St. Andrew’s Career Mentoring Ministry, which has a partnership with 13 church groups in the Detroit area.

“We started out thinking we’d review resumes and interview techniques, but we found that the main thing people really need is support,” Dobies said. During the sessions, parish volunteers.

Economic statement, blessing in the womb, Missal translation approved by U.S. bishops

WASHINGTON (CNS)—At a statement concerning fears about laws and changes in regulations on abortion that might advance under a new Democratic-run Congress and White House was the major news that came out of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ annual fall meeting on Nov. 10-12 (see above story), the U.S. bishops took action in several other areas.

Among other meeting actions, the bishops approved a statement on the economy, a blessing for children in the womb and a second section of the Roman Missal translation. They gave free task forces the authority to develop Church priorities up to 2011 on issues ranging from strengthening marriage to addressing cultural diversity in the Church.

They also approved a budget of $144 million, a 2.25 percent increase from 2008, and they elected a conference secretary-elect and chairman-elect for five committees: pro-life activities, cultural diversity, communications, doctrine and national collections.

In their statement on the economic crisis, approved on Nov. 11, they reminded people that “we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers. We are all in this together.”

Adopted in a voice vote, the brief statement released by Cardinal Francis E. George on behalf of the bishops noted that “hard times can isolate us or they can bring us together. “As pastors and bishops, we see the many human and moral consequences of this crisis,” the statement said. Though the impact of the crisis is greater in some regions of the country, families all across the nation are losing their homes, workers are losing their jobs and health care coverage, retirement savings are threatened, and people are losing the sense of hope and security, it continued.

But the Church will continue to “reach out to those in need, stand with those who are hurt, and work for policies that bring greater compassion, accountability and justice to economic life,” the statement said. The bishops concluded by offering prayers for anyone who is “hurting, anxious or discouraged in these difficult times.”

Despite some continued criticism that the latest English translation of the third edition of the Roman Missal is plagued by obscure wording and sentences that are too long, the U.S. bishops approved another lengthy section of the translation on Nov. 11.

Needling affirmation by two-thirds of the U.S. bishops.
**Hyde Amendment restricting the federal enforcement of laws banning procedures such as abortion was outlawed, as was the ban on trimester-specific precautions that would further divide our country, and the church should be in opposition to evil.**

This is an evil law that would further divide our country, and the church should be in opposition to evil. A version of the Hyde Amendment restricting the federal funding of abortions would be abrogated. FOCA would have lethal consequences for prenatal human life.

FOCA would have an equally destructive effect on the freedom of conscience of doctors, nurses and health care workers whose personal convictions do not permit them to consent to the private killing of unborn children. It would threaten Catholic health care institutions and Catholic physicians. It would be an evil law that would further divide our country, and the church should be in opposition to evil.

There was little debate before the vote and no amendments could be made to the translated psalms. In an action related to key priorities established earlier by the bishops, the primate decided to grant five task forces the authority to tackle issues ranging from strengthening mission to addressing cultural diversity in the Church through 2011, and approved a host of goals for each task force for the next year.

The task forces are on faith formation and sacramental practice, strengthening marriage, the life and dignity of the human person, cultural diversity in the Church, and the promotion of vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.

The task forces are expected to be submitted to the full body in June.†

The bishops also decided by voice vote to review the USCCB regulations on statements and publications in liturgical settings. The decision also must be confirmed by the Vatican. The translation now goes to the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments for “recognitio” or confirmation. The first section of the missal came before the bishops in 2006, and was confirmed by the Vatican earlier this year.

To fill a gap in existing prayer books, the U.S. bishops overwhelmingly approved a liturgical service in English and Spanish for blessing children in the womb. A chorbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., praised the new blessing as “a tangible way to witness pastorally and sacramentally to the life of the unborn child,” and said it could also serve as an opportunity for parishes to bring together expectant couples for mutual support.

The document also must be sent to the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments for “recognitio” or confirmation. The English-language version was approved 223-1, and the Spanish-language version 224-0.

The U.S. bishops later chose the revised Grail Psalter produced by the monks of Conception Abbey in Mo. in liturgical use in the U.S.

The Nov. 12 vote was 205-5 in favor of accepting a recommendation of the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship to adopt the Grail Psalter for use in all liturgical settings. The decision also must be confirmed by the Vatican.

The election is misrepresented ideologically as a referendum on abortion, which is an issue of equal respect for all human life. The election is misrepresented ideologically as a referendum on abortion, the unity desired by President-elect Obama and all Americans at this moment of crisis will be impossible to achieve.

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By Sean Gallagher

On May 3, 2009, thousands of Catholics across central and southern Indiana will gather at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis for a Mass that will celebrate the 175th anniversary of the founding of the archdiocese. At that time, they will join voices in singing a hymn text composed by Benedictine Father Harry Hagan specifically for the anniversary.

"Come and See the Many Wonders," which is set to the hymn tune "Beach Spring" by B. F. White, alludes to the theme of the 175th anniversary, "We have seen the Lord: Come and see."

In a recent interview with The Criterion, Father Harry spoke about the hymn text.

"It tries to celebrate this fact that many people have created this tradition, which we, today, have inherited," he said. "Therefore, it is up to us to hand the tradition on and also to add to the tradition."

The text includes references to the first bishop of Vincennes, the first bishop of God Simon Bruté, and Indiana’s first saint, St. Theodora Guérin, the foundress of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

"I thought about trying to name at different kinds of people or different kinds of occupations," said Father Harry, a monk of St. Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. "In the end, it became clear that I was going to leave out somebody. So I limited myself to Bishop Bruté and St. Theodora."

Charles Gardner, executive director for the archdiocesan secretariat for spiritual life and worship, asked Father Harry to compose the text.

"I think it’s a great match and a great opportunity," said Gardner about the text. "I think it works. It just works."

"As a pastoral musician, I’m dedicated to having texts that are strong, that really say something but that also work," Father Harry said.

Father Harry added that he was looking forward to when many people across the archdiocese sing the text. "It will make me happy," he said. "When you write a text like this, it’s nice when people use it. You try to make it so that it will serve well."

"The text is kind of in the eating of the pudding," said Sandra Bierly, the "pudding" tasted pretty good.

"I think it’s going to change their hearts and make a difference," said Bierly, a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. "It’s just such a beautiful hymn."

Father Harry Hagan, who wrote it, just touched everything.

Bierly sang the text when she was present at a Mass on Oct. 28 at Huber’s Winery in Clark County to celebrate the successful conclusion of the Legacy for Our Mission: For Our Children and the Future campaign.

As a Bierly was singing the hymn at the end of the Mass, her thoughts turned to how the Church in Indiana began in a small way, but has grown over the past 175 years.

"I think only about how that little mustard seed has spread all over the state," Bierly said. "It’s huge, and it’s going to get bigger."

Father Harry intended the text to help those who sing it turn their thoughts to the future of the archdiocese.

The first three stanzas of the hymn text begin with the word "come," but Father Harry chose the fourth and final stanza with the word "go."

"It kind of invites people to come and see what God is doing in the future," Father Harry said. "So I hope people will go forth and carry on the tradition ... which [they] have inherited."

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Faith can help build brotherhood of humanity, cardinal tells U.N. 

UNITED NATIONS (CNS)—People of faith can help build a brotherhood of life and human dignity that can reach across international borders to achieve world peace, the president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue said in an address to the United Nations General Assembly.

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, despite their weaknesses and contradictions among their followers, are the harbingers of peace and reconciliation," Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran said on Nov. 12 during the General Assembly’s high-level meeting on culture of peace.

The cardinal also urged world leaders to promote opportunities for people of different faiths to come together so they can overcome indifference, build respect for diversity and promote the sacredness of life.

