Pope Benedict XVI signed a document Jeanne Jugan in 1982, and Poor’s Baltimore province. “We’ve coordinator in the Little Sisters of the Poor are ‘thrilled’ that their foundress of the Little Sisters of the Poor are ‘thrilled’ that their foundress, blessed Jeanne Jugan, will be canonized.

Father Michael Magiera blends experience on opera stage with priestly ministry

By Sean Gallagher

He knows his lines by heart. He knows precisely what to do and when to do it. He has entered into the very personality, the “persona,” of the role assigned to him. And he has dedicated himself to this task, so that those who will witness his performance might be mysteriously drawn into it with him.

Is this man an actor who brings an audience into a play or opera, or a priest who, by virtue of his ordination, stands in persona Christi (“in the person of Christ”) to lead the faithful in the Eucharist into a greater communion with the Lord in his suffering, death and resurrection?

Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter Father Michael Magiera has lived both sides of this question.

As a young man in his 30s in the 1980s, he was an international opera singer. And in 2005, he was ordained a priest for a congregation dedicated to celebrating the traditional Latin Mass. He has served for nearly three years as the associate pastor of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis.

Father Magiera has sought to bring the positive aspects of his experience on the stage to bear on his priestly ministry. But it was a long journey for him to arrive at this, his greatest role.

“I wanted to be a star”

Father Magiera’s dedication to his faith was not always as strong as it is now. As a young boy growing up in Philadelphia in the 1950s and early 1960s, he was enchanted with the stage to bear on his priestly ministry.

More than a decade before he became a seminarian, Michael Magiera performed the role of Acis in George Frideric Handel’s opera “Acis and Galatea” in 1984 at the Stadttheater in Augsburg, Germany.

Little Sisters of the Poor are ‘thrilled’ that their foundress, blessed Jeanne Jugan, will be canonized

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The announcement that Pope Benedict XVI will canonize Blessed Jeanne Jugan, the foundress of the Little Sisters of the Poor, on Oct. 11 has created excitement among members of the congregation worldwide.

“We knew it was only a matter of time, but everyone was just thrilled when the official announcement was made,” said Sister Constance Veit, publications coordinator in the Little Sisters of the Poor’s Baltimore province. “We’ve anticipated this for so long.”


On Feb. 21, Pope Benedict presided over a consistory that gave final approval for the canonization of 10 people, including Blessed Jeanne, who began her ministry on the streets of France taking the elderly and poor into her home in the early decades of the 1800s.

To support her ministry, Blessed Jeanne begged for money, a tradition that the Little Sisters of the Poor consider a fundamental part of their mission today. The canonization will take place during the Synod of Bishops for Africa.

New leader meets archdiocese he calls ‘snapshot’ of universal Church

NEW YORK (CNS)—Calling the diverse New York Archdiocese “a real icon, a snapshot of the Church universal, of the Church in the United States,” Arch - bishop Timothy M. Dolan pledged his life, his heart and his soul to the people of the archdiocese on Feb. 23.

Pope Benedict XVI named Archbishop Dolan, head of the Milwaukee Archdiocese since 2002, to succeed the retiring Cardinal Edward M. Egan. He is to be installed as New York archbishop on April 15.

At a press conference in the New York Catholic Center, Archbishop Dolan said, “I can tell you already that I love you. I need so much your prayers and support. I am so honored, humbled and happy at the prospect of serving as your pastor.”

As pastor, he said he has “a sacred mandate to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and how the Church transmits his mystery, his ministry and his invitation.”

He said the message is intended to serve everybody. “Nothing foreign is alien to us. That’s part of the Catholic chemistry. We’re not just sanctity, not just sanctity, not just Sunday people.

“The Church through the ages has been a hyperkinetic partner of the arts, literature, health care and immigrants,” he added. “Look to us to continue that partnership.”

Archbishop Dolan promised to do whatever he could to affirm the priests of the archdiocese. “The vitality of this great archdiocese is in its parishes,” he said. “The priests are on the front lines. I am their servant. You can count on me to help them.

“I look forward to being with the priests,” he added. “That’s not a chore; that’s a choice.”

Archbishop Dolan said in his role as pastor that he would engage, rather than confront.

See NEW YORK, page 2
The swaying, overpowering guitars and drums just made me sick," he said. "I had gotten really tired of that. I decided I wanted to be a priest since the time I was 7 years old. For whatever reason, in the mid-1960s when things started to change, I thought, 'I don't like this.'"

Although in his young adult years he said he drifted away from the Church "when the homosexual things kicked in," Father Magiera says it was the post-Vatican II liturgical changes that were at the root of his abandoning of his faith.

His desire for the priesthood, though, was soon replaced by love for music and the stage.

After studying music and French as an undergraduate and teaching high school music for a year, he studied voice at Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts from 1976-79, then studied voice privately in New York for free.

He had big ambitions. "I wanted to be a star," he said. "I just imagined myself at [New York City] Opera or the [Metropolitan Opera] or some big place over in Europe or Chicago or San Francisco or something like that."

From 1982-87, he was a member of a German traveling opera company and performed as a guest singer on stages across that country as well as in Austria and France. During that time, he was invited to return to Philadelphia to play a role in an opera. His traveling expenses and executive suite in a hotel were paid, and he earned $6,000 for his services.

"I wanted to be a star at this point," he said. "Oh, yes he said, mimicking the producer at the time. But then, when he stepped back, he added, "I didn’t want that, of course.""

Coming home

Within a year of this triumph, he returned to Philadelphia for good, sobered, in part, by the knowledge that he wasn't going to be the next Luciano Pavarotti. He said that he was trying to go up ideas of stardom," he said. "I had sort of come down to earth and I was working at another job, but I was keeping my hand in music."

He kept his hand in his art by being a paid singer at various Protestant congregations in his hometown, including St. Clement's Church, a deeply traditional Episcopal parish that celebrated a liturgy much like the traditional Latin Mass.

In the late 1980s, he learned that Catholic Church leaders were allowing the traditional Latin Mass to be celebrated once again. He found his way to churches for these liturgies, came to regret leaving the Church and eventually returned to the faith.

"I needed something that was going to be meaningful to me in a liturgical way," Father Magiera says. "I thought that was the only really real way that I could connect because, when you're a Catholic, the [primary] way that you have to deal with God is through the liturgy."

Through this reconciliation and a re-discovery of the liturgy of his youth, his long dormant desire to be a priest resurfaced.

It was "in that environment that I actually started thinking of a vocation again, which means that this was something that came from me," Father Magiera said. "God called me again. I was very fortunate that he called me again and that I listened this time."

His greatest role

Father Magiera became a seminarian for the Priests Fraternity of St. Peter in 1998, and hasn't looked back in regret at his old dreams of stardom.

In the last decade, he has reflected on how his career and ministry as a priest have, in a sense, been blended.

"You are set as apart as a priest, as you are set apart on the operatic stage," Father Magiera said. "You bring your talent, you bring something that exists on paper or something that exists in the mind of someone. You bring that to life through an art.""

"The Mass is the greatest work of art," he said. But he also said there are challenges to bringing the two together.

"When I was on the stage, I had to train myself to give free rein to emotions that w ould normally be suppressed," he said. "Now, sometimes, it’s difficult to stifle them because I’ve had so much practice at giving free rein to the emotions."

