commitment to protect the sanctity and disciples and renew their spiritual By Mary Ann Wyand

March for Life.

the pro-life pilgrimage to the nation's throughout the archdiocese—including young adults and chaperones from joined about 865 high school students, Immaculate Conception to intensify Basilica of the National Shrine of the Jan. 21 at the Trinity College Chapel.

That night, as the principal celebrant Cardinal Rigali of Philadelphia, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, told diocesan pro-life directors during an afternoon Mass on Jan. 21 at the Trinity College Chapel.

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By Mary Ann Wyand

WASHINGTON, D.C.—God calls pro-life supporters to become pro-life disciples and renew their spiritual commitment to protect the sanctity and dignity of life from conception until natural death.

Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, told diocesan pro-life directors during an afternoon Mass on Jan. 21 at the Trinity College Chapel.

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Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein walks in the 36th annual March for Life on Jan. 22 in Washington, D.C., with Mary Schaffner, program coordinator of the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry; and St. Malachy parishioner Donna Johnson of Brownsburg.

Hundreds from central and southern Indiana participate in March for Life in Washington

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Hundreds from central and southern Indiana participate in March for Life in Washington
ARCHDIOCESAN PILGRIMAGES TO VINCENNES SET FOR MARCH

In honor of the 175th anniversary of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, a pilgrimage to Vincennes, Ind., will be led by Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein.

Started in 1833 as part of the Diocese of Vincennes, the pilgrimage was continued when the Diocese of Indianapolis became the Diocese of Vincennes.

This year, the Archdiocese will celebrate the pilgrimage on March 18.

For more information, call Kay Scoville at 317-236-1428 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1428.

Pro-life leaders criticize Obama for reversing Mexico City policy

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pro-life activists quickly denounced President Barack Obama’s Jan. 23 signing of an executive order reversing the Mexico City policy, a move that clears the way for the federal government to provide aid to programs that promote or perform abortions Overseas.

“Obama has reversed the policy to engineer more abortion and undermine efforts to promote safe and effective voluntary family planning in developing countries,” said Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, president of the bishops’ conference.

The policy was enacted by President Ronald Reagan in 1984. It prohibited taxpayer funding for groups that offer abortions or provide information, counseling or referrals about abortion.

“A federal law known as the Hyde Amendment prohibits U.S. funding from being used directly to provide abortions. The Mexico City policy was reversed by President Bill Clinton in 1993 and re-established under President George W. Bush in 2001. Clinton and Bush each took their actions on Jan. 22, the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s Jan. 1973 decisions of Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton that recognized abortion as a constitutional right and overturned state laws against abortion,” said Deirdre A. McQuade, assistant director of the Bishops’ Office of Pro-Life Activities.

The policy has been called the “global gag rule” by its opponents because it prohibits taxpayer funding for groups that even talk about abortion if there is an unplanned pregnancy, and is known as the Mexico City policy because it was unveiled at a U.N. conference there in 1984.

Cardinal George said Obama’s executive order will ensure that the birth control pill and other contraceptives are paid for with federal funds, which he said undermines the intent of the Hyde Amendment.

The policy also resulted in reduced abortions on a worldwide basis. “We should not export the tragedy of abortion,” he said.

The policy also has strong public criticism from Priests for Life, a group that calls itself the largest U.S. Catholic pro-life organization dedicated to ending abortion and euthanasia, and the Catholic bishops of Colorado, as well as House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio).

“This executive order is a profound disappointment for me and millions of other Americans who were hopeful that President Obama’s vow to govern from the center would apply to the divisive issue of abortion,” said Boehner, who is Catholic.

Many people expected Obama, like Clinton and Bush, to sign the executive order on Jan. 22, when tens of thousands of pro-life marchers were protesting U.S. abortion policy, but he decided to wait a day.

“I see that as a sign of respect to the Catholics and other pro-life activists,” said Thomas P. Melady, a former U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, who wanted to see the Mexico City policy remain intact.

“It says something about his style and the courtesy he extends to those of us participating in the March for Life,” Melady told Catholic News Service on Jan. 23. “It says he is concerned about the other point of view. He is using the Executive Branch of government to find common ground.”

That sentiment was echoed by the Rev. Jim Wallis, Sojourners, who said Obama’s call for abortion reduction and the delay was a clear message that the president wants to find a way to discuss abortion that will be less divisive.

“I support the president’s call for a new dialogue on the best ways to achieve abortion reduction while retaining his position on the issue,” Wallis said.

“I hope the discussion can now move beyond the usual politics of abortion, changing the polarized debate, and building a new common-ground movement to dramatically reduce abortion.”

Not everyone saw Obama’s waiting a day after the pro-life observance as a sign of respect.

“The president is not just respecting the pro-life cause; he had himself signed this order at all,” said Derkert A. M’Quade, assistant director of communications for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Office of Pro-Life Activities.

“We were concerned this new dialogue would tip the iceberg for President Obama’s abortion policy. This should strengthen our resolve” for the pro-life cause, she said.

The executive order will not fund abortions directly, M’Quade said, but it will indirectly provide financial resources to perform the procedures.
Pope lifts excommunications of Lefebvrite bishops

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI has lifted the excommunication of four bishops ordained against papal orders in 1988 by the late Archbishop Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre. The move was considered a major concession to the archbishop’s traditionalist followers.

The Vatican said the decree removing the excommunication, signed on Jan. 21 and made public three days later, marked an important step toward full communion with the Society of St. Pius X, founded by Archbishop Lefebvre in 1970.

It said some questions remain unresolved with the society, including its future status and that of its priests, and that these issues would be the subject of further talks.

“The Holy Father was motivated in this decision by the hope that complete reconciliation and full communion may be reached as soon as possible,” a Vatican statement said.

The head of the Swiss-based society, Bishop Bernard Fellay, had requested the removal of the excommunication in a letter on Dec. 15. Bishop Fellay wrote that he and the three other bishops illicitly ordained in 1988 were determined to remain Catholic and accepted the teachings of Pope Benedict “with filial spirit.”