The cardinal was one of more than 70 speakers to address the world body in a meeting’s opening session that religion should not be turned into instruments that cause misery.

"Terrorism and criminality are the enemies of every religion and every civilization," the Saudi leader said.

Israel’s Peres later followed and, in his remarks, invoked the memory of a Bulgarian, who called his brother Lito to peace and reconciliation, and said their example can serve as an inspiration for the world.

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Opinion

Parish Diary/ Fr. Peter Daly

Economy affords us opportunity to put Christ back in Christmas this year

This year, we will be singing, “Have yourself a very little Christmas.” The lyrics have changed with the economy. Given the dismal state of the economy, governors of some states are offering to share their preachers may at last get their wish. Christmas will be less commercial. The celebration of the birth of Jesus will not be so materialistic. We cannot take much credit for this. (We don’t have any credit left anyway.) People are already de-personalizing their Christmas celebrations out of necessity, not a newfound asceticism.

My good friend, Msgr. Jack Myslikns, says, “Never confuse lack of opportunity with virtue.” This true. We may not be able to take much credit for this, but this year we may finally do what we should have done all along. We may put Christ back into Christmas.

The great saints all recognized that something we do every year with mixed motives. Perhaps we are simplifying Christmas out of necessity rather than virtue. But, as Blessed Teresa of Calcutta would say, “Be good anyway.” This crisis presents us with an opportunity for spiritual realization.

So here are some suggestions for having ourselves a very little Christmas:

First, buy the things people need anyway. Stuff they will use every day. If they need a new mattress, buy one. A new shirt is never so single. Nothing is more appreciated than a good night’s sleep. They will think of you in the mornings. People used to buy useful gifts. Remember getting socks and underwear?

Second, give time instead of stuff. There probably are people in your life who you have been intending to “get caught up” with. The Christmas card is not enough. There are probably a couple of people who would enjoy a visit.

Letters to the Editor

To truly make a difference in society, we must change one American at a time

If Americans want to live in a more peaceful, secure environment, we will be willing to more peaceful ourselves. Can we learn to covet the wily insult less and humble kindness more? Will we be willing to spend more time examining our own faults and weaknesses, and less time shining a spotlight on the sins of others?

If Americans want social justice, are they willing to protect the lives of the unborn, the sick, the imprisoned and the destitute? Are we willing to share in the spirit of love and charity?

If Americans want prosperity, must we give up an attitude of entitlement and a life of materialism? Will we give up an attitude of materialism? Will we give up the wish to spend all our time and resources on ourselves, and replace it with a sense of gratitude for God's blessings that inspires us to share in the spirit of love and charity?

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El verano de este año, recibí cartas de seis-, séptimo- y octavo-grados en Aurora. Los alumnos del séptimo y octavo grado me habían escrito antes cuando se enteraron de que estaba lidiando con el cáncer. La intención de sus cartas más recientes era contarles lo contentos que estaban por la remisión de mi padecimiento y que continuaban rezando por mi. También pusieron de manifiesto que rezaban a diario por las vocaciones al sacerdocio y la vida religiosa.

Varios de los estudiantes del séptimo grado dijeron que esperaban con ansias recibir el sacramento de la confirmación el próximo 3 de mayo, durante la celebración del aniversario de los 175 años de la parroquia de Aurora.


También rezo por las buenas vocaciones al sacerdocio…”.

Jho escribió: “Mi clase reza por su recuperación, y creo que también mi mamá. Me alegra mucho que se sienta mejor y que siga siendo nuestro obispo.”

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El balance de lúgubre y lúdico de la plantilla de St. Mary es que nuestro director es muy estricto. Johnathon comentó: “Es un gran fanático de los Colts, como yo…”.

Los seis- y séptimo-grados me escribieron que se sentían bien con respecto a la publicidad de su vida en la escuela y sus esperanzas de que el público comprendiera que estaban a su servicio.

En un testimonio de fe lleno de espíritu, A dam escribió: “Yo soy el líder de esta escuela…”. También rezamos por ustedes a diario. Lamento no haber podido confirmarlos a todos a ellos como a otros. He tendido que contar con la colaboración de sustitutos que me reemplazan durante las confirmaciones del octavo ya que la recuperación de los efectos producidos por la quimiorapia y la radioterapia ha sido lenta.

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Intención del arzobispo: promover las vocaciones católicas.

El arzobispo M. Buechlein pidió a los estudiantes de las escuelas secundarias católicas que fueran una fuente continua para promover las vocaciones al sacerdocio y el discípulo de Dios en el servicio de Dios.

"Dios bendiga, arzobispo M. Buechlein...

La intención del arzobispo M. Buechlein para el mes de noviembre es promover las vocaciones católicas.

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Events Calendar

November 21
Northside K-nights of Columbus Hall, 2100 E. 37th St., Indianapolis. Catholic Business Exchange, 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., followed by buffet breakfast. Dr. James Ippolito, cardiologist and president of Genessis, presenter, 11 a.m., $20 members, $20 non-members. Information and registration: www.catholicbusinessexchange.org.

November 22
Roncalli High School, 3300 Prague Road, Indianapolis. Annual food drive for St. Vincent de Paul Pantry, 8 a.m. Information: 317-787-8277 or info@roncallis.org.

November 22

November 22-23
St. Barnabas Parish, 8300 Rahke Road, Indianapolis. Outreach ministry, "A Different Kind of Giving" market, shop for Christmas presents that have a purpose, market open after all Masses. Information: 317-882-0724.

November 23
Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Altar Society, annual bazaar and chicken noodle dinner, crafts, bake sale, 12:30-4 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454, ext. 2.

November 23
Bishop Chatard High School, 5885 N. Crichtenden Ave., Indianapolis. Chatard-a-Thon, "Good Vibrations," women's shopping brunch, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. $15 per person. Information: 317-251-4515, ext. 2264.

November 23
Cretin-Drey School, 75 N. Beverly Place, Indianapolis. Open house, 1-3 p.m. Information: 317-860-1000 or gdretinis@saintlouis.edu.

November 24
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. "Day of Silence," 8 a.m.-4 p.m., $5 per person. Information: 317-926-1963. ext. 156, or smzooler@saintsimon.org.

November 24-26
St. Simon the Apostle Church, 3150 Union St., Indianapolis. Parish Mission, "The Life, Writings and Theology of St. Paul," Franciscan Friar Bill Burton, presenter, 6:30-8 p.m. Information: 317-634-4519.

November 24-26
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, 30 S. Downey Ave., Indianapolis. Liturgy of the Hours, 7:30 a.m. and 8:15 p.m. Thanksgiving Service, 11 a.m. Information: 317-859-4673 or janet@francisandclare.org.

November 25

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Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. "Vito's sophisticated style," 7-9 p.m. Information: 317-826-6600, ext. 156, or mszooler@saintsimon.org.

November 25
St. Frances and Clare Parish, 509 Olive Branch Road, Greenwood. Family Advent carol fest, 7 p.m. Information: 317-859-6673 or janet@francisandclare.org.

November 27
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November 28-30
St. Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. "Roving over Raphael," Benedictine Father Paul Kung, presenter, 8:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Information: 812-933-6437.

December 1
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. "Merry Christmas," Benedictine Father Eugene Herbst, presenter. Information: 317-859-6673 or janet@francisandclare.org.

December 1-3

December 2

December 18
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. "Day of Silence," 8 a.m.-4 p.m., $25 per person includes continental breakfast and lunch. Information: 317-547-7681 or spasso@archindy.org.

December 19-21
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. "Mondays in Christmas," Benedictine Brother Christian Rab, presenter. Information: 800-581-6605 or thurs@mszooler@saintsimon.edu.