"Sometimes, [the Mass] is just so profound and so meaningful that it would be hard for me to stop from crying."

Mgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, pastor of Holy Rosary and archdiocesan vicar general, has seen up close over the past three years how Father Magiera has used his talents and experience "not to draw attention to himself, but to draw others to Christ."

"His beautiful singing voice, his ability to speak in public, and his people skills, sense of humor and ability to organize things well are all now in the service of the Lord and the Church," said Mgr. Schaedel.

Brandon Stanley, a homeschooled 17-year-old, has been an altar server at the traditional Latin Mass at Holy Rosary Parish for a decade. He recalled what it was like to serve for Father Magiera for the first time after he had learned that his new associate pastor had been a professional opera singer.

"We had heard that he had been an opera singer. And I wasn’t really sure what to expect," Brandon said. "But when he got here and he sang for the first time, all of the altar servers were dumbfounded. We weren’t expecting such a strong voice."

Brandon has a special appreciation for Father Magiera’s vocal talent because they both share a love for taking voice lessons for two years, and is a past member of the Indianapolis Children’s Choir. In addition to being an altar server, Brandon has also started to regularly chant the epistle reading at the Sunday celebration of the Word, alternating in the traditional Latin Mass at Holy Rosary Church.

"[Father Magiera] is living proof that you can change dramatically, that it’s never too late," Brandon said. He has been able to incorporate one of his largest gifts, which is his voice, into the priesthood.

"He was an opera singer before. And he was using his gift there. But then he was able to turn around and keep that gift with faith without actually losing anything except for, maybe, stardom."

Father Magiera, sacrificing dreams of fame has been well worth it. He hopes that more young men will consider a possible call to the priesthood.

"I haven’t been happy. I haven’t changed anything," Father Magiera said. "If someone came to me and said, ‘With a wave of my hand, I could cause you to be young and beautiful again. You’d have all of Christ’s gifts, you’d have all of Christ’s virtues, you’d have all of Christ’s grace...’ I would just simply say, ‘Forget it.’ ”

"Sometimes, [the Mass] is just so profound and so meaningful that it would be hard for me to stop from crying."

MAGIERA (continued from page 1)
Church leaders speak out against state immigration proposal

By Bridget Curtis Ayer

One family, two immigration statuses: the parents are undocumented, the children are American citizens. This summarizes one of the primary problems in addressing the complexity of immigration law, especially those that penalize undocumented individuals. The pathway to legal citizenship can commonly take more than a decade to attain and, for many, is neither clear or legal way to gain entry into the United States, but jobs and a better way of life are clearly an attractive and attainable reality. Not surprisingly, immigrants come in droves to America.

Federal immigration law clearly is broken, but can or should states intervene to fix it? Some state lawmakers think so, but Church leaders and many others testified at a recent Indiana state Senate hearing in opposition to a proposed law that not only delves into federal territory, but also could create more problems for all immigrant families (documented and undocumented), employers and the health of an already ailing Indiana economy.

Senate Bill 580, the undocumented immigrants’ bill, which passed in the Senate Pensions and Labor Committee on Feb. 18 by a unanimous vote, would impose additional penalties for undocumented immigrants who drive without a valid driver’s license, and create mandates and fines on the businesses who employ undocumented workers.

Father Steve Gibson, pastor of St. Mary Parish in East Chicago, Ind., in the Gary Diocese, a parish with a large Hispanic community, and Fr. Thomas Gibson, Father Thomas Fox, who serves as a Hispanic ministry assistant in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, know firsthand the plight of the Hispanic families resulting from flawed federal immigration laws. They also realize the additional damage Senate Bill 580 will have on these families if it passes.

“The truth of the matter is there were 300,000 people who lost their driver’s licenses last year in Indiana,” Father Gibson said. “Most of them are the family wage earners. Then you add spouses and children who drive and you’re talking about half a million people who have their whole security in jeopardy.

“We know what’s a crisis here. These are the same people who were permitted to get driver’s licenses as long as they had some kind of identification. Now these same wage earners are being denied a renewal of their driver’s license,” Father Gibson said.

“Laws like this one and others like it that target businesses that employ immigrants are doing nothing but furthering the crisis,” Father Gibson said. “With employers release employees who are undocumented or when authorities try to stop in and get them, it creates problems. And they take them out, usually are parents. The families are not about to leave because they have no place to go. They have no legal way to get undocumented people and, for many, there is no clear or legal way to get entry into the United States, but jobs and a better way of life are clearly an attractive and attainable reality.

“Everyone agrees the immigration laws need to be reformed and that there are reforms that need to be made in the area of immigration. It is not uncommon in areas where there are employers who are being picked up and are being deported without an order of deportation. There have been some illegal immigrants, Father Thomas said. “This kind of proposal does not create jobs and is going to make immigration worse. We definitely need comprehensive and meaningful immigration reform, but that needs to come from the federal government.”

Also testifying in opposition to the bill were representatives from the business community, who raised concerns about the negative impact the bill would have on businesses during this tough economic time.

Representatives from victims of domestic violence groups also raised concerns that the bill would further victimize victims getting needed help.

Bridget Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion. To learn more about the Indiana Catholic Conference, log on to www.indianacatholic.org.

Travel with Archbishop Buechlein to historic Vincennes on March 18

In honor of the 175th anniversary of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein is leading a spiritual pilgrimage for adults to Vincennes, Ind., on March 18. This historic city was the original location of the cathedral and home of Servant of God Simon Bruté, the first bishop of the Diocese of Vincennes, which became the Diocese of Vincennes and, later, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

In Vincennes, pilgrims will tour St. Francis Xavier Cathedral (the diocese’s original cathedral), visit the crypt church, venerate the remains of Bishop Bruté, celebrate Mass and enjoy a meal. Archbishop Buechlein hopes that this pilgrimage will be an opportunity for prayer, conversion and a deeper understanding of the origins of our Catholic heritage in Indiana.

The trip will depart from the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis approximately at 8 a.m. Arrivals in Vincennes will be celebrated in the cathedral at 11 a.m. followed by lunch at a nearby restaurant.

After lunch, there will be a tour of the cathedral library and museum. The group will return to Indianapolis between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. The cost is $59 per person and includes deluxe motor coach transportation, continental breakfast, lunch, fees and gratuities.

The trip will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. Pilgrims may register online at www.archindy.org. Click on the 175th anniversary link, select “pilgrimage to Vincennes,” then “adult” to register.

You may also register by calling Carolyn Noone, associate director of special events for the archdiocese, at 317-236-1428 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1428.

Illinois

For the 12th consecutive year the Feinstein Foundation, based in Rhode Island, will divide proceeds equally $1 million among hunger-fighting agencies across the US. It’s a unique opportunity to stretch our food donation dollars. During March and April the total dollar amount of donations made to St. Vincent dePaul-Indianapolis will be multiplied by the Feinstein foundation. If, for example, donations to SVDP-Indianapolis in March and April account for 3% of the total reported to the Feinstein foundation by all reporting agencies, we can expect to receive $30,000 in matching monies.

To make your donation qualify, please indicate “Feinstein” on the memo line of your check (payable to St. Vincent dePaul or website donation www.svdpindy.org), or include a note with your donation of cash.