The Vatican said that the pope had responded positively to the request in order to promote “the unity in charity of the universal Church and succeed in removing the scandal of division.”

In a letter published after the Vatican announcement, Bishop Fellay said his society was eager to begin talks with the Vatican about the causes of the “unprecedented crisis” shaking the Church.

During these discussions with the Roman authorities, we want to examine the deep causes of the present situation and, by bringing the appropriate remedy, achieve a lasting restoration of the Church,” he said.

The decree removing the excommunications, issued by the Congregation for Bishops, underlined the hope that this step would be followed by full communion and that all members of the Society of St. Pius X would demonstrate “true fidelity and true acknowledgment of the magisterium and the authority of the pope.”

The move came after one of the illicitly ordained bishops, British-born Bishop Richard Williamson, provoked Jewish protests with assertions that the Holocaust was exaggerated and that no Jews died in Nazi gas chambers. He spoke in a TV interview recorded last November, but aired in mid-January.

The Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, said emphatically that the Vatican did not share Bishop Williamson’s views, but that it was a completely separate issue from the lifting of the excommunication.

“Saying a person is not communicated is not the same as saying one shares all his ideas or statements,” Father Lombardi said.

The removal of the excommunication was a key condition of the Society of St. Pius X in its on-again, off-again talks with the Vatican over reconciliation. In 2009, the pope granted another of the society’s requests, re-opening the possibility for use of the traditional Latin Mass used before the Second Vatican Council.

A archbishop Lefebvre rejected several important teachings of the Second Vatican Council, including those related to religious liberty, ecumenism and liturgy. The Vatican statements did not mention the council’s teachings, and Father Lombardi had no comment on whether the society was asked to adhere to them.

The Vatican action came the day before the 50th anniversary of Blessed Pope John XXIII’s calling of the Second Vatican Council. Father Lombardi said it would be wrong to see the lifting of the excommunication as rejection of Vatican II.

“The contrary, I think it is a beautiful thing that the council is no longer considered an element of division, but an element in which every member of the Church can meet,” he said.

In addition to Bishops Fellay and Williamson, the decree removed the excommunication of French Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais and Argentine Bishop Alfredo Garrella. The Vatican said in 1988 that Archbishop Lefebvre and the bishops, he ordained in 1988 automatic excommunication for defying papal orders against the ordination.

Bishop Fellay called the pope’s action a “uni lateral, benevolent and courageous act,” and described it as a victory for Catholic traditionalists worldwide. But he said he had made clear to the Vatican that the society still has problems with Vatican II.

He said, quoting from his Dec. 15 letter: “We are ready to write the creed with our own blood, to sign the anti-modernist oath, the profession of faith of Pius IV, we accept and make our own all the councils up to the Second Vatican Council, about which we express some reservations.”

Bishop Fellay added in his communiqué that “we are convinced that we remain faithful to the line of conduct initiated by our founder, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, whose reputation we hope to soon see restored.”

Cardinal Andre-Vingt-Trois of Paris, president of the French bishops’ conference, welcomed Pope Benedict’s action as a “gesture of mercy and openness for strengthening Church unity.” France is home to nearly 200,000 members of the laity who receive pastoral care from the Society of St. Pius X.

However, the cardinal rejected suggestions that the move would make it easier for Catholics “to be Catholic while making selections in Church teaching, doctrine and Church tradition.”

The Society of St. Pius X is like a religious order. Its members are made up of its deacons, priests and four bishops. Lay Catholics who receive pastoral care from the society are not members.

“Since every Church is able to suspend a penality—it’s an opportunity, an open door allowing Christians to reconsider the fullness of communion with the Church,” Cardinal Vingt-Trois told the archdiocesan Notre Dame Radio on Jan. 24. “People who, for the most part, present themselves sincerely as defenders of tradition also give themselves a magisterial power to distinguish good from bad tradition. But such an act of discernment can only be an act of the Church, not of some particular group within the Church.”

French Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard of Bourdeaux said Pope Benedict knew “the drama a schism represents in the Church” and wished to “go as far as he could in extending his hand.” Cardinal Ricard is a member of the Pontifical Commission “Ecclesia Dei,” which oversees the reconciliation of Lefebvrite Catholics with the Church.

“The lifting of the excommunication isn’t the end but the beginning of a process of dialogue,” Cardinal Ricard said in a Jan. 24 statement. “It doesn’t regulate two fundamental questions: the juridical structure of the St. Pius X fraternity in the Church and the agreement on dogmatic and ecclesiological questions. But it opens a path to travel together, which will doubtless be long and demand better mutual knowledge and esteem.”

From the Society of St. Vincent of Paul Memorial Program.

During our fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2008, the Society of St. Vincent of Paul Archdiocesan Council received $18,380 from people who made donations in memory of a relative, friend or co-worker. Their thoughtfulness and generosity helped us operate our Client Choice Food Pantry at 3001 E. 30th Street and our Distribution Center at 1201 E. Maryland for over one week, and over 3,000 families were provided food, clothing and household necessities from SVPD. So when you read: “In lieu of flowers please make a contribution to Society of St. Vincent of Paul, please send your donations to: 3001 E. 30th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46218 or donate online to: www.svdpindy.org remember that you are honoring a special person while you are helping people in need.

May God bless you!
I

36th annual March for Life in

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that promote or perform abortion

government to provide aid to programs

abortions or provide information,

the U.S. Agency for International

that reversed the Mexico City policy.

from conception to natural death.

him as far as policies concerning abortion

Obama to show what “change” means to

pro-life postcard campaign to oppose

were asked to participate in a nationwide

some restrictions on abortion.

a majority of Americans support at least

in December by the U.S. Conference of

unwavering commitment to life.

actions, by the millions, show our

of President Obama’s first acts, I have

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, who

do—executive orders like this present

could present more setbacks where life

executive order on the day of the march,

movement respect by not signing the

provided a powerful witness to life.

legalizing abortion. They say there is

Most Rev. Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.,

comes to life issues, we need to

A call for change? When it

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary

of Indianapolis distributes copies of postcards

opposing the Freedom of Choice Act to

parishioners during Mass on Jan. 25

at Holy Rosary Church. Parishioner Danica

Hostetler of Indianapolis prepares to send

the postcards while her children watch with

interest.

federal abortion rights legislation pending

in Congress.