January 9-11

Grants

The American Association of the Order of St. Maltesa, the American branch of an international Catholic chivalric and fraternal organization, recently awarded C R A Radio, 3033 Martin Rd., Indianapolis a $10,000 grant to serve the evangelization efforts of the Catholic Church by expanding their Spanish language broadcasts and current agreements to reach a greater number of households.

Bus blessing

Mgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, right, blesses a new 2008 Ford Bus for Caring Place Adult Day Services program of Catholic Charities Indianapolis on Nov. 12. Catholic Charities Indianapolis received a grant to pay for the 15-seat vehicle through the Indianapolis Department of Transportation’s 3330 program, which assists nonprofit agencies to obtain grants to serve the state’s vulnerable population. Among the group who attended the groundbreaking ceremony are Lula Emile-Baxter, left, program director of Adult Day Care Services; Benedictine Brother Anthony Stein, bus driver; David Siler, executive director of the Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries; and Daughter of Mary Mother of Mercy Sister Olima Okpala, who ministers at A Caring Place.

Retreats and Programs

November 21-22
Monastery Immaculate Conception, Kordes Center, 841 E. 14th St., Ferdinand. "Journalizing: Praying the Scriptures of Our Lives," Benedictine Sister Maria Tasto, presenter. Information: 812-367-1411 or spirituality@thedome.org.

November 21-23

November 22
St. Barnabas Parish, 8300 Rahke Road, Indianapolis. Outreach ministry, "A Different Kind of Giving" market, shop for Christmas presents that have a purpose, market open after all Masses. Information: 317-882-0724.

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November 23
Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Altar Society, annual bazaar and chicken noodle dinner, crafts, bake sale, 12:30-4 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454, ext. 2.

November 23
Bishop Chatard High School, 5885 N. Crichtenden Ave., Indianapolis. Chatard-a-Thon, "Good Vibrations," women's shopping brunch, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. $15 per person. Information: 317-251-4515, ext. 2264.

November 23
Cretin-Drey School, 75 N. Beverly Place, Indianapolis. Open house, 1-3 p.m. Information: 317-860-1000 or gdretinis@saintlouis.edu.

November 24

November 24

Orchestrating an anonymous gift

Day 7: Benedictine Sister Mary Claude Creteau, presenter, 8 a.m.-9:45 a.m., $80. Information: 812-367-1411 or spirituality@thedome.org.

Stature dedication

Tyler Braun, a sophomore at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, proudly touches a bronze statue of Blessed Pope John XXIII during a dedication ceremony for the statue on Oct. 28, the 50th anniversary of the pope’s election. He is a member of Natividad of Our Lord jesu Christ Parish in Indianapolis. The statue was made in Italy and donated to the school by Roncalli’s chaplain, Father James Wilmoth, who also serves as pastor of St. Roch Parish in Indianapolis. Roncalli High School is named after Pope John, whose baptismal name was Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli.
More must be done to prevent children's suffering, death, says pope

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—More must be done to prevent children's suffering, death, says Pope Benedict XVI.

All three sisters of St. Benedict are charter members of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. They taught in schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Diocese of Evansville before retiring.

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About 58 percent of women and men religious are past 70; 7 percent are past age 90. More than 4,900 need skilled nursing care. Even at advanced ages, many work in compensated or volunteer ministry that benefits others.

Religious institutes are financially autonomous and responsible for the support of their members. Income sources include compensated ministry, government benefits and investment return.

Most elderly religious receive, on average, a Social Security benefit of $1,313.30 in 2009. This excludes government benefits and investment return. Religious institutes are financially autonomous and responsible for the support of their members. Income sources include compensated ministry, government benefits and investment return.

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SHARE IN THE CARE

December 14, 2008

RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS

From left to right, Sister Mary Lucy Dippel, O.S.B., Sister Mary Carol Messmer, O.S.B. and Sister Marie Oliger, O.S.B.

All three sisters of St. Benedict are charter members of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. They taught in schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Diocese of Evansville before retiring.

About 58 percent of women and men religious are past 70; 7 percent are past age 90. More than 4,900 need skilled nursing care. Even at advanced ages, many work in compensated or volunteer ministry that benefits others.
Catholic Conference launches online tool for grassroots effort

Catholics across Indiana can engage their elected officials in a new and powerful way through an online tool offered by the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC). The software tool launched by the Indiana Catholic Conference and now available on the ICC Web site, www.indianacc.org, allows visitors to enter a Legislative Action Center and engage in a variety of grassroots activities in a few simple keystrokes. One of the key features of the software allows visitors to quickly identify and contact their elected officials.

By clicking “Legislative Action Center” on the ICC home page, the visitor has information and quick access to government officials. The center includes these choices: Elected Officials, Issues, Election and Media. Under the “Elected Officials” menu, for example, visitors are able to access the “Indiana Legislative Directory” for state officials; or select “President” to access the president of the U.S., federal agencies and a congressional directory; or select the “Supreme Court” for contact information for the U.S. Supreme Court.

In addition to contact information for each office holder, biographical information and links to other useful Web pages for individual members of the Indiana General Assembly or the U.S. Congress, governmental agencies and the U.S. Supreme Court are available. Visitors to the center also have the option to join the action network. By joining the action network, members will begin receiving a weekly electronic newsletter called “Legislative Update” when the Indiana General Assembly is in session during the months of January through May 2009.

Those receiving the “Legislative Update” remain current on the issues and in tune with the ICC’s efforts in the legislature.

The ICC also sends periodic electronic “Action Alerts” to network members who, when called upon via e-mail, will assist the Church’s legislative efforts at the statehouse by contacting lawmakers.

“When the Indiana General Assembly is in session, getting input from constituents in a timely manner on legislation that is being created is vital to the process,” said Glenn Tebbe, ICC executive director. “When Catholics contact their representatives in union with the work of the Catholic Conference, it allows the Church to be more effective in shaping morally sound public policy.

The use of this software by Catholics has the potential to significantly impact the Church’s role in the public policy arena,” Tebbe explained. “It is my hope that our faith community will seize the opportunity to take advantage of this online tool.”

Tebbe added, “Catholics that have a particular charism in pro-life, social justice, education, immigration reform, health care or family life issues will be able to stay connected and be counted when important legislative decisions are made on priority issues the Church is following.”

Want to know what the current issues are or how elected officials voted on abortion legislation? Select “Issues” from the menu in the Legislative Action Center.

Under “Issues,” individuals can look up voting records under “Key Votes” for members of the Indiana General Assembly (state senators and state representatives) or members of Congress (U.S. senators and U.S. representatives) on legislation affecting the unborn, families in poverty, capital punishment, same-sex marriage, the common good, education and immigration reform.

Also under the “Issues” menu, visitors can view current legislation, legislative reports and updates, and get tips on contacting legislators via phone, mail or in person.

Other features include a “Tell a Friend” option, which allows visitors to e-mail friends or family members about legislative alerts or updates for friends expanding those who can become informed and involved in the legislative process.

Want to write a letter to the editor or put a call into a talk radio program to voice a concern from a Catholic perspective? Contacting the media is made easier than ever by selecting “Media” from the menu in the Legislative Action Center. Contact information is available for major newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations in the state, including e-mails, addresses, phone and fax numbers.

While the role of the ICC is to serve as the official voice of the Catholic Church in the public policy arena, primarily in Indiana, those visiting the ICC Web page will also be notified about important federal legislation that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is concerned about. The Web page also offers the means to contact members of Congress.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that, “It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent to the dignity of the human person. . . . As far as possible, citizens should take an active part in public life” (#2163–2165).