Please don’t wait!! Make your donation to: Society of St. Vincent de Paul 1301 E. 30th Street Indianapolis, IN 46218

Please or donate online at: www.svdpindy.org

Requests for help are up—we’re now serving 2,810 client families per week from our food pantry and non-food distribution center. Sadly, donations are not keeping pace. Won’t you please consider participating in the nation’s largest grassroots campaign to fight hunger? Recipients of your generosity need it now more than ever.
C ould anything demonstrate better the Church’s teaching about bioethics better than the controversy caused by a woman in California who gave birth to eight babies?

As everyone surely knows by now, 33-year-old Nadya Suleman gave birth to octuplets after already having six children—four under age 7. All 14 of her children came about through in vitro fertilization. Suleman is divorced, single woman whose mother has been taking care of her children.

She says that she loves children, and that is commendable. But almost everything else about this situation is grotesque.

Some people have praised Suleman because she refused to “selectively reduce” the number of embryos in her uterus and one of them so that those remaining would have a better chance of survival and be healthier after birth. But that isn’t the point. She should never have had multiple embryos implanted in her uterus in the first place.

Much more than that, there shouldn’t have been any embryos to implant in the first place. They were left over after being created when she underwent in vitro fertilization for her other children.

The Church has always taught that in vitro fertilization is immoral, but the birth of the octuplets occurred about a month after the Vatican released a new document on the subject. In vitro fertilization was much more comprehensive than just about in vitro fertilization, but it again condemned it.

The Church teaches that techniques for assisting fertility are morally permissible if they respect the right to life of every human being and if procreation is accomplished as a result of the conjugal act in marriage. Obviously, that wasn’t the case here.

The Church consistently teaches that conception must always result from the conjugal act. That is why it condemns artificial contraception and one of the reasons why it condemns in vitro fertilization. In the latter, that separation begins with the way the father’s sperm is collected and becomes part of the fertilization of an egg outside the womb.

In vitro fertilization also usually involves the deliberate destruction of human embryos. If they aren’t destroyed, they are frozen. Today, in vitro fertilization has so come to be that there are thousands of frozen embryos, in a sense “orphans.” Proposals to use those frozen embryos for experimental research that require their eventual destruction are not moral.

Even the proposal for so-called “prenatal adoption,” which would allow frozen embryos to be born, although well-intended, is subject to a number of problems. They should not have been frozen in the first place.

As already noted, the Church teaches that procreation must be accomplished as result of the conjugal act in marriage.

Suleman is not married, so her pregnancy was still another violation of the natural law as expressed in the Church’s teachings. We Catholics believe that marriage is the best way to raise and educate children. Suleman is bound to have a difficult time doing that for her 14 children.

The Church realizes that infertility can be a source of great suffering for married couples who ardently want to have children. Some of them can be helped through moral techniques, but sometimes couples simply are unable to conceive. In those cases, the Church recommends adoption, and thousands of couples have found this to be a satisfactory way to have the family they want.

Other couples, though, for their own reasons, reject that solution. They want biological children and they know that technology enables them to do so. But the Catholic Church insists that just because something can be done through technology doesn’t make it something that should be done.

Perhaps, just perhaps, what happened here will shock enough fertility doctors to around the country to make them reflect a bit on their ethical responsibilities. Some of them have criticized the doctor for implanting so many embryos.

Now that Suleman’s 14 children are here, we hope that they will be healthy and that she will find some way to care for them. We can’t understand the people who left messages at the hospital where the octuplets were born saying that they hoped the babies would not survive infancy.

As is almost always the case, this controversial situation couldn’t have occurred if people would thoughtfully consider the Catholic Church’s moral teachings.

—John F. Fink

Embryologist Ric Ross removes a viable frozen embryo from a storage tank at the Smotrich IVF Clinic in La Jolla, Calif., in this 2007 file photo. The new Vatican document “Dignitas Personae” (“The Dignity of a Person”) warns that certain recent developments in stem-cell research, gene therapy and embryonic experimentation violate moral principles and reflect an attempt by man to “take the place of his Creator.”

March for Life coverage very inspirational and appreciated, readers say

Thanks for your tremendous coverage of the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. Photos from the event were very inspirational, especially those featuring Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein’s support and presence.

We need your continued support in our efforts to form a commonsense approach to the issues that the latest Supreme Court decision has brought to mind. We need to calm passions, be ready to fight for God’s will. As we pray at Mass, may we grow toward that end.

Mike Walro

Editorial

The octuplets

Be Our Guest/Dr. Edward J. Droopcho

Doctor: Story on brain death raises important points to consider

I am writing in regard to the article on brain death in the Feb. 6 issue of The Criterion.

It is important to reiterate that Pope John Paul II, and more recently, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences fully supported the concept of “brain death” or “total irreversible brain failure” as equivalent to death of an individual.

One of these criteria is that the brainstem control of breathing is irreversibly lost so that the patient cannot and does not take any spontaneous breaths when disconnected from a ventilator. Any spontaneous breathing movement, even if intermittent or ineffective, is automatically incompatibly with the diagnosis of brain death. A person who is truly brain dead, when disconnected from a ventilator, usually suffers cardiac arrest within a few minutes.

Brain death is distinctly different from other states of brain injury, and should never be confused with such disorders as vegetative state, minimally conscious state or locked-in syndrome. Persons with any of these other disorders do have some likelihood (although sometimes very small) of partial recovery.

In stark contrast, a person who fulfills the diagnostic criteria for brain death has zero chance of recovery. There is not a single well-documented instance in the medical literature of a person recovering from whatever condition, including breathing—after the diagnosis of brain death has been made in a careful and considered manner.

It was wonderful to read about the recovery of Ralene Kupferschmidt. Her story is so strongly a case that she was not—and could not have been—“brain dead” in the first place.

In our own society, we have been made in error (which should never occur), or there may have been some misunderstanding between health care givers and family, or Kupferschmidt made a recovery which is unprecedented in the nearly 30 years since modern brain death criteria have been applied.

There are two other important points which this article brings to mind: 1) It is the physician’s duty to be absolutely rigorous and methodical in making the diagnosis of brain death. A person who does not fulfill the strict diagnostic criteria should NEVER be diagnosed as “brain dead.” 2) It is the responsibility of the hospital, in every hospital accurately and carefully in language so as never to confuse brain death with potentially reversible neurologic disorders.

(Edward J. Droopcho is a professor in the Indiana University Department of Neurology and a member of Inmaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis.)

Letters to the Editor

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the responsible change of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Communio et Progressus, 116).

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, professional, and temperate in tone. They must conform to a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, past content, sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions of a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every six months. Letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor.” The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1717.

Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
Renovamos en la Cuaresma nuestra determinación a hablar con consideración

Los 40 días de la Cuaresma nos brindan la oportunidad de una conversión profunda que dure más allá de la Cuaresma. Es una oportunidad para reformar nuestra relación con el lenguaje y la comunicación.

En nuestra cultura, es fácil caer en el error de creer que podemos arremeter contra Político B. Algunos esperan que si usan las palabras “bellos” (“hermosos” en español) y “sensacionalismo,” nos bajaremos de la lógica y empecemos a juzgar y criticar a los demás.