Church officials and legal experts have

said the proposed Freedom of Choice Act

(FOCA) would make abortion a

fundamental right that would eliminate

all existing pro-life laws and policies that

have been enacted since 1973.

The campaign conducted in parishes

throughout the country is a way for

Catholics who supported Obama for

president to tell him they did so despite,

not because of, his stand on abortion,

said officials from the U.S. bishops’

pro-life office.

“If any Catholics voted for Obama

despite his position on abortion, and they

have an obligation to say, ‘This is not

why I voted for you,’” said Richard M.

Duerflinger, associate director of the

Office of Pro-Life Activities of the

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“I am in no way suggesting that voting

for Obama was a practical, political decision,

or that those who voted for him are in any

way to be condemned for their actions,”

said Duerflinger.

Many pro-life leaders are concerned

that Planned Parenthood would seriously

challenge confronts Americans—the

Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA). This

legislation, if passed by Congress and signed

by the president, would make abortion a

fundamental right.

The president has publicly promised

Planned Parenthood that he will sign into law

this radical pro-abortion legislation.

If FOCA were to become the law of the

land, Catholic hospitals would have to close

because they would be forced to perform

abortions. Catholics would be told to violate

their consciences as doctors, nurses,

social workers and teachers or as other

professionals who deal with abortion-minded

women.

In a nation that was built on religious

toleration, FOCA would not only alienate

Catholics from the political process; it would

also persecute Catholics and otherChristians

who refuse to disobey God’s Divine Law.

The time is past due for Catholics to

become politically astute, responsible citizens

who act as moral compasses in the

world. In the years ahead, Catholics must

have the courage and opportunity to

bring the truth of their faith to the political

arena. Only then will our nation’s laws and

policies at home and abroad safeguard the

dignity and sanctity of human life.

To build a culture of life, we must train

pro-life leaders who can present a clear pro-life

message to political office holders, Catholic,

and others of good will, who will restore respect

for human life from conception to natural death.

Perhaps some of these future leaders

will be found among our archdiocesan youth

and young adults, who marched in protest of

Roe v. Wade in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 22

during the national March for Life Rally.

(Servants of the Gospel of Life Sister Diane

Carollo is the director of the archdiocesan

Office for Pro-Life Ministry.)

Declining World Religious

Statistics gathered by Italian Claretian Father Angelo Pardilla

show definite decline of men and women religious.

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<tr>
<th>RELIGIOUS</th>
<th>1965</th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>2005</th>
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<td>ALL MEN</td>
<td>329,799</td>
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<td>214,904</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALL WOMEN</td>
<td>961,264</td>
<td>728,281</td>
<td>633,675</td>
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Recent polls, including one conducted in December by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, have indeed shown that a majority of Americans support at least some restrictions on abortion.

Last weekend, Catholics in pews throughout central and southern Indiana were asked to participate in a nationwide pro-life postcard campaign to oppose

--Mike Krokos

Our faith calls us to be voices for the voiceless, and those voices are needed now more than ever. There is strength in numbers. May our actions, by the millions, show our unwavering commitment to life.
A
s our society confronts the dire consequences of the current plunge in the economy, so does our local Church. We live in the real world. But the reality of the situation in the Church is compounded by the numbers of impoverished folks who understandably and rightly are turning to us for help. However challenging it may be, as Pope Benedict X VI reminds us, we Catholics are not like a federation of individualists who tend to our own needs while turning a blind eye to those in need around us. We are not individualists who care for others if and when it is convenient and it doesn't require sacrifice. It is of the essence of being Catholic and Christian that we are a communion of believers, a people called to charity in any circumstance.

In his famous encyclical letter on charity, the pope teaches us that proclaiming the Word of God and participating in the sacramental life of the Church are incomplete if charity is not set aside. In other words, we share the responsibility to look after each other, especially those in greatest need.

The Catholic Church is not an abstract organization or institution that exists just for its own sake or that exists merely as an administrative body. We believe that we are the Body of Christ instituted by Christ to carry on his mission and ministry in our world.

Yes, the Church organizes itself in order to administer the mission of Christ, in order to provide for the real needs of ministry. It organizes itself so that the mission of Christ can be proclaimed and that the sacraments of Christ, especially the Eucharist, can be provided. The Church organizes itself so that the ministry of charity, which is a shared responsibility of all Catholics, is promoted for all of us, but especially for the poor.

I suppose the most immediately visible way in which the Church is organized is in our local parishes. The parishes are the places in which most Catholics enjoy the proclamation of the Gospel, the Eucharist and other sacraments. Our parishes are the forums in which the Church's mission and ministry are most visibly alive.

It is difficult for some, perhaps many folks, to realize and understand that the good of parish life and a large part of the mission and ministry of parishes depends on their ability to maintain communion with the other parishes, which together are the archdiocese.

Together, our parishes share aspects of Christ's mission that otherwise would be difficult if not impossible to carry out by individual parishes.

It is often spoken of as “shared ministries.” Examples of shared ministries are the works of archdiocesan Catholic Charities, or ministry in our Home Mission parishes that need the help of other parish communities in order to provide pastoral care in some of our rural and urban localities.

All Catholics of our archdiocese, like members of a large family, share the challenge of providing for our poor people, especially our poor children. The needs of the poor and of our children in pockets of poverty are more severe in these troubled times.

Even as most of us are seriously affected by the current “economic tsunami,” we cannot turn our backs on our sisters and brothers who are in desperate circumstances. Nor is this a time when we can allow ourselves to curtail the resources that all of us need to strengthen our faith and to maintain a healthy spiritual and moral life.