Since its inception in 1996, more than 1,200 organizations nationwide have used Capitol Advantage’s online tool to engage millions of interested citizens in the public policy process.

There are 11 other state Catholic conferences that use Capitol Advantage, including California, Kentucky, the District of Columbia, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, New York and Wisconsin. Six other Catholic Conferences use similar online systems.

Christian Lefeld, executive director for the Minnesota Catholic Conference, said that in the two years since the Capitol Advantage software was made available in his state, they have had more than 1,300 subscribed users. More than 450 of the subscribed users have sent e-mail messages to government officials.

“We have editable messages. So many of the messages sent by users are personalized, resulting in greater impact,” Lefeld said.

Click on “Legislative Action Center.”

To explore the ICC’s new online public policy tool, log on to the ICC Web site at www.indianacc.org. For more information, click on “Legislative Action Center.”

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 a program and to have a calcified heart valve. However, he had no idea how urgent it was until his wife encouraged him to attend an education and immigration reform.

Are you at risk? Get your FREE Healthy Heart Kit and find out. Call 1-877-888-1777 or visit HeartAttackCare.net today.

Chris, heart valve replacement patient

Chris participated in the first-of-its-kind innovative research study, which may allow more patients to avoid long-term use of blood thinners.
By receiving Eucharist, Catholics can ‘transform world,’ bishop says

ST. LOUIS (CNS)—The purpose of the Eucharist is seen in the actions of the saints, Bishop Paul A. Zipfel of Bismarck, N.D., told a gathering of the Gateway Liturgical Conference in St. Louis on Nov. 7.

“At Holy Mass, whatever you do for the least of my brothers and sisters, you do for me,” Bishop Zipfel said. 

The Mass brings people into communion with Christ; they were tabernacles. She would do what she did because she had learned to recognize the Lord in them, the poorest of the poor.

The bishop reminded his audience that if the world today could be reduced to a global village of 1,000 people, 6 percent would control half of the income. In the village, 30 percent would be hungry, 60 percent would live in shantytowns and 70 percent would be illiterate.

“Such an attitude misses the depth of the Eucharist, Bishop Zipfel said. “There is no more intimate meeting with the Lord than at holy Communion. But, such a meeting pushes us to another level. The Catholic faith is not just a ‘me and Jesus’ experience.”

“The Eucharist forms us into a community, the Church, which is something much bigger than ourselves,” he continued. “Finally, the Eucharist pushes the individual believer and the whole community to make a difference. It commits us to the transformation of the world.”

The Mass brings people into communion with Christ, with their brothers and sisters, and especially with the poor and all those who suffer, Bishop Zipfel said. “It reminds us that Christ became poor by taking our flesh, and he embraced that poverty completely when he embraced the cross,” he said. “The Lord identified with the poor and disadvantaged so fully that he would even tell his disciples, ‘Whatever you do for the least of my brothers and sisters, you do for me.’

The poor with whom M other Teresa would serve “were Christ; they were tabernacles. She would do what she did because she had learned to recognize the Lord in them, the poorest of the poor.”

The Gospels, Bishop Zipfel said, are full of people’s encounters with Jesus and how His words, actions and presence changed everyone he met. The bishop pointed to the two followers’ encounter with Jesus on the road to Emmaus, and how he explained Scripture and then broke bread with them.

“For 2,000 years, we Catholics have done precisely this at Holy Mass. … In this way, no matter when or where we live, the risen Christ comes into our midst as He did for those two disciples,” he said.

In his talk, Bishop Zipfel urged people “to be drawn more deeply into the mystery of God’s love with open minds, with open hearts, with open hands and with open eyes.”

The Eucharist, he said, “is central to our Catholic identity. The greatest gift that Christ left his Church is the very presence of Christ in our midst.”

That gift, Bishop Zipfel said, “has lifted and carried countless Christians throughout the centuries in the face of great struggle and opposition.”

Actually, we don’t mind if you compare. Because for the last four years, when HealthGrades—America’s leading independent healthcare ratings company—has compared hospitals for overall heart care, St. Vincent Heart Center of Indiana has been named #1. No hospital in the 10-state region has earned this honor four years in a row: 2006, 2007, 2008, and now 2009. When the experts compare, there’s simply no comparison. The best heart care in Indiana. Period.
Once again this Thanksgiving, most people will bow their heads for a moment and give thanks to God for the blessings in their lives. Looking back upon the past year, the archdiocese can also count its blessings in many ways.

As we list some of the remarkable blessings for the Church in central and southern Indiana in the past year, we start with heartfelt thanks to each of you for the faith you have and the faith you live. We wish you and your family a happy and blessed Thanksgiving and a joyful Advent.

Here are 10 reasons to give thanks as an archdiocese for what has truly been a special year:

**Sharing a legacy**
A Nini Mo Lobby was a 12-year-old girl who helped the poor from her wheelchair.

**In or around Indianapolis**
Teenagers from St. Malachi Parish in Brownsburg get ready to take part in the 35th annual March for Life on Jan. 22 in Washington, D.C.

**Now You Can Hear Catholic Radio Everywhere**
You can hear the station at 589.1 on your FM radio.

**Making history, offering a future**
In March, the archdiocese welcomed 7,000 Catholic educators from across the country to the National Catholic Educational Association Convention—why the first time in the 150-year history of the association that the convention was held in Indianapolis.

Yet even more important are the daily efforts of the 1,900 staff members who educate the more than 23,000 students in the 71 Catholic schools in the archdiocese, and the sacrifice of the parents who make it possible for their children to attend Catholic schools.

**Beginning a new era**
On June 28, history was made at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis when Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein ordained 25 men from central and southern Indiana as the first class of permanent deacons in the archdiocese's history.

They will be able to baptize, witness marriages and preside over funeral services. They deacons can also preach, share the Gospel, teach the faith, and take part in and lead many ministries of charity.

**Taking one for the team**
Once again, just as it has done for nearly 70 years, the Catholic Youth Organization has helped shape the lives of children and teenagers through sports, science fairs and music contests—thanks to the help of about 2,500 volunteers who dedicate their time and talents to about 20,000 boys and girls each year. All that, plus you can get a drink and popcorn for about $2 at many school gymnasiums.

**Going the extra mile**
The commitment of young people is often inspiring, especially when they literally “go the extra mile” to live their faith. Several hundred teenagers from the archdiocese participated in the 35th annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., in January to show their support for the unborn. And 44 youths set aside proms, sports and other commitments to travel to New York to see Pope Benedict XVI in April.

**Carrying the torch**
This year, six archdiocesan priests celebrated 50 years in the priesthood:

We remember two priests who died, Father Charles Cheshbrough and Msgr. Bernard Schmidt, and take note of the lifetime of service to the unborn. And 44 youths set aside proms, sports and other commitments to travel to New York to see Pope Benedict XVI in April.

**Extending a hand**
When floods devastated many communities in southern and central Indiana in June, officials from Catholic Charities and volunteers from many parishes rushed to help.

As the faltering economy continues to hurt families, when floods devastated many communities in southern and central Indiana in June, officials from Catholic Charities and volunteers from many parishes rushed to help.

They’re just two examples of a reality that continues to inspire. When there are others in need, the ones who often step forward to help are the people who realize just how blessed their own lives are.

**Passing the baton**
One era of faith opened the door for another era of faith in the archdiocese this summer.

For more than 75 years, the cloistered Carmelites nuns lived in the Monastery of the Resurrection in Indianapolis, offering their gift of contemplative prayer for the world. At the end of June, they moved to the motherhouse grounds of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg.