En contraste, Tomás de Aquino escribió que “los juicios de los demás siempre son justos y necesarios. Pero el juicio propio es una cuestión de justicia. Y a veces, aunque el juicio propio sea justo, la forma en que se expresa puede ser injusta.” (Summa Theologica, 2a, 2ae, q. 22, a. 4)

Es importante que escuchemos atentamente el lenguaje que nos rodea. ¿Podemos escuchar y comprender más allá de nuestras propias opiniones? ¿Podemos ser escuchados y comprendidos en nuestra comunicación?

In the criterion: The Criterion, Friday, February 27, 2009

Traducido por: Daniela Guanipa, Language Training Center, Indianapolis.
Lenten concert

Catholic musician and youth minister Steve Angiello of Highlands Ranch, Colo., sings during a concert on Feb. 20, 2007, at St. Augustine the Apostle Church in Indianapolis. Angiello will present a Lenten concert at 7:30 p.m. on March 13 at St. Jude Parish, 5353 McFarland Road, in Indianapolis as part of the church’s year-long 50th anniversary celebration. A singer, songwriter and storyteller, Angiello creates relevant, dynamic music for liturgy and listening, which proclaims that through Christ we have the power to carry out God’s work. The concert is free and open to the public. For more information, call 317-786-4371 or go on to www.stjudeindy.org.

Events Calendar

February 27
St. Joan of Arc Church, 4217 N. Central Ave., Indianapolis. Registration for students for the 2009-10 school year. Information: 317-784-5454.

March 1-3
St. Rita Parish, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Bieron Ave., Indianapolis. Lenten revival, “Disciples with a Destiny.” Father John Jude, revalidation, 6 p.m. Information: 317-632-9349.

March 4

March 6-8
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Women–Financial Accountability,” a two-day workshop for women battling debt. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Information: 317-545-7681 or spasotti@archindy.org.

March 9
Sharon Catholic Center, 3033 Martin Rd., Floyds Knobs. “Becoming a Person and Kid’s Care,” 5-7 p.m., $6 adults, $3 children. Information: 317-517-1301 or mike.lamping@knobs.org.

March 10

March 11

March 12
St. Christopher Parish, 5301 W. 16th St., Indianapolis. Women’s Convocation, “Spring Into Life,” speaker to be announced. Registration required. Information: 317-545-7681 or spasotti@archindy.org.

March 13-15
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Catholic Pro-Life Week,” Bishop Dennis M. J. Church, presenter, 9 a.m.-11 p.m. Information: 812-933-6437.

March 14

March 15

March 16
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 22nd St., Indianapolis. Lenten Fish Fry, 5-7 p.m., $5 adults, $3 children. Information: 317-638-5551.

March 17
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Catholic Pro-Life Week,” Bishop Dennis M. J. Church, presenter, 9 a.m.-11 p.m. Information: 812-933-6437.

VIPS

Benedictine Father Denis Quinnet, a native of New Albany, was elected Abbott of Blue Cloud in 2008. He became a monk of a cloud of the Holy Spirit in 1936, Father Denis attended St. Placid Hall, a Benedictine school for candidates for Benedictine brethren at Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. After graduating in 1954, Father Denis was assigned to Blue Cloud, a foundation of Saint Meinrad. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1976.

Celebrating President Lincoln

Ted Capin, the principal of St. Pius X School in Indianapolis, portrays President Abraham Lincoln for the first- and second-grade students at the Indianapolis North Deanery school on Feb. 11 as part of the school’s celebration of the Civil War president’s 200th birthday.

Vanessa Gammons/Indianapolis Star
Abbott pleads guilty to setting St. Anne Church fire

By Mary Ann Wyand

St. Anne parishioners in New Castle are thankful that William S. Abbott finally told the truth on Feb. 19 about starting the late-night fire which gutted their historic Henry County church on April 7, 2007, a day before Easter.

Abbott, a 34-year-old New Castle resident who has a history of criminal offenses, admitted to Henry County prosecutor Kit Crane and staff prosecutors that he broke into the church and set the building on fire.

He pleaded guilty to arson, a Class A felony, and will receive a reduced prison sentence as part of his plea agreement.

Henry County prosecutor Kit Crane and Henry County Superior Court 1 Judge Michael Peyton scheduled a sentencing hearing for 9 a.m. on March 16, the day that Abbott’s trial was set to begin in Wayne County Superior Court in Richmond.

Abbott pleaded guilty in Wayne County Superior Court last week. The trial had been moved from Henry County at the request of Eugene Hollander, Abbott’s attorney.

The plea bargain also removed habitual offender charges. Abbott has been convicted of several crimes since 1992, including child molestation, resisting law enforcement, receiving stolen property, battery and receiving stolen auto parts, among others.

Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth, parish life coordinator of St. Anne Parish and St. Rose Parish in Knightstown, said on Feb. 23 that Abbott’s plea agreement “seemed almost too good to be true.” Sister Shirley said she “did a lot of praying” for Abbott and hopes that his sentencing is “the beginning of him doing good rather than evil.”

Before Masses last weekend in the basement of St. Anne’s Parish Life Center, Sister Shirley told the truth on Abbott—“I just marvel at how God has been with us these past two years. As difficult as it’s been, it’s God’s way and God’s time. It’s been two years, but I think that time was needed for us to come to the place [of healing] where we are now.”

—Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth

You Have Been Forgiven,” Sister Shirley said, which was chosen because of the trial date.

He’s had a hard time in prison,” Sister Shirley said. “He’s been in prison for longer than he’s been out. The longer I live the more I just think that we see so little of a person’s life. We see a small portion. I only know one thing about Billy Abbott—that he burned the church. I don’t know all that God knows. I don’t see all of Abbott’s 34 years.”

Father James Farrell, director of Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis, is scheduled to preach a three-day Lenten retreat about prayer, forgiveness and community on March 15-17 at St. Anne’s Parish Life Center.

Sister Shirley said parishioners will pray the peace prayer of St. Francis of Assisi at Masses during Lent and also reflect on a booklet from 23rd Publications titled “The Path to Forgiveness” by Father Paul Boudreau.

“I just marvel at how God has been with us these past two years,” Sister Shirley said. “As difficult as it’s been, it’s God’s way and God’s time. It’s been two years, but I think that time was needed for us to come to the place [of healing] where we are now.”

St. Anne parishioners will break ground beginning for their new $4.4 million church on the parish campus during a 2 p.m. ceremony on March 29, she said, which will be a new beginning for the 243-household parish.

Lenten Dining Guide

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ALLEN RAAB
Superintendent
Judith said. "Our mother general was at the Holy Spirit to dedicate her life to taking care of the elderly poor will inspire people to "better help the elderly, to make them feel that they are loved and appreciated, and that their lives and all the years of service they’ve given to the community and their families are deeply appreciated.”

Since Blessed Jeanne began her mission in 1856, the Little Sisters of the Poor congregation has grown to more than 2,700 members, who care for approximately 13,000 needy elderly people in 202 family-style homes throughout the world, including 32 homes in North America.