In the spiritual arena, our human limitations cause all of us to lose ground in need. Not only do we need to help provide for our physical and spiritual needs within our parish boundaries, but also for those faith families in even more severe circumstances who need our help in a special way.

Especially in difficult times, as the pope teaches us, we need to ponder the reality that whatever we have by way of human, material and spiritual gifts we receive by the providence and blessing of God. No one of us, rich or poor.

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

**SEEKING THE FACE OF THE LORD**

**BUSCANDO CARA DEL SEÑOR**

Even in hard times, ministry of charity must continue

El ministerio de la caridad debe continuar aún en tiempos difíciles

**M**ientras nuestra sociedad enfrenta los terribles efectos del desmoronamiento actual de la economía, nuestra iglesia local también sufre un duro golpe.

Vivimos en el mundo real. Pero la realidad de la situación en la Iglesia se caracteriza con claridad por la desigualdad impresionante que comprenible y acertadamente acuden a nosotros para obtener ayuda.

Independientemente de lo difícil que pueda ser, tal y como nos recuerda el Papa Benedicto X VI, los católicos no somos como una federación de individualistas que suelen atender sus propias necesidades sin dar importancia a las de otras personas que necesitan ser cuidadas. No somos individualistas que se preocupan por los demás únicamente cuando les es conveniente y si no supone sacrificios.

La esencia de ser católicos y cristianos se fundamenta en que somos una comunidad de creyentes.

Como tales, estamos llamados a practicar la caridad en cualquier circunstancia. En su famosa carta encíclica sobre la misión y su ministerio en nuestro mundo.

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El ministerio de la caridad debe continuar aún en tiempos difíciles.
Events Calendar

February 1
Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Twister Circle, Oldenburg. OASIS Booster Club, all you can eat breakfast, 7 a.m.-noon, free will donation. Information: 812-933-0173, ext. 244.

February 2

February 3-March 31
St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, 10405 Haverstick Road, Carmel, Ind. (Diocese of Lafayette). Divorce Recovery Workshop, eight weekly sessions. Information: 317-864-8459 or 317-496-4017.

February 4

February 5
St. Mary Parish, 317 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis. Solo Seniors, Catholic, educational, charitable and social single men and women, single, widowed or divorced, new members welcome. 6:30 p.m. information.

February 9
St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, 535 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. Catholic Cemeteries, Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 317-236-1586 or retreates@mountsaintfrancis.org. Information: 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. includes materials. Information: 502-582-2971.

February 13

February 14
Benedictine Father Noël Mueller, presenter. Information: 800-581-6905 or info@benedictinn.org.

February 15
Saint Meinrad Archabbe, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. “Woman Talks: Life lessons for Women by Women—Encountering the Legal System,” Denee Dall, presenter, 6:30-9 p.m. $25 includes dinner. Information: 317-788-7581 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

February 16

February 26

February 27
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Teen Lenten Lecture Series: A New Look at the Bible,” information. 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. $10 per person. Information: 812-933-6437.

February 28

March 3
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Centring Prayer,” Franciscan Sister Kathy Campbell, presenter. 9:11 a.m.-1 p.m. $15 per person. Information: 812-933-6437.

March 4
Benedict Archabbe, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. “Woman Talks: Life lessons for Women by Women—Encountering the Legal System,” Jane Dall, presenter, 6:30-9 p.m. $25 includes dinner. Information: 317-788-7581 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

March 7

March 8

March 11
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Lumen Dei meeting” and book. Information: 317-788-7581 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

March 14

March 18

March 25

March 26

March 27

March 28

March 29

March 30

March 31

March 31
Modernization efforts of agency encounter technology snafu

By Bridget Curtis Ayer

Good ideas don’t always pan out in practice. Modernizing some of the services rendered by the state’s Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) to improve access to benefits is one of them. The attempt at rendering better services has resulted in, at least temporarily in some counties, an inability for many people to access any benefits.

Two bills, House Bill 1691, authored by Rep. Suzanne Crouch (D-Indianapolis), and House Bill 1195, authored by Rep. Bill Crawford (D-Indianapolis), have been introduced to address the problem. House Bill 1691 would prevent additional counties from moving to the new system until the joint Commission on Medicaid Oversight has reviewed the changes and status of the counties that have already implemented the eligibility determination changes. House Bill 1195 provides for specific measures to correct some of the problems noted in the summer study committee.

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) supports the review of the program, and is supportive of these bills because they call attention to a real and serious problem facing the elderly and families in need.

Three programs which are affected in the modernization effort include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps and Medicaid.

In 2007, Indiana’s FSSA signed a $1.6 billion contract with IBM Corp. and Affiliated Computer Services to implement a call system and Web program for welfare applicants.

This new system would be the entry point for applicants to access benefits. Previously, applicants had to visit a county welfare office, where they were assigned a caseworker to handle their application process through a face-to-face visit.

Debbie Schmidt, executive director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, said that their clients are experiencing a myriad of problems with the new system. “We’re seeing an increase in need caused by rising utility bills, unemployment, the mortgage crisis and the downturn of the economy in general,” Schmidt said. This increase in need, coupled with a new system which is complicated for applicants and Catholic Charities staff to navigate, has compounded the problem for those who are served by Catholic Charities.

"Many of our clients can’t get access or maintain their benefits,” Schmidt said. “In general, the poor do not have home computers, Internet access or even phone service.

"These are obstacles to gaining access,” she said. “The demand for computers at the library has increased significantly as this is also the way many go to apply for unemployment benefits.”

Lisa M. Young, who works with Schmidt as assistant director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, said “the new system is difficult to navigate.”

Lost paperwork, documents of one applicant being placed in another applicant’s file causing denial or delay of benefits for both applicants, and technology failure from unscanned signatures on the receiving end to the Web page being down for days highlight some of the problems encountered by those needing help. Not only is the Catholic Charities’ staff hearing complaints about these problems, they also are experiencing them firsthand as they work with their clients to help them access state benefits.

Corina Hurtado of Hispanic Health Advocate, a program of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, has experienced difficulties from document management errors made that result in delayed or denial of benefits to her clients.