**Celebrating the journey**
In September, the archdiocese began the celebration of its 175th anniversary when Archbishop Buechlein led a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Before the journey, the archbishop shared these words of thanksgiving for the past and hope for the future: “It is fitting that we begin the observance of our 175th anniversary with a pilgrimage to the place where Jesus was born, and where our Catholic faith and Church have their roots.

“We will be keeping all of the members of our local Church in our thoughts and our prayers as we make this journey to thank God for all of the blessings we have received and to ask him to guide us through the next 175 years.”

Happy Thanksgiving!
The Plain Dealer

Gas prices have more than doubled since the Arabo-Iraqi war, and the auto industry is tied to suppliers all over the world. But Detroit is not the only place feeling the effects of the nation’s troubled economy. Construction companies, retailers, mortgage bankers, securities firms, the motel industry, appliance factories, shipping companies and steel plants all have cut jobs this year. During the month of October alone, manufacturing jobs decreased by 90,000, construction by 45,000, retail by 38,000 and the financial industry by 24,000. Only the health care and mining industries gained employees in this time period. A according to the U.S. Labor Department statistics released on Nov. 7, the jobless rate rose to 6.5 percent in October when employers fired 240,000 workers. That figure put the total number of unemployed Americans past 10.68 million, the highest level in 25 years. One year ago, the jobless rate was 4.8 percent.

Gene Gilbert, one of the coordinators of the St. Basil job Search Support Group in Brecksville, Ohio, said he sees the effects of frequent layoffs in the Tuesday night meetings at his parish, where participants range from “high-level CGIs to part-time employees,” and sometimes both husbands and wives are unemployed. In Ohio, 7,000 job cuts were recently announced by the international shipping company OHL. Other layoffs in the state have come from Whirlpool Corp., The Plain Dealer, Cleveland’s daily newspaper, and steel companies and auto parts factories. "A major thing our Church stresses is there are basically two commandments: Love the Lord and love your neighbor as yourself. Right now, our neighbors are hurting in so many ways."

—Gene Gilbert

He said that parish job support programs are “filling a void.” The St. Basil group, formed about five years ago, is part of a group of four parishes in the Employment Network Ministry of the Cleveland Diocese. "A major thing our Church stresses is there are basically two commandments: Love the Lord and love your neighbor as yourself. Right now, our neighbors are hurting in so many ways," Gilbert added.

"We want to make sure they have as much help as they can get in this stressful time. It’s one of the biggest crises people can go through when their very livelihoods are in jeopardy," he said.

Dobies agreed the Church can play a key role in helping people find jobs and also maintaining their self-confidence. "One of the main things job seekers need is hope — the belief they can find another opportunity and that their lives are not over," she said.
Upon returning from church, the Persaud family discovered that soot and ash were all that remained of their home in Guyana — it had been consumed by a fire. In a desperate attempt to find shelter, Inbranie Persaud and her two daughters transferred chickens they were raising from a large pen to a smaller chicken coop.

The large pen then became their only shelter from the elements. Here Inbranie and her girls would find little rest and even less peace. In a matter of two hours, this poor family’s source of shelter went from little to nothing.

The girls continuously cried while their mother prayed over them the first night in the coop. The entire family slept on a rotted mattress as mosquitoes swarmed around them. Inbranie fervently prayed as the smell of smoke and burnt wood wafted throughout the coop. “God, please protect us,” Inbranie sobbed. “It’s only the girls and I in here. We have nothing… we have nothing.”

The Persauds were not only left unprotected from the elements, but vulnerable to thieves, looters and worse. Concerning the safety of her children, Inbranie said, “They’re afraid ’cause anyone can come in on us. I can’t sleep. Anything I hear I just jump up. Who am I gonna turn to for help? There’s no neighbor I can call out to.”

“Mommy, when are we gonna come out of here?” 5-year-old Lotoya Persaud frequently asks her mother. “I don’t know what to do,” her tearful mother responds. “I ain’t got nothing.”

“God, please protect us,” Inbranie Persaud sobbed.
“We have nothing… we have nothing.”

“God, please protect us,”
Inbranie Persaud sobbed.
“We have nothing… we have nothing.”

“This, rather, is the fasting that I wish… sheltering the oppressed…”
(Isaiah 58:6a,7b)

A new, protective home would be a miracle for a family like the Persauds. Unsheltered families like this throughout the Caribbean and Latin America pray for the miracle of
After their home was destroyed by a fire, the Persaud family has been forced to live in a chicken coop.

Little to nothing

a sturdy new home. Your gift for housing can be an answer to a desperate family’s prayers.

You can help Food For The Poor build a single housing unit for just $2,600 — and the benefits for those you will help are beyond measure. The homes we build are basic, but they provide shelter from the elements and protection from other dangers. For the poorest of the poor, receiving the keys to a new home may be the most important event in their lives.

Founded in 1982, Food For The Poor works to end the suffering of the destitute by providing food, clean drinking water, basic shelter, medical supplies and education to our poorest brothers and sisters in the Caribbean and Latin America. We strive to effectively and efficiently serve those in desperate need; more than 96% of all donations received go directly to programs that benefit the poor.

Inbranie found the remnants of her church hymnal amid the rubble of her former home. Standing atop its vacant grounds, Inbranie said, “I’m praying that we can come out of this [chicken coop] as fast as we can. I really, really need help. I thank God for anyone who can help me.”

The brochure enclosed in this publication contains more information on how you can help suffering families in need of safe housing. Every gift will make a tremendous difference to families in great need.

Please be a caring neighbor to families like Inbranie’s by sending a gift for housing today. One gift can alter the future of an entire family.

“Lord… When did we see You a stranger and welcome You…” (Matthew 25:37b–38a)

Your gift of $2,600 will build a home for a destitute family.

It costs only $2,600, or a pledge of $174 a month for 15 months, to build a new home for an unsHELTERED family. Other gifts will help build a new home by providing essential parts such as a roof or locking doors. Your gift can help answer the prayers of a desperately poor family that prays for safe shelter. Through your compassion and generosity, you can replace despair and fear with hope and human dignity.

Please, be as generous as you possibly can and send a gift to help provide a home for those in dire need. Please use the postage-paid envelope in the brochure located in this publication to send your gift today. May God bless you for your compassion.
WASHINGTON (CNS)—Almost half of American voters say they are living paycheck to paycheck as food prices rise and the country’s economic woes deepen, reports the Alliance to End Hunger.

In an Election Day survey of 1,000 voters nationwide, the alliance found major concerns developing around what it calls “food insecurity.” Three in five voters—69 percent—said they were impacted by high food prices. Slightly less than half—49 percent—said they expected to be hit by the crisis are people who are not able to feed their children any more,” said Rev. Beckmann, alliance president.

“With people turning to Catholic agencies, we are seeing higher food prices. The crisis facing low-, moderate- and working poor and the middle class as part, has targeted 2015 for eliminating child hunger in the United States. The advocacy group also called for major policy changes to reduce global hunger and poverty over the same period.

Sen. Dick Lugar, R-Ind., and Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., have been congressional allies in the fight against hunger both in the U.S. and around the world. Joining the alliance’s annual meeting, the two legislators called on President-elect Barack Obama to appoint a “food czar” to oversee domestic and international food policy.

The position is called for in the Global Food Security Act, which was introduced in Congress earlier this year, but has not been acted upon. Lugar said he plans to reintroduce the bill in the next Congress. McGovern called hunger a “political condition.”

“We have the opportunity to redefine our priorities, not only domestically but globally,” McGovern said. “We have the ability to solve hunger. What has been a problem for a long time is that we haven’t been able to muster the political will,” he said.

Rev. Beckmann finds that the legislation will be a much-needed boost to ending food insecurity for millions of people worldwide, not just in the U.S., and for helping begin an economic turnaround in the global financial crisis.