Rose Dente, 96, one of the oldest residents of St. Martin’s Home—an assisted-living facility operated by the Little Sisters in Baltimore—was ecstatic when she was told that the canonization was set for Oct. 11. "In my heart, I always knew Jeanne Jugan was a saint," Dente said. "Now, the whole world will know it." Celebrations will be planned at the Little Sisters’ facilities worldwide, and members of the congregation are waiting to see who will be eligible to travel to Rome in October for the canonization. Sister Constance told CNS.

"With the population of older persons growing at an exponential rate, Jeanne’s work and her message are even more relevant today than they were when Pope John Paul II beatified her over 20 years ago," she said. "As a Dominican priest who founded the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I've been working with these Little Sisters of the Poor in France, and three others.

The pope presided over a Feb. 21 consistory that gave final approval for the canonization of 10 people, including Blessed Damien, a Belgian-born member of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Born in 1840, Blessed Damien spent the last 16 years of his life caring for patients with Hansen’s disease, or leprosy, on the island of Molokai. He died in 1898 and was beatified in 1995.

On Oct. 11, the pope will also canonize: • Blessed Zygmunt Felimski, a former archbishop of Warsaw, Poland, and founder of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary. • Blessed Francesca Cell Guitart, a member of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

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Food for the soul

Lenten meals give parents a chance to teach the faith

WASHINGTON (CNS)—It’s not always easy to bring family members together for a tasty, nutritious and affordable meal. When Lent comes around, the need for meatless Fridays and the hope of teaching children about why Catholics fast and abstain from meat can make meal planning seem nearly impossible.

But two Catholic mothers in different parts of the country have a few solutions to offer.

“I think it’s very important that we do observe Lent as families even though it’s not doctrinally required below a certain age,” said Lisa Hendey of Fresno, Calif., the mother of two teenagers and founder of CatholicMom.com, a Web site that offers a variety of free resources to Catholic parents.

Amy Heyd, a mother of three from Cincinnati, says meals can be a teaching moment at any time of year. She wrote her new book, Saints at the Dinner Table (St. Anthony Messenger Press, $19.95), in part to bring lessons from the early days of the Church into the lives of her children today.

“I’m constantly trying to find ways to teach them about my faith and teach them to make good choices in life,” Heyd said. “They need to keep relearning [about good choices] until it’s part of who they are.”

Hendey said it is important for Catholic children to know not only what they are expected to do during Lent, but why. “We link it to an act of service,” she said of the family’s simple, meatless meals on Fridays in Lent.

The money saved by keeping a meal plan or not going out to dinner as a family is donated to Catholic Relief Services. Operation Rice Bowl or the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, she said.

“Kids can understand that giving when parents say, ‘We’ll take this and use it to help someone else who is not as blessed as we are,’” Hendey added. “It’s not so much talking about what we’re doing without, as it is what we’re doing to help other people.”

Heyd—who whose children are in the third, sixth and eighth grades—sometimes makes it a family project during Lent. “Take a meal to a needy friend or to a local soup kitchen or Ronald McDonald House. They usually don’t do it on Fridays, however, so that they can provide a ‘good hearty meal,’ such as the tortellini soup featured in Heyd’s book in a chapter on St. Margaret of Scotland.

St. Margaret, queen of Scotland, often welcomed groups of commoners into the royal castle during Lent by providing them with “magnificent feasts,” Heyd said. For that reason, the chapter on St. Margaret also includes a recipe for chocolate mint cake with vanilla cream—a hardly appropriate for a sacrificial meal during Lent, Heyd might add a laugh.

Heyd said that her Friday meals during Lent sometimes focus on a concept rather than a recipe. She might offer her teenagers the fixings for “build your own veggie pizza,” a baked potato bar or fondue.

CatholicMom.com, the Web site that Hendey founded in 1999 as “my personal response to Pope John Paul II’s call to live out the faith” during the jubilee year, offers dozens of meatless recipes contributed by visitors to the site.

The site also includes downloadable religious education materials for all ages, ranging from word searches to coloring pages to lesson plans geared to a variety of feast days, sacraments or Bible events. Hendey records a weekly podcast with a Catholic author, entertainer or personality, and more than two dozen columnists offer their views on a wide range of topics.

She said CatholicMom.com began as “a hobby” that generated barely enough in advertising to pay its own Web hosting fees. Hendey, whose husband, Greg, was not Catholic, also wanted to strengthen her own knowledge in “not single-parenting, but single-parenting” their two boys.

Archdiocesan parishes schedule annual Lenteen penance ser vices

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled penance services during Lent. The following is a list of penance services that have been reported to The Criterion.

Due to space constraints, penance services scheduled later in the week have not been included in this list this week’s newspaper. However, the entire schedule is posted on TheCriterionOnline.com.

An Operation Rice Bowl sits in the center of the table at a Catholic family’s home in Centreville, Va., on Feb. 4. Coordinated by Catholic Relief Services, the nationwide Lenten program encourages participants to learn about hunger and poverty around the globe and then to make donations to help those most in need.

The Angiolotti family prays before eating a meatless meal of baked potatoes and sautéed at their home in Centreville, Va., on Feb. 4. Parents Terry and Nel, along with their children, Brendan, 9, Emily, 11, and Kyle, 13, have made Operation Rice Bowl a centerpiece on the family table during Lent. The nationwide agriculture program coordinated by Catholic Relief Services encourages participants to think about hunger and poverty around the globe and then to devote a portion of their penance services to help those most in need.
By John Shaughnessy

For two years, the teenager and her mother had shared every step of this special journey. Yet now they were separated as they both breathlessly waited to see if the fairy tale ending would come true.

Moments earlier, 17-year-old Katie Stamper of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood had just finished skating in the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games, ending her freestyle performance with a difficult jump that she nailed.

Watching that last jump, Katie’s mother, Bernadette Reilly, was the picture of every parent who has ever sat in the stands and cheered for his or her child. Wanting Katie to succeed and feel good about herself, Reilly felt the relief and joy flow through her body as she watched her beaming daughter put a signature touch on what had been a well-done performance.

With two more skaters left to compete, Katie and her mother had to wait and watch before the judges declared the medal winners. Katie watched from an area reserved for skaters and their coaches while Reilly waited in the stands. Yet both daughter and mother were connected by their thoughts of their shared journey to this moment—a moment that Katie considered as part of God’s plan for her.

To start the story, return to 2006 when Katie was 15 and watching the Winter Olympics on television with her grandmother. When a female figure skater glided across the ice, an awe Katie turned to her grandmother and said, “I want to skate.”

It didn’t matter to Katie that she had never skated before. She just knew she wanted to try to skate—to look that graceful, to feel that sense of soaring. So her mother, who desperately wanted Katie to have something that would make her feel special, arranged for her daughter to take lessons. And Katie not only loved skating, she was good at it.

Yet in the midst of this breakthrough, Katie also learned something about herself that would lead her to one of the toughest decisions of her life. When Katie was in kindergarten, she was diagnosed as being mildly mentally challenged. Her mother didn’t tell Katie about the diagnosis until two years ago, shortly after she started skating.

With her diagnosis, Katie was eligible for the Special Olympics sports program. With her talent in skating, she had qualified for the 2009 World Winter Games in Boise, Idaho, where she was one of five Indiana athletes at the competition in early February that involved 3,000 athletes from 100 countries.