“T he application process is complicated,” Hurtado said. “There’s really no easy way for an applicant to confirm their application was completed properly or even received. The person thinks they’ve applied in reality they haven’t.”

Theresa Teders, community services supervisor for Brief and Emergencies Services, a program for Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, said she has had clients who came to her very upset because they had Medicaid insurance card was rejected when they went to pick up a prescription at their local pharmacy.

Under the previous system, emergency assistance for food stamps would be expedited with a wait time of seven to 10 days, said Teders, but now the wait averages about 45 days.

John C. Etling, agency director of Catholic Charities Terre Haute, said he is also seeing longer delays for those being served in his area. “I’ve seen a delay in services [of] 30, 60 or even 90 days,” he said.

“There’s a disconnect somewhere in the process,” Etling said. “There’s one company that has an expertise in handling calls, another with an expertise in document collection and another that handles the document verification. The problem is there isn’t one company handling it all.”

Both bills, House Bill 1691 and House Bill 1195, have been assigned to the House Public Health Committee.

(Bridget Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion.)

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Catholic radio provides weekly legislative updates

As in years past, Glenn Tebbe, ICC executive director, will provide weekly legislative updates on Indianapolis Catholic radio.

They are broadcast at 11:05 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday on WSPM 89.1 FM following Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein’s weekly radio broadcast. Indianapolis Catholic Radio also streams on the Internet and can be heard statewide by going to www.catholicradioindy.org and clicking on the “Listen Now” button. †
Pro-life marchers turn Obama’s call for change against him at rally

WASHINGTON (CNS)—President Barack Obama and his vocal support of abortion came under fire from members of Congress, clergy and pro-life activists during the opening rally of the 36th annual March for Life.

For nearly two hours on Jan. 22, a crowd estimated at 100,000 listened to three dozen speakers pledge to fight efforts to expand the availability of abortion and to oppose any increases in federal funding for agencies that perform abortions.

The crowd’s disdain for Obama’s views on abortion offered a sharp contrast to the exuberance that nearly 2 million people showed at the 44th president at his inauguration on the very same grounds 48 hours earlier.

Speakers took an almost defiant stand against the new president in pledging to reverse the 1973 Supreme Court decisions of Roe v. Wade and Does v. Bolton that recognized abortion as a constitutional right and overturned state laws against abortion.

Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton...
abortion," the cardinal said. "We have great hope in the Lord's power to heal our land of the painful wound of legalized abortion." 

A archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein participated in the vigil Mass with six cardinals, eight other archbishops, 28 bishops, and hundreds of priests and seminarians.

"It's a wonderful symbol of the unity of our Church, especially gathered on a very serious and grave occasion because of the anniversary of Roe v. Wade," he said. "Archbishop Buechlein told some of the pilgrims. "It's also a sign of great hope to see so many of us together and to be united in prayer, but it was even greater to see the tremendous number of young adults and youths. What a tremendous gathering, especially of faith in the dignity of human life and the fact that we are created in God's image."

In his homily during Mass as with the archdiocesan pilgrims on Jan. 22 in the crypt church of the basilica, Archbishop Buechlein thanked the youths and young adults, "who hold fast to your pro-life commitment in a culture that is drifting more and more away from the Creator of our human dignity, from God himself."

The archbishop said "Amercans continue to struggle to understand a mature definition of human freedom and individual rights... Abortion is not permissible under any circumstance.

Servants of the Gospel of Life Sister Diane Caroll, director of the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, said "the fight to protect human life will certainly intensify in the future" because the President signed executive orders that reverse restrictions on overseas abortion policies.

"I'm here to support the pro-life cause and try to get Roe v. Wade changed," Jake Elstro said while he waited to march along Pennsylvania and Constitution avenues with a crowd that march organizers said totaled more than 100,000 people. "Just like football, it's a battle. We've just got to keep going and hope we can accomplish our goal."

"I want to support my faith and getting rid of this atrocity that is abortion," she said. "I have been praying for a change of heart in the Congress. Some things are probably going to change for the worse, but I just pray that it won't."

Butler University freshman Christopher Gogian, a member of St. Jude Parish in Fort Wayne, Ind., is helping start a pro-life group at the Indianapolis college.

"This is my fourth march," he said. "I think the most important thing is to stay focused on what's going on in the pro-life movement. ...We have to be patient and consistently active in what we're doing to end abortion. ...Men and women who have been affected by abortion need to get their message out to the truth can be revealed to those who are not understanding of the issue."

Indiana University sophomore Katherine Lee, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis and St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, wore a cap with "Ave Maria" written on it during the march to remind people that the Immaculate Conception had said "yes" to life.

"I want to march for the babies," she said. "I want to fight for life... The pro-life movement is still alive. It's still growing strong. I want to be a witness to that, and to see people from all over the country come together and join as one body to support the dignity of life."

Laura Estrid, a Marian College graduate who ministers as coordinator of religious education at St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish in Cambridge City, traveled with parish teenagers on the bus trip to the march.

"It's inspiring to see how many people here are saying abortion has got to stop," she said. "I just to see all the seminarians and priests at the Mass gives you hope for the Church. Ninety percent of the young people here were born after the Roe v. Wade decision, and they're all survivors. That just amazes me to think about it." Estrid said she feels sad because the President is "not wanting or willing to stand up for the Gospel of Life and values. What we need to do right now is to pray, to pray very hard, for our President, for his soul and for his conversion."
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— Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein

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Muslims, Christians and Jews have similarities and differences

**By John Borelli**

When asked about the beliefs of Muslims, many Americans would probably say something about the five pillars of Islam. This is a remarkably good sign of how much education has taken place in the years since Sept. 11, 2001. “Islam” is an Arabic word that means loving submission or total dedication, implying that a Muslim does all in his or her power to submit to God’s will. Islam implies deeds or acts, and five basic acts constitute the five pillars:

- **The act of faith in no god but God, and in Muhammad as the messenger of God.**
- **Prayer or the confirmation of submission to God through prescribed prayers five times a day.**
- **Paying the poor tax, a fixed percentage of one’s income for those in need.**
- **Keeping the annual month-long fast of Ramadan.**
- **Participation in the hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca, if at all possible during the prescribed time of the year.**

The foundational declaration of the Second Vatican Council, “Nostra Aetate” (Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions), approved and promulgated on Oct. 28, 1965, mentioned three of these pillars: prayer, almsgiving and fasting:

“The Church regards with esteem the faith which is professed by Muslims, and its fundamental beliefs. Muslims believe in the one God, creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to humans, they take pains to submit wholeheartedly even to his inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, whom the faith of Islam is gladly linked, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere him as a prophet, and Muhammad as the messenger of God. They also honor Mary, his mother, and Jesus as God, they revere him as a prophet but identified as a monotheist (hanif) and friend (khalif) of God. Some Muslims, following the Church’s “esteem” for Muslims for their faith in the one God, creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to humans, they take pains to submit wholeheartedly even to his inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, who is the first prophet of the Bible, though identified as a patriarch by Jews and Christians. Jesus and Mary also are called prophets. There are others too, most of whom are figures in the Bible. Though the term “prophet” is shared by Jews, Christians and Muslims, this should not be passed over lightly. Members of the three Abrahamic traditions may agree what it is to be prophetic by hearing and speaking God’s word and acting upon it, but they differ on the weight and application of the term “prophet.”

Christians declare that the Word of God is made flesh as a person while Muslims believe that God’s words have become concrete in a book, the Quran. Muslims distinguish between Islam—what Muslims must do—and i mam—what Muslims must believe God has taught. An imam is one who stands before the assembly and leads the prescribed prayers five times a day. “Imam” is an Arabic word for the interior condition of faith. The Quran says, “The righteoues is he who believes in God, the last day, the angels, the books and the prophets” (2:177). The Quran gives this list several times.

Thus, Muslims believe in the one and only God, who has spoken to humanity from the beginning and who will judge on the last day. God has spoken through prophets, but most Christians will probably be surprised that the list of prophets drawn from the Quran and other Muslim sources is longer and does not include certain major prophets of the Bible, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah.

To Muslims, Adam was the first prophet and Noah was one too, individuals whom Jews and Christians do not call “prophet.” A braham, another prophet but identified as a monotheist (hanif) and friend (khalif) of God in the Quran, is a model of faith, as “Nostra Aetate” reports, though identified as a patriarch by Jews and Christians. Jesus and Mary also are called prophets. There are others too, most of whom are figures in the Bible. Though the term “prophet” is shared by Jews, Christians and Muslims, this should not be passed over lightly. Members of the three Abrahamic traditions may agree what it is to be prophetic by hearing and speaking God’s word and acting upon it, but they differ on the weight and application of the term “prophet.”

Christians declare that the Word of God is made flesh as a person while Muslims believe that God’s words have become concrete in a book, the Quran. Muslims believe in the existence of angels, spirits to whom God has given specific tasks. In fact, Gabriel (jibril) is the angel of inspiration who brings revelation to the prophets. Muslims also believe in lesser spirits or jinn, some of whom are good and others evil. Though Christians and Muslims disagree on particular aspects of each of these beliefs, the bishops of the Second Vatican Council declare the Church’s “esteem” for Muslims for the belief in the one God, creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to us through the prophets and to whom we lovingly submit in faith, just as Abraham did millennia ago.

With Muslims, Christians can celebrate the faith of A braham continues in the hearts and minds of devout Jews, Christians and Muslims.

John Borelli is special assistant for interreligious initiatives to the president of Georgetown University in Washington. The former associate director for ecumenical and interreligious affairs for the U.S. Bishops also serves as national coordinator for interreligious dialogue and mission for the U.S. Jesuit Conference.†

**Followers of Islam, gathered outside Haram, the Grand Mosque, attend an evening prayer service in Mecca in Saudi Arabia on the eve of Hajj, the pilgrimage season of penance and sacrifice. Muslims are obligated to make the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lives if they are physically and financially able to travel there.**

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**Discussion Point**

Seeking ‘the face of Islam in the U.S.’

What do you know about Islam? What would you like to know?

“What I would like to know is just what the main goal of Islam is, the crux of the religion. And I’d like to know not only the end goal of people who follow Islam, but [and] what path would they follow to get there.” (Kevin Blau, Merrimac, Wis.)

“When I lived in Seattle ..., my pastor was from Lebanon. He grew up surrounded by Muslims, and he told us how peacefully Catholicts and Muslims got along, [He said] that many Muslims sent their children to Catholic schools because of the quality education they could get there, and they didn’t worry about their children being taught religion. ... Today I have mixed feelings. ... I know Muslims who are average Joes, ... but I know that some are radicals. ... I’d like to know which is more representative of Muslims in America. I’d like to know the face of Islam in the U.S.”

(Honor Leitzen, Alexandria, Va.)

Lend Us Your Voice

A upcoming edition asks: Other than the Sunday Mass readings, how do you learn about the Bible?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to cgreens@catholicnews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100.†
Where is God leading you? You may be surprised

Initially, I phoned three contacts in the area. One laughed, and said they had just laid off 13 employees. A second said her agency wasn’t as unfortunate as others because only one position was eliminated. She promised to contact me immediately when any positions opened up. I somewhat identified with Mary and Joseph when those times, which make me wonder about bitter women like Friedan.

Still another historically revisionist attitude about times that I am familiar with is the case that I grew up with, the case of dropping the atomic bomb at the end of World War II. Some of the self-appointed moralists claim it was unjustified and immoral. Well, my answer is: That was then and this is now.

Get over it.

Well, all I can say is that every principled and authoritative person I knew or read about at the time agreed that dropping the bomb was both necessary and morally obligatory to end slaughter on both sides. Those of us who are still alive now continue to claim this.

All this is not to say that we bear no responsibility for our current choices in life. We are obligated by God to do so.