“With just a bit of facilitation, we can free up the intense desire of poor people around the world to get out of poverty. That is tremendous motivation for economic recovery. They really are a buoyant part of the global economy,” he said.

Between 1990 and 2005, the number of people living in extreme poverty—those living on less than $1 per day—declined by 500 million worldwide, thanks to local and regional initiatives that promoted development, self-sufficiency, and education. While the trend has slowed since 2006 because of the economic downturn, Rev. Beckmann is hopeful that attacking hunger globally will lead to a quicker turnaround.

“I believe that God is moving in our time to liberate people from hunger, poverty and disease,” he said. “The progress that the world is making is an experience of the saving God in our history. Right now, poor and hungry people are surviving a big setback, but I remain really hopeful. This is God moving in our time.”

(Editor’s note: Information about Catholic Charities USA’s Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America can be found online at www.catholiccharitiesusa.org. The Alliance to End Hunger’s “Blueprint to End Hunger 2008” can be found online at www.bread.org/learn/us-hunger/issues/blueprint2008.)

WASHINGTON LETTER

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Holy Rosary Parish in Seeleyville marks 100 years of faith

By Sean Gallagher

SEELEYVILLE — On Oct. 7, 1908, the feast of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, Father John Walsh celebrated Mass for the first time in the partly completed church of the then-Dioce of Indianapolis’ newest parish, located just east of Terre Haute in the town of Seeleyville.

Because of the feast day, the parish came to be known as Holy Rosary Parish.

A vicar bishop Daniel M. Buechlein was the primary celebrant on Oct. 11 at Mass in the same church that celebrated the Terre Haute Deanery faith community’s 100th anniversary of its founding.

The archbishop was joined on the occasion by many of the parish’s members and its administrator, Father Dominic Chulkwudi.

“One thing of joy for me to be present when the parish celebrated its 100th anniversary,” said Father Chulkwudi. “They were enthusiastic about the celebration. It was a very colorful celebration.”

“The people spoke to you. They shook hands. They said, ‘How are you? Are you new here? Have you just moved in or are you visiting?’” Pat Armstrong, 66. “The people spoke to you. They shook hands. They said, ‘How are you? Are you new here? Have you just moved in or are you visiting?’”

It was a time of joy for me to be present when the parish celebrated its 100th anniversary,” said Father Chulkwudi. “There is a continuity from the earliest members of the parish to this year.”

It was that sense of family in the parish that greeted Pat Armstrong and her family when they moved to the area from central Indiana. “It was a very friendly, warm, welcoming parish,” said Armstrong, 66. “The people spoke to you. They shook hands. They said, ‘How are you? Are you new here? Have you just moved in or are you visiting?’”

“It was like home. It’s as much like home as my house or going back to my parents’ home.”

From its beginning, Holy Rosary Parish has always remained a relatively small parish. Today, it numbers some 84 households.

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BASKING RIDGE, N.J. (CNS)—The 32-page hardcover volume of rhyming poetic verse is the first published book for Debbie Moldovan and Keri Conkling. The poem is a fictional vignette about a group of about 10 boys and girls in the 8 to 12 age range, who are playing baseball with a scant amount of worn-down baseball equipment. Most don’t have their own mitts and have to borrow and share.

But an older man watching them play brings them a full bag of baseball gear that he had kept from his days as a coach. The gift brings joy to the boys and girls, and inspires the narrator, a child, to give back to other people and causes.

The book arose from an event in the Moldovan family three years ago. The 39-year-old mother of two boys and one girl asked her son, Tyler, what he would like to do for his upcoming ninth birthday. He didn’t want presents; he told her, just friends to come to his house and play baseball in his backyard. Moldovan and her husband, Rob, held what they called a “grand-slam birthday party” in their Basking Ridge backyard. The 17 boys who attended played Wiffle ball, kept track of the game on a wooden scoreboard built by Rob Moldovan, and brought along their extra baseball equipment. Most don’t have their own equipment—gloves, cleats, baseball pants and more—were given to Pitch in for Baseball in Fort Washington, Pa., a charitable organization for improving the lives of children in need through baseball.

After the party that same day, moved to other people and causes. The gift brings joy to the boys and girls, and inspires the narrator, a child, to give back to other people and causes.

The 17 boys who attended played Wiffle ball, kept track of the game on a wooden scoreboard built by Rob Moldovan, and brought along their extra baseball equipment for donation to kids who did not have their own. Some 100 pieces of equipment—gloves, cleats, baseball pants and more—were given to Pitch in for Baseball in Fort Washington, Pa., a charitable organization for improving the lives of children in need through baseball.

Despite having no experience in the publishing industry, he started researching children’s book publishers and came across Franklin Mason Press in Trenton, a company with a dual mission: to produce high-quality books and support children’s charities with donations from each book sold.

Franklin Mason Press and the mother of an 8-year-old Little Leaguer, knew right away that A Glove of Their Own had potential. She became the third author of the book, providing editorial adjustments. She made the book sing,” said Moldovan.

The thing about this book is that “everybody’s heart is in the right place,” Funari-Willever said. “There’s always some book proposal I receive that stands out each year. This was the one. I think it will be as popular with adults as children.”

Franklin Mason Press has chosen three charitable organizations— Good Sports, Pitch in for Baseball and Sports Gift—to be its designated partners for this book. Ten cents from the sale of each book will automatically be donated to each charity. And when each organization sells books through its membership or fundraisers, the publisher will donate $3 per book.

“Our entire story is about divine intervention,” said Keri Conkling. “It’s just a matter of all of us keeping our eyes open and realizing how great God brought us together to do something bigger and better than we knew we could.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE: A Glove of Their Own costs $15.95. Copies may be ordered online at www.agloveoftheirown.com or www.franklinmasonpress.com.)

Children’s book aims to start movement about baseball, giving

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Christmas Shopping Guide. See pages 15, 16 and 17 for more Christmas shopping advertisers.
Evan
ergating Hispanics, young adults key to Church growth

By David Gibson

A dam Ruiz made about “2,000 home and neighborhood visits” between 2001 and 2005 as part of his ministry in the Hispanic community of Shelbyville, Ky. Strongly motivating him, he said, was “a desire to draw close to the people where they live” and hear their questions.

The story of Ruiz’s ministry at a Parishion of Faith, a Hispanic ministry center “for the 60,000 Latinos in the Archdiocese of Louisville,” is told in shaping Catholic Parishes. Pastoral Leaders in the 21st Century (Loyola Press, 2008). The people Ruiz visited began to trust him, he explained, then began telling them about their stories and revealing their suffering. “When the people shared their stories with me, they essentially were inviting me to find a place alongside them in their journey of faith,” Ruiz explained.

Ruiz pursued “a conversation” with his community’s Hispanic people by seeking them out. Recent research suggests that this kind of conversation is vital for 21st-century parishes and their people.

The “U.S. Religious Landscape Survey,” released in February 2008 by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, reached beyond Catholicism, but what it said about those entering and leaving the Catholic Church in the U.S. drew widespread attention.

One survey conclusion was that “Latinos, who already account for roughly one-third adult Catholics overall, may account for an even larger share of U.S. Catholics in the future.” Latinos now account for nearly 45 percent of Catholic adults aged 18 to 29.

The survey indicated that “the Catholic share of the U.S. adult population has held fairly steady in recent decades, at around 25 percent.” Yet, it said, “roughly 10 percent of African Americans are former Catholics.” How, then, does the Catholic population remain steady?

The survey concluded that the large number of Catholic immigrants help answer this. Immigrants tend, statistically speaking, to replace those leaving the Church. In all this, CARA called particular attention to teenagers and young adults. It indicated, for example, that some 55 percent of those who stopped thinking of themselves as Catholic in years past did so between the ages of 18 and 39.