Katie’s selection put her at a crossroads. If she chose to participate in the Special Olympics event, she knew the news would spread to her friends and classmates at Center Grove High School in Greenwood that she mightily mentally challenged. Like most teenagers who don’t want to draw attention to themselves, Katie struggled with what she should do.

In the end, she decided to accept who she is, challenge herself, and teach and inspire others.

So she skated at the World Winter Games, even overwriting an injury to her left foot that she suffered two weeks before the competition.

When the two last skaters finished their routines, Katie and her mother turned to look at the judges and the scoreboard where the results would be posted. Finally, the results flashed on the scoreboard. Katie had earned the gold medal.

Katie beamted as she stood in the special area for skaters. Her mother fought back tears as she celebrated in the stands. Long minutes passed before they had the opportunity to see each other. When they finally did, Katie glowed as she held the medal toward her mom.

“I told her I was so proud of her,” Reilly recalls.

Katie hasn’t stopped smiling yet, for reasons that extend beyond the gold medal: “I made a lot of friends there,” she says.

“I met girls from Canada, and we became best friends,” a young man who had a lot of kids, too. “I ran to an autistic boy. And I talked to the other girls about how they should accept themselves and stand up for themselves.”

“Skiing has changed me. It’s helped me feel more confident in myself.”

That’s been the biggest reward of Katie’s gold-medal journey, her mother believes.

“Skeing has become,” her mother says. “She’s becoming more outgoing and more expressive and more easy-going with life. It’shuge to see the way she feels about herself. It gives her the strength and the courage to speak out and continue to challenge life.”

“She sees life can be good instead of a struggle. It makes you wish all kids could feel that way.”

Korean cardinal’s funeral Mass highlights his life of service, love

SEOUL, South Korea (CNS)—The funeral Mass of Cardinal Stephen Kim Sou-hwan, 86, former cardinal from South Korea, highlighted his life of love and service for suffering people.

Cardinal Kim, the first South Korean cardinal, died on Feb. 16 in Seoul, South Korea. That’s been the biggest reward of Katie’s gold-medal journey, her mother.

“I told her I was so proud of her,” Reilly recalls.

Korean cardinal’s funeral Mass highlights his life of service, love

College of Cardinals nearly 40 years ago by Pope Paul VI.

In his homily, Seoul Cardinal Nicholas Cheong Jin-suk recalled that Cardinal Kim loved the poor very much and his priority was caring for them. This virtue, as well as his Catholic faith, made it possible for him to stand against military dictatorships, he said.

Bishop Peter Kang U-lil of Cheju told the crowds that many people of all religions were mourning Cardinal Kim’s death, especially during the global economic downturn. Bishop Kang, president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Korea, said the way that Cardinal Kim faced his own hardships in life must have comforted suffering people and given them hope.

Cardinal Kim often told people that his journey to the priesthood was not easy. He was forced to serve in the Japanese army during World War II when he was a seminarian, reported UCA News.

All national TV stations telecast the one-and-a-half-hour Catholic service.†
Who will you allow to be your parent’s caregivers? 

By David Gibson

The number of Americans age 65 or older living alongside us in society has grown rapidly, but experts say that beginning with 2010 this statistic for senior citizens will begin to leap upward in an unprecedented way. By 2030, this number may rise in the U.S. alone to more than 71 million elderly people, double the year 2000 statistic.

The number of Americans age 85 or older could quadruple by 2050 from the 5.3 million senior citizens in 2006. These elderly people live alongside us. Often, however, they do not live alongside their younger family members or close to them. For decades, mobility has meant that younger family members found jobs and created a life for themselves far from the hometowns of their youth.

Mobility, for all its good features, helped displace a support system in which younger and older family members somewhat readily could share their strengths at each of life’s different phases. Today, 65-year-olds are hardly considered old.

Many people ask, “When does old age begin?” The stereotype of exhausted, bored people in decline does not fit the older members of today’s society. None of this is to deny, however, that significant issues of health, happiness or financial viability will surface for many senior citizens over time.

So a two-pronged reality deserves attention as the number of older people surges upward in the U.S. First, it will be decidedly off base to regard our older population as a burden, ignoring the gifts and continued personal development of people in life’s “third age.” Second, however, painful questions about the well-being and care of the aged will become unavoidable.

Pope John Paul II understood this. In his 1999 “Letter to the Elderly,” he wrote, “Honoring older people involves a threefold duty: welcoming them, helping them and making good use of their qualities.”

The late pope, then “an older person” himself, cautioned against relegating older people “to the fringes” of life. From a Christian perspective, the older person who needs help possesses a God-given dignity, with gifts and talents, a unique history and personality. Who will serve as this person’s caregivers in the future?

The high cost of long-term care insurance or various residences for the aged suggests that many older people needing ongoing medical care will not receive most of it from trained professionals in health care institutions.

Families will resolve this daunting challenge differently.

Many families may seek new, creative solutions to the unresolved challenges of mobility, discovering good reasons for their older and younger generations to live near or with each other. If so, the family’s generations often will enrich each other’s lives. Caregiving is a two-way street.

Won’t older parents continue, even at advanced ages, to give care to younger family members in various supportive ways? Surely grandparenting roles will expand, for example.

And as the years pass, care giving in various forms by younger family members for the older person in weakened health will emerge for many and for a time as a significant element of home life.

I do not want to be glib. Caregiving is a demanding vocation. Some people will conclude that providing care for an aged parent is not their vocation. Those who accept this vocation often will feel unprepared. They also may be parents, and they will likely have jobs outside the home. The sacrificial dimension of this vocation will become clear to them.

But it is worth noting that adult children may be uniquely qualified to serve sick or aged parents with a love and respect born of a multitude of good memories. And think what an advocate the adult child makes for a parent!

From a Christian standpoint, the caregiver has many opportunities to share life with another person in ways that are full of grace. One caregiver said she considered her full-time, nearly year-long role a blessing. Caregivers need assistance and support, however, and they also need care.

In their 1999 message about “The Blessings of Age,” the U.S. bishops addressed challenges faced by caregivers and explained that a “mix of emotions is normal as you experience both the rewards and the stresses of care giving.”

The bishops noted that “care giving can be emotionally and physically exhausting.” They said caregivers rightfully expect support from other family members and the faith community.

“The parish has a responsibility to provide spiritual and other support for caregivers,” the bishops noted. “For example, by helping to form support groups for caregivers, referring you to community resources, sponsoring adult education programs that deal with issues of particular concern to caregivers, or periodically recognizing and blessing caregivers.”

The bishops cited a 1996 survey showing that one U.S. home in four had a person caring for an older adult. These caregivers included adult children and spouses caring for a husband or wife.

The demands of the caregiving vocation are nothing new. But will the frequency of caregiving by family members become the “something new” of the near future?

“As more people provide care,” the bishops noted, “and as more people receive care for longer periods of time, we must respond to this new reality.”

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

Discussion Point

Frail elderly people need loving care

This Week’s Question

What is your view of nursing homes today? Do you anticipate living in a nursing home someday?

“We moved my mother from Florida to Michigan, where she is living [in a] beautiful, well-run facility and is well cared for. We did that because logistically, unless we win the Lotto, we don’t have the facilities or nearby family to care for her and the problems she has at 88. But I believe that the elderly should be part of a family unit to give them purpose and connectedness. There is nothing like family.” (Bonnie Reaume, Grosse Pointe Farms, Mich.)