But we must remember also that we can use only the information and abilities that are available at the time. Hindsight always seems better, but that doesn’t make what happened earlier bad for our souls.

(Cynthia Dewes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle Church and a regular columnist for The Criterion.)

Perspectives

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Older parents give younger ones perspective

I suppose I should be used to it by now. After all, I’ve been raising children for more than seven years. It has been a long road. In that time, I’ve found to my surprise that there are still a few little ones in tow, oh, a few hundred times. But I’ve learned that when my younger sons start being well, the little ones are there during the middle of Mass, so I get distracted. I’m concerned not much for my own participation in the Mass but for those people around me.

I get distracted, a woman once said when little Victor keeps dropping a missalette onto the pew in front of us or makes faces with the folks sitting behind us that people around us are being distracted from the reason we have all come together.

Of course, I have taken our children to the back of church lots of times if they really start throwing a fit. But sometimes it is hard to know if they’ve crossed the line and made Mass a difficult experience for others. But I can say that, though, what I’ve found is that I’m far more distracted over my children’s behavior than the good folks who sit by us all the time.

A lot of times, a people good bit older than me who have sat in pews front or behind my family have come up to me after my wife or me after Mass.

With smiles on their faces, they’ll say “How’s all the family doing?” And if their own kids were similarly rambunctious when they were young, often, they’ll try to perk up the kids with offers of toys, activities, and other things. As I have one boy who is not only a 12-year-old (6) Jesus staying behind in the Temple after his parents left for their hotel room, the boy was recognized as a “little prophet.”

Jesus’ first trip to the Temple is celebrated liturgically on Feb. 2, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord. On that occasion, the old Simon recognized the Christ child as Israel’s long-awaited Mashiach. He blessed Mary and prayed her child, but also warned her that a sword of sorrow would pierce her heart.

At the same time, the aged prophetess Anna likewise praised the newborn king of Israel and said that “everyone who listened to her (Lv 2:22-40).

I know my own little sons are not on pews near us, but the ones who sit by us during Mass.

And I know that, on at least one occasion, there was a misunderstanding in the only Mass the little son of the 12-year-old (6) Jesus staying behind in the Temple after his parents left for their hotel room. The little boy was recognized as a “little prophet.”

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Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Feb. 1, 2009

• Deuteronomy 18:15-20
• 1 Corinthians 7:32-35
• Mark 1:21-28

The Book of Deuteronomy furnishes the first reading for this weekend.

Deuteronomy appears in modern Bibles as the fifth book in sequence in the Old Testament. It is one of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, and all of them are attributed to Moses.

In this reading, Moses addresses the Chosen People, whom he has led, with God’s help, from Egypt where they were enslaved.

He promises them that God will send proclamers with whom the people can relate on their journey. But if anyone presumes to take the role of prophet upon himself or herself, without having been called by God, then this impostor will die.

God will take care of his people.

St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians is the source of the second reading.

From the earliest days of Christianity, virginity has been treasured. Christians have never been forbidden to marry, although all Christians are bound to be chaste, according to their state in life. However, over the centuries, Christians have chosen lifelong virginity for religious reasons.

Corinth, in the first century A.D., was a city notorious for its outrageous immorality. It was a busy commercial center. Visitors often availed themselves of the pleasures of the flesh provided in Corinth. Indeed, a prostitute, the goddess of love and carnal desire, was the city’s special deity.

Paul sees virginity as a powerful Christian witness and, from a more cynical hunch that virtue is impossible for all, he has led, with God’s help, from Egypt where they were enslaved.

It’s how we use the sun will shine.

That standing tall will be two winters in the year.

May we see shadow, he goes back to sleep through the cold days ahead.

I often wonder, what would a sunny Candlemas Day mean? Was I happy to God, which the Lord still teaches that such possessions occur.

However, all people have “unclean spirits” within them. All people sin, and sin is the mark of the devil’s involvement, to some extent at least, in any person’s spiritual life.

People can be aware of their sins, and indeed usually they are aware of how and when they turn away from God and harm themselves or others. For many, this realization produces a sense of guilt or the cynical hunch that virtue is impossible for them to attain.

For them, these readings are especially comforting and encouraging. God will never leave us. Such was the promise of Moses.

This promise was perfectly fulfilled in Jesus, with God’s own power to put away any unclean spirit. He can strengthen our resolve to be holy, even to be holy in the most radical way.

Reflection

Thanks be to God, few people today would say that they, or great numbers of people, are “possessed by the devil,” although the Church still teaches that such possessions occur.

However, all people have “unclean spirits” within them. All people sin, and sin is the mark of the devil’s involvement, to some extent at least, in any person’s spiritual life.

People can be aware of their sins, and indeed usually they are aware of how and when they turn away from God and harm themselves or others. For many, this realization produces a sense of guilt or the cynical hunch that virtue is impossible for them to attain.

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Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

Purification of Mary, presentation of Jesus are observed on same day

Q I’ve been trying to learn the significance of Candlemas Day. I know that we celebrate the Purification of the Blessed M other on Feb. 2, which is also called Candlemas Day, but I’m not sure why.

A Yes, there is an interesting connection between these celebrations.

According to the law of Moses in the Old Testament, a mother was ritually unclean for a period of time after giving birth—40 days after the birth of a boy and 80 days after the birth of a girl.

At the end of that time, the mother came to the priest to be “purified.” (See Leviticus, Chapter 12.)

Any firstborn male, human or animal, was considered to belong to the Lord. A nimals were sacrificed. Human firstborn sons were presented in the Temple if possible, and certain payments were made that charged over time. (See Ex 34:19-20.)

Both of these events, the purification of Mary and the presentation of Jesus, are commemorated on the same day. When they began to be celebrated in Rome, perhaps in the fourth or fifth centuries, the date was set on Feb. 2, 40 days after Dec. 25, the day the Roman Church celebrated the birth of the Lord. Eventually, candles became major elements in celebrating this feast, thus the tradition of blessing candles on that day.