Changes in the Catholic population “have been incremental,” occurring “most often among young adults and teens,” CARA said. It proposed this as “a primary area for study directed at reducing losses.”

As such, recent research suggests that parishes are challenged nowadays to pursue conversations with Hispanic Catholics in their midst, while also pointing toward other—essential conversations—with unchurched Catholics, teenagers and young adults...

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By David Gibson served on the Catholic News Service editorial staff for 37 years.

Eucharist, Internet keep young adults Catholic

This Week’s Question

As a teen or young adult, what keeps you connected to your Catholic faith?

“First and foremost, the Eucharist. I can never get over the awesomeness of the sacrament and how much God must really want us to make himself present to us in such a humble and perpetual state. Secondly, I feel connected... by the rich and long tradition behind it. Nothing can be so assuring or expel more doubt of a divine origin than the fact that a Church composed of sinners... has stood through such fire and hard times and still manages to grow and thrive.” (Grant Irwin, Chatsworth, Calif.)

“The Internet is both the catalyst that first connected me to my faith and the instrument that maintains that connection. Growing up, I... went to a Catholic school and... to church every Sunday, but my faith wasn’t really mine. (In) college, my faith was tested, and I went to the Internet for answers...” (The information I found there lit a fire within me and changed me from someone... merely going about the motions to a man with convictions... inspired by the Church.” (Nicholas Hardesty, Owensboro, Ky.)

“Because I have traveled a lot doing internships over the past few years, one of the first things I do when I move into a new area is first the nearest parish and make an appointment to see the priest. The local parish community and interactions with a good priest... help me stay interconnected to my faith.” (John Souder, Maryville, Tenn.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: What comes to mind when you think of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to coreen@catholicnews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100.
Possible saints: Maria Luisa Josefa

Venerable Maria Luisa Josefa was Mexican rather than American, but she spent five years in Los Angeles.

She and her Carmelite community fled there when Mexican President Plutarco Elias Calles enforced anti-Catholic laws in 1924. Maria’s properties were confiscated and priests and nuns exiled. Many exiles were murdered. And 25 of them were canonized in 2000. Maria’s parents owned an extensive ranch near Atotonilco el Alto, 50 miles east of Guadalajara, Mexico, where she was born in 1866. They called her Luisa.

She was still the owner of a church when parents choose a husband for their daughters and, when she was 15, she chose a physician, Pascual Molina, who was 30. They opened the first hospital at Atotonilco, which flourished under Luisa’s leadership.

For 14 years of marriage, Pascual died. The hospital expanded. Luisa was a hard worker and needed the money for her mission. When she was 33, she decided to give herself to the church. She lived as a nun. In an issue of The Joyful Catholic, she wrote that, “I realized that I was not happy with the worries of the world. I was tired of the noise and confusion. But once I discovered the secret of teaching, I loved it.”

I had the good fortune recently to be seated at dinner next to a popular and frequent visitor to Atotonilco. Digging for gold, I asked him about his early life. “My first job,” he replied, “was teaching. I taught first grade. I loved the noise and confusion. But once I discovered the secret of teaching, I loved it.”

I looked up from my salad and asked, “OK, what is the secret?”

He smiled and said, “I discovered that once my students knew I loved them, I could teach them anything.”

“My friend,” he explained, was the most valuable lesson in his life, better than anything he learned in seminary, and the secret to his success as a teacher.

As dinner ended, I thanked him wholeheartedly.

Driving home that night, I pondered his words. That discovery, that connection, that love, can be mastered. But once discovered, it becomes the most valuable lesson you can have in life, beyond anything you learned in school, beyond anything you learned in this lifetime.

Jesus taught us to love others, not ourselves. But that connection, that love that we feel for another, can be learned. It can be mastered. It can be practiced.

The Joyful Catholic/Rick Herman

Like Jesus, love people first, teach them later

If someone you know is difficult to teach, this story is for you.

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If someone you know is difficult to teach, this story is for you.

I had the good fortune recently to be seated at dinner next to a popular and frequent visitor to Atotonilco. Digging for gold, I asked him about his early life. “My first job,” he replied, “was teaching. I taught first grade. I loved the noise and confusion. But once I discovered the secret of teaching, I loved it.”

I looked up from my salad and asked, “OK, what is the secret?”

He smiled and said, “I discovered that once my students knew I loved them, I could teach them anything.”

“My friend,” he explained, was the most valuable lesson in his life, better than anything he learned in seminary, and the secret to his success as a teacher.

As dinner ended, I thanked him wholeheartedly.

Driving home that night, I pondered his words. That discovery, that connection, that love, can be mastered. But once discovered, it becomes the most valuable lesson you can have in life, beyond anything you learned in school, beyond anything you learned in this lifetime.

Jesus taught us to love others, not ourselves. But that connection, that love that we feel for another, can be learned. It can be mastered. It can be practiced.
Feast of Christ the King
Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Nov. 23, 2008

- Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17
- 1 Corinthians 13:20-26, 28
- Matthew 25:31-46

The reading repeats the description given in the Book of Ezekiel. In Ezekiel, God, the shepherd, separates the sheep from the goats, the good from the unfaithful. 

In this reading from Matthew, Jesus promises a final judgment that will separate the faithful from the sinful.

Beautifully in this reading, the Lord defines who will be judged as faithful and who will be seen as unfaithful. The faithful will not be those who only give lip-service to their belief in God, but those who—in the model of Jesus—give themselves to care for the troubled and the distressed, who bring relief and hope to others.

These forces cannot be dismissed as hostile to God are at work in the world. Those who have admitted God, through Jesus, into their identities because of their voluntary unfaithfulness. In and through Jesus, the power and life of the Resurrection, and of the role of the Lord as shepherd, are extended to all people to make them holy. 

In this reading, God speaks in the image of the king. Would she and the king flee the country with their children? We are Christians truly, come what may. Christ, the King will never, never leave us. God will bring us to the glory of heaven after the wars of Earth are ended.

Reflection

Sixty years ago, the parents of the current royal family of England enjoyed the people’s highest esteem because of their voluntary unfaithfulness. In the case of Sisley and her husband, they would send their young daughters to Canada.

A yearning to surrender to your will, O Lord, my God, is the goal of all human action.

Q & A

Is there such a thing as a “range” of Catholic beliefs? In a recent column about heresy, you wrote that “Catholic beliefs are taught with varying degrees of authority” and that there is a “hierarchy of truths” in Catholic doctrines. I find it difficult to accept this teaching, but I must be believed by the faithful. Is there such a thing as a “range” of required teachings or are they all one level to be accepted by everyone the same way?

A

There is in Catholic theology what the Catechism of the Catholic Church (90, #234) calls a hierarchy of doctrines since they vary in their relation to the foundations of the Christian faith. This means that some doctrines are more closely linked to divine revelation in the Scriptures or in Christian tradition while others are to some degree deductions from those directly revealed by God.

As an obvious example, the doctrine of the incarnation, which says that Jesus is a divine person with two natures—both human and divine—is more directly revealed than belief in guardian angels. Over the centuries, Catholic theologians have assigned to individual doctrines what are called theological notes, indicating the connection they have to basic Christian revelation. These notes are defined, for example, by the source of the teachings, how they developed in the Church’s tradition, how they relate to other dogmas and so on.

These notes range from “definite faith” to dogmas “of faith because of ordinary teaching of the universal magisterium” to doctrines that are “common and certain” and all the way down to teachings that are “offensive to pious ears,” with at least a dozen other categories in between.