“My opinion, from what I’ve seen firsthand and their reputation, is not very good. The alternative of [professional caregivers] coming into the home is excellent, but probably unaffordable for most people.” (Julie Wieeman, O’Fallon, Ill.)

“I’m thankful that they exist for people who have nowhere else to go to get that care. I’d prefer to care for a family member at home, but I’m glad that people have the talent and desire to work there.” (Martha Tankersley, Birmingham, Ala.)

“The last time I was [at a nursing home], I watched my elderly neighbor die behind a curtain. It was very sad. Then, in the community area, people were just sitting there, sometimes in wheelchairs, not interacting with each other or the staff. It seemed like they were among people, but still isolated and lonely.” (Cotelle Dempsey, Rye, N.Y.)

End Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: Can you quote vernal passages of the Bible? If so, what helps you to remember them? If not, what do you think will help you to do this?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to c gereen@catholicnews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100.
When it comes to faith, maybe we are part of the problem

Losing one’s faith must be the worst condition possible.

Imagine having to come to grips with the world being chaotic because there is no reason behind its existence and no hope for it to change. Lent seems a good time to contemplate faith really means to us, personally and as part of the community.

Life in a chaotic world without hope also means existing in a moral vacuum. The only arbiter for our beliefs is our personal desire and the physical service to stave it. All decisions are random, all relationships tenuous, and all emotions bound to run rampant in a life without purpose or consequence. Gosh.

The reason being these gloomy thoughts is a couple of books I’ve read recently in which real people describe such losses of faith. Two, by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, about a Somali Muslim woman, and the other is Acedia & Me by Kathleen Norris. The latter notes that the husband of Hirsi Norris’s husband rejected the Catholic Church entirely because of skewed childhood memories of Church practices and attitudes. He became an atheist, although he admired his wife’s growing faith. She is a Protestant, and he became an atheist, although he admired his wife’s growing faith.

Norris’s husband rejected the Catholic Church entirely because of skewed childhood memories of Church practices and attitudes. He became an atheist, although he admired his wife’s growing faith. She is a Protestant, and he became an atheist, although he admired his wife’s growing faith.

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Recently sightings of other “fallen away” Catholics have saddened me even more. When we watched a television tribute to the late Pope John Paul II on PBS, we also saw a clip of a man demolishing not only the Ten Commandments, but also the very idea of God, in one of his recent interviews.

Bill Maher, another comedian who contributed to the program, delivered a vicious, sneering attack on religion, and the Catholic faith in particular. My question is, what terrible things happened in these people to make them so angry at the Church? After all, we can’t blame everything on parochial school abuse!

Most folks’ experience of Church comes through contact with those who speak for it and practice to what it teaches, including lay people as well as religious and clergy. So, as part of the body of Christ, we all have a responsibility to be Christ to others.

It’s up to us. Perhaps dispersed Catholic didn’t have the support of pastors, priests or anyone else around them who remembered that.

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

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Make Lenten sacrifices for the right reason

Sometimes I feel like I’m in a perpetual Lent when I’m homeless. It’s like I’m fasting all the time.

Let me explain. It’s not uncommon for my wife, Cindy, and me to spend our nights actually eating during our family meals. We have also developed a custom over the years of reading short stories (usually a couple of pages) about a saint to the boys.

God forbid that I delay telling the story in order to eat my food while it’s still hot. There has been a many a meal where, after patiently waiting for, oh, I don’t know, 30 seconds for the story, my oldest son, Michael, will say, “Daddy, are you going to read the same old story?”

OK, I’ll be honest. I’m actually happy that he wants to hear the story. I know that little income contributes to the one-on-one time my wife Cindy and I experience at our meals, which are more than worth it since I can see that my boys enjoy the culture surrounding it, sitting down together with us around our table.

But the sacrifices took some getting used to. I grew up as the youngest of two children. And I was the youngest among all of my siblings on both sides of my extended family.

In other words, I was really if ever anything as well as a child. While, I didn’t know how many little, everyday sacrifices are involved in helping to keep one’s life at a good home at and grow up well.

Maybe I didn’t know about them because I was too young to accept such sacrifices as a natural part of their everyday life. They didn’t make a big deal about it, so I just made them without thinking twice.

That is kind of what Lent is all about. It is time to look at what we can do to get better of preparing oneself to grow closer to the Lord in time for the solemn period of fasting, death and resurrection.

Part of making such sacrifices well is to draw attention to ourselves. For example, many parents do each day for their children. Jesus had some advice for those who draw attention to themselves while giving of themselves for others:

“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.” (Mt 6:18-19)

We parents, at all times in our lives with our children, and all Catholics during the Lenten season, need to tell the Lord, Jesus’ words to heart. We need to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. And this isn’t a case where our Lord is telling us to do the right thing, but also to do it for the right reason. "When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward." (Mt 6:18-19)
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 1, 2009

• Genesis 9:8-15
• 1 Peter 3:18-22
• Mark 1:12-15

The Book of Genesis provides us with the first reading. It is the familiar story of Noah, who was a faithful God. Whereas the earth was almost universally was uninhabited, as Noah. Since Noah was true to God, God provided that Noah escape the impending doom of the great flood that covered the earth.

The reading is about the events following the flood. Noah, his family and the pairs of the various animals that Noah had taken aboard the ark were safe on dry land. By God’s help, they had survived the flood.

God assures Noah that never again would a flood destroy the earth. For Noah and his family, the most consuming divine promise was that God promised to protect them and all their descendants. In return, they would have to conform to God’s holy will.

Genesis sadly has had a very tortured history. Volumes on how to interpret Genesis would fill a library. Without ingraining into the many controversies, it suffices to say that the purpose of the book, and of this reading, is to teach religious facts.

The simple religious fact is that sin destroys. God wills that people not face eternal death, but many people choose death by sinning. It is their choice.

The Second Epistle of Peter is the source of the second reading. The letter states that it was composed in Babylon. Probably it was written in Rome, which Jesus Christians called Babylon because of the excesses they saw all around them there.

For Christians, living in the midst of these excesses was daunting. This epistle encouraged and reassured them. As in the case of Noah, God promised the faithful, who are united with God through Jesus. The faithful will survive—even in eternity—because God will prevail. The “glories” of Rome would fade—as indeed they did. St. Mark’s Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is very brief, but it is quite dramatic.

Times are threatening. Jesus retreats into the desert, where he is tempted by Satan. John the Baptist is arrested. Then the Lord comes into Galilee. His message is bold and stark. He says that “the time of fulfilment” is at hand. God will be vindicated. The tables will be balanced. The sinless will be saved. It is inevitable.

Jesus calls people to reform their lives. Fidelity to God is the key to life. There is still time to reform.

Reflection

The Church has begun the season of Lent, which is the most intense period in the year of calling its people to union with God. This weekend’s readings call people to face the facts of life as humans. They need God.

What about the flood described in Genesis? How extensive was it? Does the story in Genesis actually echo an older story from pagan sources about a great flood, with the exception of the references to the faithful Noah?

Regardless of the answers to these questions, the religious message of Genesis is clear. The first reading for this weekend is a fitting beginning to reflection for Lent. This is the message. Willful rejection of God leads necessarily and always to destruction. God, however, always is ready—indeed even eager—to forgive and to restore life despite the gravity of our sins. His plan is that we should live.