For some unknown reason, a folk legend in the Middle Ages says that a sunny Candelmas Day meant a cold spring. As a Scottish saying put it, “If sunny Candlemas Day meant a cold winter, then sunny Easter Day means a hot summer.”

Whatever the meaning of that Gospel passage, the one essential truth to remember is that God our Father is always there with open arms to welcome us, and the Holy Spirit is always ready to help us go there.

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer 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.

My Journey to God

Standing Tall

From clinging faults, Lord, set us free.
Remove false pride
That we may see.

Don’t let us feel A jealous twinge—
When we fall short, A mother wins.

Make us aware The standing tall Is not beyond The stance of all.

The sun will shine. (We may or not!) It’s how we use it.

What we have got.

By Dorothy M. Colgan

(Dorothy M. Colgan is a member of St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad, St. Ann parishioner of Bernette Ray of Indianapolis carries a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe along West 86th Street in Indianapolis during the rosary march on Sept. 21, 2008, to start the “40 Days for Life” pro-life prayer campaign in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. She has experienced abortion and now assists with the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry’s abortion reconciliation ministry in central and southern Indiana.)

Daily Readings

Monday, Feb. 2

The Presentation of the Lord

Malachi 3:1-4
Psalm 24:7-10
Hebrews 2:14-18
Luke 2:22-40
or Luke 2:22-32

Tuesday, Feb. 3

Blaise, bishop and martyr
Ansgar, bishop
Hebrews 12:1-4
Psalm 22:26-28, 30-32
Mark 5:21-43

Wednesday, Feb. 4

Hebrews 12:4-17, 11-15
Psalm 103:1-2, 13-14, 17-18a
Mark 6:1-6

Thursday, Feb. 5

Agatha, virgin and martyr
Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24
Psalm 48:2-4, 9-11
Mark 6:7-13

Friday, Feb. 6

Paul Miki, martyr and his companions, martyrs
Hebrews 13:1-8
Psalm 27:1, 3, 5-9
Mark 6:14-29

Saturday, Feb. 7

Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21
Psalm 23:1-6
Mark 6:30-34

Sunday, Feb. 8

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Job 7-11-14
Psalm 147:1-6
1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23
Mark 1:29-39
Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday the week before the publication date for inclusion in the Obituaries section of The Criterion. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in The Criterion. Order priests and religious who are brothers or sisters are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituary sections on this page.


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Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Office of Catholic Education
1400 North Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367
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Additional information

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Sister Loretto Emenogu eager to continue Church’s mission work

By Mary Ann Wyand

The statistics on global poverty are heartrending, even incomprehensible.

It’s hard to believe that 200 million children who are under 5 years old suffer from malnutrition or that 6,000 children die from polluted water each day or that, during the next 24 hours, 40,000 children will die of starvation and diseases related to malnutrition somewhere in the world.

It’s also difficult to comprehend that half of the world’s population—a billion people—suffer from diseases that can be prevented and treated.

And it’s sad to think about how, on a given night, 775,000 Americans are homeless throughout the United States.

Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy Sister Loretto Emenogu, a native of Nigeria, hopes that Catholics will remember their brothers and sisters throughout the world and in their home missions who are sick, hungry and in need of help.

On July 1, 2008, Sister Loretto began serving the Church in central and southern Indiana as the mission educator for the archdiocesan Mission Office.

She succeeds Sister Demetria Smith, a Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa, who served as mission educator in the archdiocese for 13 years.

As a part of her ministry, Sister Loretto promotes the work of the Church’s Holy Childhood Association, which helps impoverished people throughout the world, during her presentations to students in Catholic schools and parish religious education programs.

Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedi, vicar general, said Sister Loretto was asked to serve as the archdiocese’s full-time mission educator last September when Sister Demetria decided to move to a different ministry position, working part time at the receptionist’s desk.

“I see everybody as my own brother and sister,” Sister Loretto said. “I’m so blessed to be asked to do this ministry work and labor in the missions and having been there herself, she was very knowledgeable and could speak from the heart about the needs.

“When Sister Demetria decided to move to a different ministry position, working part time at the receptionist’s desk,” he explained, “Sister Loretto, who was working in [the archdiocese’s] Refugee Resettlement [Program], was also ready to make a transition. She is from Nigeria and has worked in the missions in Africa.”

“Msgr. Schaedi invites Catholic school faculty members as well as parish coordinators of religious education programs—including adult education courses and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults—to contact Sister Loretto about scheduling a presentation on evangelization and the poverty-relief efforts of the archdiocesan Mission Office in cooperation with Catholic Relief Services and the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

Sister Loretto describes her new ministry as “a blessing” because it enables her to talk about God, the Catholic faith, mission work throughout the world, and religious vocations to children and adults.

“I want to help keep the light burning in the hearts of our children,” Sister Loretto said. “I’m so blessed to be asked to do this ministry with the children and help them to follow the steps of Jesus in their life and continue the mission work of the Catholic Church.

“I see everybody as my own brother and my own sister because we are all created by one God and have one faith, the greatest faith, in common all over the world,” she said. “When I educate the children about the missions, my priority is making them understand that we have one thing in common. We are all one family, and it doesn’t matter where you come from.”

Sister Loretto said she found her religious vocation at age 5 in Kaduna, in northern Nigeria, after dreaming about St. Agnes, who told her that she would grow up to be a nun. At age 11, she dreamed about St. Agnes again, who told her once more that God was calling her to become a sister.

She joined the Daughters of Mercy MOTHER of Mercy in Nigeria at age 13½ after attending St. Joseph’s School and continued her education at the order’s Mercy High School.

The late Bishop Anthony Gogo-Nwedo, a member of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and founder of the Daughters of Mercy, arranged for her to work in the missions in Africa.

In 2004, she began working in the Refugee Resettlement Program and taught cultural orientation to refugees from different parts of the world.

(For more information about mission education programs, call the archdiocesan Mission Office at 317-236-1485, 800-382-9836, ext. 1485, or log on to www.archindy.org/mission.)