Several years ago, for example, someone claimed that the impossibility of ordination of women was an article of faith because it was in the catechism. Since the bishops of the world had been consulted before publishing the catechism, so the argument went, the teaching was infallible.

Others replied that, using that criterion, every article of faith in the catechism would be an infallibly defined article of faith. In 1993, however, when asked a similar question about the theological weight of dogmas in the catechism, then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who was the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith before his selection as Pope Benedict XVI, explained the difference: The doctrine that the catechism affirms have no other authority than that which they already possess.

In other words, while some teachings are clearly articles of Catholic faith—the primacy of the pope for one—determining the theological note of others may require serious study and research concerning their development in the teaching history of the Church. The mere fact that they are in the catechism is not sufficient to make such a judgment.

I am 77 years old, have been Catholic all my life and enjoy reading about the saints.

I understand that Sunday Masses are special because they are always a commemoration of Easter and the Resurrection. This past June, however, the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul was celebrated on Sunday. This is the first time that I’ve ever heard of it, so I was curious to learn more about the saints.

Can you explain? (Illinois)

A

You’re right. It’s rare, for the reason you mention, that other feasts replace Sunday Masses during the year. However, any feast ranked as a “sola”—there are 16 of them—replaces the Sunday liturgy if it falls on a Sunday.

The following saints’ days—Pentecost, the Holy Trinity and Christ the King—are, of course, automatically on Sunday. Any other saints’ days, however, few of them, that fall on the holy days of obligation and others, may be transferred to Sunday.

The feast of St. Peter and St. Paul is a solemnity. A few of the others are the feasts of St. Joseph, the birth of John the Baptist, All Saints and Corpus Christi.

I am working on an arrangement that may occur if the feasts fall during special seasons, for example, during Lent.

Daily Readings

Monday, Nov. 24

- Thanksgiving Day
- Sirach 50:22-24
- Psalm 138:1-5
- 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
- Luke 17:11-19
- Friday, Nov. 28
- Revelation 20:1-4; 11-21
- Psalm 84:3-6a
- Saturday, Nov. 29
- Revelation 22:1-7
- Psalm 95:1-7b
- Sunday, Nov. 30
- First Sunday of Advent
- Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b, 64-2-7
- Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
- 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
- Mark 13:33-37

Readers may submit prose or poetry for fall column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experience for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column. Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206, or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.
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Service Beyond Expectation

MADISON, Ind. — The Criterion, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, published an obituary section on November 21, 2008, featuring the deaths of various individuals. The obituaries are typically placed in memoriam sections of newspapers, and they serve to honor the deceased and provide a way for the community to support the grieving family. The obituary section is an important part of the local community, allowing people to remember and pay tribute to those who have passed away.

The obituary section includes the name of the deceased, their date of birth and death, and their place of residence. It also provides a brief history of the deceased's life, their accomplishments, and their contributions to the community. The obituary section is a way to honor the deceased and acknowledge their impact on the community.

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St. Martin de Porres celebration brings diverse Church together

St. Martin de Porres celebration brings diverse Church together

By Mary Ann Wyand

St. Martin de Porres celebration brings diverse Church together

This banner of St. Martin de Porres was handmade by Juan Miguel Diaz Carbajal of Lima, Peru, and given to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis by St. Mary parishioner Jamie Torpaco of Indianapolis. The feast day celebration brought together Latino, African-American and Anglo-American Catholics for worship, and was sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Multicultural Ministry.

Catholic Campaign for Human Development provides funding for small self-help programs that create sustainable jobs, preserve community, improve neighborhoods, enhance opportunities for youth, and allow people to find a dignified way out of poverty.

Please give generously to the special collection on Nov. 22-23.

The Gospel reading from Matthew emphasized the greatest commandment—Christ’s call to love God—and then to love your neighbor (Mt 22:34-40).

The multicultural assembly took that Scripture advice to heart as they recalled the devotion of St. Martin de Porres, who dedicated his life to serving God despite being mistreated because he was biracial.

The son of a Spanish gentleman and freed black slave from Panama who immigrated to Lima, Peru, Martin was born in 1579 and became a lay brother of the Dominican Friars in Lima at age 13. He wanted to become a priest, but was denied his dream because of the color of his skin.

“We feel very happy for being able to share the Good News of the Gospel with a Hispanic-American and Anglo-American community and our brothers and sisters in the Hispanic community as well,” Deacon Emilio Ferrer-Soto said in his homily.

“One of the songs familiar to the Hispanic-American community begins with the words: ‘Come and go with me to my Father’s house, where there is joy,’” he explained. “That song comes to mind today as we gather in this celebration. Indeed, there is joy in this house today. In spite of all the challenges and burdens of life, we still find a great joy … You, dear brothers and sisters, are a joyful people, and the whole Church needs that joy today.”

Deacon Ferrer-Soto reminded the people that, “Certainly, at this holy Mass, we have so many reasons to praise our Lord, Jesus Christ, our Savior … Tonight we have come together as brothers and sisters in one multicultural community—or better, one multicultural family—to listen to God’s word and receive the Eucharist. … The Lord speaks to us in many special ways, and calls us to worship together regardless of the color of our skin and our culture.

On this feast, Catholics celebrate the holiness of Jesus realized in St. Martin de Porres, he said, as well as the power and the wisdom of the Gospel demonstrated in the life of Martin, who was canonized by Pope John XXIII—now Blessed John XXIII—46 years ago.

“We know that our Peruvian brothers and sisters are very happy to celebrate with us,” Deacon Ferrer-Soto said. “The Lord of the Miracles continues doing miracles in and out of Peru, and all of this thanks to the intercession of St. Martin de Porres. … The example of Martin de Porres is a simple evidence that we can strive for holiness and salvation as Christ Jesus has shown us, first, by loving God … and, second, by loving your neighbor as yourself.”

The Church rises up men and women outstanding in holiness, he said, people like St. Martin de Porres, to inspire us and help us grow in holiness.

“We cannot say that we love God with our being and not strive to love each other,” the deacon said. “This is what it truly means to be a Christian. … We must act like Jesus.”

“Recently, we have seen and heard of so many acts of violence in our city, but also in our surrounding communities and indeed throughout the world,” Deacon Ferrer-Soto said. “These incidents sadden us, and we often ask what we can do to promote peace and end violence. … Peace and love begin by the way we think, speak and act toward our family, co-workers and neighbors. … We must follow the lesson of love given by St. Martin de Porres.

“There should be tears in our eyes whenever we see young people dying … from problems related to drugs, gangs, domestic violence, child abuse and many other problems that we know exist in our communities,” he said.

“We have one Father. … All of us belong to the family of God, in which there is only one color, and that is the color of the human race. We are all the children of God, and Jesus is our big brother. … Because God has loved us so perfectly, so powerfully, in Christ Jesus, we must, in turn, love each other.”

Father Arturo Miguel Ocampo, pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Indianapolis, was the principal celebrant for the fifth annual archdiocesan celebration of the feast of St. Martin de Porres on Nov. 3 at St. Patrick Church in Indianapolis. Concelebrants from Indianapolis parishes were Father Kenneth Taylor, pastor of Holy Angels Parish; Father Steven Schwab, pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish; and Franciscan Father Thomas Fox, Hispanic ministry assistant for the archdiocese, who is in residence at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish.

Deacon Emilio Ferrer-Soto, left, and Deacon Oscar Morales, right, assisted with the multicultural liturgy. Rev. Samuel Ruiz, a Lutheran minister standing behind Father Ocampo, was a special guest at the liturgy.

St. Monica parishioner Maria Pimental-Gannon of Indianapolis proclaims the first reading during the fifth annual archdiocesan celebration of the feast of St. Martin de Porres on Nov. 3 at St. Patrick Church in Indianapolis.