We must seek forgiveness. Essential to asking for forgiveness is to acknowledge personal sin. Acknowledgement must be more than simply realizing our faults. The future is important. We must discipline ourselves so that we do not sin again. Such disciplining is the purpose of Lent.

On this weekend, the Church calls us to discipline by penance. It calls us to prayer, to focus our hearts and minds, and to communicate with God, the fountain of strength and mercy. Only with God’s strength will our resolve not to sin again endure in our daily life.

My Journey to God

A Challenge

There is somebody out there, somebody who needs help more than you.

The boy at school, bullied and taunted by people who are cruel, needs a friend, a smile and a joke to know he’s not alone.

The elderly person at church who is alone and faithfully goes up to Communion every Sunday. His clothes are scruffy and worn, not the type of person you want to shoot the breeze with at the moment of “peace.”

There are many people in our lives that, unassuming, unimportant,

(Nicola Rose Vogel is a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus.)

because we can’t see each other, we dismiss them as invisible, hardly worth noticing at all.

I throw down a challenge to you. I guarantee that you know what to do. Together with the person who desperately needs help then take it upon yourself with God’s grace and love.

He will show you the way and you will become the angel that person prayed for today.

By Nicola Rose Vogel

Question Corner/ Fr. John Dietzen

Covering church statues and art with purple for Lent is old custom

At the start of Lent in our parish, the statues and pictures in church are covered with a purple cloth. Other churches in our area do not practice this. Is there a rule about this or is it up to each parish? (New York)

I am not sure this trivial, but I know other parishes are as confused as I am. (Ohio)

A short and simple answer is that people who are not Catholic are welcome, even invited, to do everything that Catholics do, except, as you say, to receive Communion. Participate in the prayers, sing, make the sign of the cross, bow or genuflect as you wish.

In fact, the liturgy should become a more genuine act of worship for you if you participate in this way as long as you feel comfortable doing so, and if your actions reflect your interior attitude of prayer and devotion with the people worshiping alongside you.

It would perhaps not be a bad idea for parishes to place an occasional note in the bulletin on these matters to help you and others who are not Catholic to feel more at ease during Mass.

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith 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 3135, Delaware, OH 43118.
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**Rest in peace**

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in The Criterion. Order priests of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.Pray that we might be able to meet the needs of the church, of those in need, of our parishes, of our schools, of our community, and of the world in a way that shows the love and compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**BEAVER, Carol Marie**

separate obituaries on this page unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

**BEAVER, Virginia C.**

of two.

**BERGMAN, Theresa M.**


**BERGMAN, Theresa A.**


**BERGMAN, Theresa A.**


**BERGMAN, Theresa A.**

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Speakers: Education is key for families dealing with suicide

By Mary Ann Wyand
Second of two parts

GREENWOOD—Suicide. It’s painful to even read that word—but alone to cope with the reality of suddenly and unexpectedly losing a loved one because of a deliberate, self-inflicted injury. Shock, disbelief, confusion, sorrow, guilt and remorse are common reactions for the relatives and friends of people who die by suicide.

St. Nicholas parishioners Tom and Fran Smith of O’Fallon, Ill., who founded the Karla Smith Foundation with their son, Kevin, understand those devastating feelings because they have experienced a wide range of conflicting emotions as heartbroken parents.

In 2003, their daughter, Karla, who was Kevin’s twin sister, died by suicide at age 26 as a result of her bipolar disorder.

The Smiths have devoted their retirement years to educating people about the facts, symptoms, myths, statistics, warning signs, spirituality and stigmas associated with mental illness and suicide. During an educational program on Feb. 3 at SS. Francis and Clare Parish in Greenwood, the Smiths discussed “Breaking the Silence of Mental Illness in Parishes and Religious Congregations.” They also were the keynote speakers for the seventh annual archdiocesan Office of Family Ministries and Catholic Cemeteries Association Mission Day on Feb. 4 at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis. Their topic was “Suicide Grief: A Day for Persons Caring for Family Members and Loved Ones Challenged by Mental Illness and the Experience of Suicide.”

Tom Smith is the author of A Balanced Life: Nine Strategies for Coping with the Mental Health Problems of a Loved One and The Tattered Tapestry: A Family’s Search for Peace with Bipolar Disorder. Mental illness and suicide cause the relatives and friends of the loved one to experience “disenfranchised grief,” they said during the Feb. 3 program in Greenwood.

After several years of episodes of manic behavior and depression, Tom Smith said, “unknowingly to us, Karla took herself off of her medications … and as a result of that she wound up in a very major manic episode again in the summer and fall of 2002.”

During the holidays that year, Karla became very depressed, he said, decided that she didn’t want to live any longer and listened to the “voices” in her head that encouraged her to kill herself. They intervened again and Karla completed another treatment program at a behavioral health care center in Tulsa, Okla., in 2003. But soon after she was discharged from the center, Karla wrote a suicide note and took her life with a gun.

“We grieved for her and still are,” Fran Smith said. “There are staggering statistics regarding death by suicide—more than 32,000 suicides a year in the United States. Do you realize that there is a suicide in our country every 16 minutes? Ninety percent of the people who die by suicide have some type of mental disorder … Often times, when a person is released from treatment—and that was the case with our daughter—if it’s hard to believe that the suicide rate increases by 25 percent. “Imagine the guilt and the pain that parents go through,” she said. “Think of a spouse when their husband or wife takes their own life. That’s why we work with families to help them through some of those feelings of failure and guilt that accompany suicide.”

More women attempt suicide, she said, but more men die by suicide.

She said the National Association of Mental Illness and the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance are wonderful support organizations for people whose loved ones struggle with mental illness.

“It’s important not to define the person by their illness,” Fran Smith said. “We have to watch our language when discussing mental illness and suicide. … People don’t commit suicide. They die by suicide.

“Our pastor was wonderful at Karla’s funeral,” she recalled. “A death by suicide is tremendously sad. At the cemetery, he said, ‘Folks, remember that we are here because we love Karla, who was far more than her illness.’ That’s important to remember, but I think, for a long time, when someone you love dies by suicide you just think of the horror of that death and kind of forget about the rest of that person’s life.

Survivors don’t grieve about the past, she said. “We grieve about the future, about what will not be. I think that’s the thing we have to remember with someone who has a mental illness. Yes, there are some things that maybe we can’t happen [in his or her life], but there are many things that have happened, many good things that give us hope. That’s what we have to remember.”

Recognizing possible warning signs can prevent suicides

Suicide warning signs include the following indications listed in A Balanced Life: Nine Strategies for Coping with the Mental Health Problems of a Loved One by Tom Smith:

• Threatening to hurt or kill
• Uncontrolled anger
• Rage
• Hopelessness
• Anxiety
• Withdrawing from friends, family and society
• Increased alcohol or drug use
• Risky activities
• Feeling trapped
• Acting reckless
• Seeing no reason for living or sense of purpose in life.
• Dramatic mood changes
• Acting out of character
• Seeking revenge

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8255. For more information about Tom Smith’s books or the Smith family’s ministry, log on to their Web site at www.KarlaSmithFoundation.org.

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