Dr. Thomas Brown, an obstetrician and gynecologist, speaks on March 19 with medical assistant Emily Linville at his office in Greensburg. Brown, a member of St. Louis Parish in Batesville, is a natural family planning-only doctor who has chosen not to prescribe hormonal birth control for the purpose of preventing pregnancy. Linville is a member of St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County.

By Sean Gallagher
Second of two parts

GREENSBURG—Prescribing hormonal birth control to women who want to avoid pregnancy has been commonplace in American medicine for more than a generation.

“It has become so routine that the medicine has simply become known as “the pill.””

So when physicians refuse to prescribe the pill for both medical and religious reasons, it can cause turmoil in their practice, with patients leaving for other doctors. It can also lead their medical colleagues to question their decision.

But for four such doctors in the archdiocese, the choice has given them peace of mind and, ultimately, has had a positive influence on their practice and the patients they treat.

These physicians have sought to integrate their professional competence with their faith, and thus have chosen to become what are sometimes called “NFP-only doctors,” a reference to natural family planning, a Church-sanctioned way of regulating conception that is in harmony with the natural cycle of a woman’s fertility.

“Taking care of the whole person”

When Dr. Thomas Brown was studying obstetrics and gynecology in the late 1980s in medical school in Ohio, it was a given assumption that hormonal birth control was “a gift” that women could use to avoid pregnancy.

“Anyone who thought otherwise was an alien, basically, according to the way we were trained,” said Brown, a member of the Indiana Catholic university.

Despite criticism, Notre Dame is firm on President Obama as commencement speaker

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Rather than working to rescind a regulation that gives federal protection to the conscience rights of health care providers and institutions, the Obama administration’s proper role is to enforce the will of Congress as already expressed in existing statutes, said attorneys for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Anthony R. Picarello Jr., USCCB general counsel, and Michael F. Moses, associate general counsel, filed public comments on behalf of the USCCB on March 23 with the Department of Health and Human Services.

HHS opened a 30-day comment period on March 10 on whether it should rescind a regulation that took effect two days before President Barack Obama took office. The rule codifies three longtime federal statues prohibiting discrimination against health professionals who decline to participate in abortions or other medical procedures because of their religious or other moral objections.

“The question is not whether the policy to be pursued is the strong protection of conscience in health care—Congress has already decided that question repeatedly and definitively by a series of statutes—but how best to enforce the policy of conscience protection already expressed in those statutes,” Picarello and Moses said.

The USCCB comments also said rescission of the regulation would conflict with the administration’s stated goals of promoting “choice” and reducing abortions, reduce health care options for the poor and other underserved populations, and perpetuate the “undue and hostile objection to conscience rights” and widespread ignorance of existing law that are already rampant.

“If the administration’s policy is one of ‘choice,’ it cannot, consistent with that policy, refuse to accommodate a health care provider’s choice not to participate in abortion,” the USCCB said. “Otherwise, the policy is simply one of unmasked coercion.”

Similarly, it makes no sense to contend that one is working to reduce abortions by increasing access to abortion options, the comments said.

See USCCB, page 2

USCCB comments cite reasons for HHS to keep conscience regulation

WASHINGTON (CNS)—University of Notre Dame officials were standing firm on their choice of President Barack Obama as commencement speaker at the institution’s May 17 graduation, in spite of a large number of Catholics calling on them to rescind the invitation.

The Indiana university, run by the Congregation of Holy Cross, and the White House announced on March 20 that Obama would be Notre Dame’s 2009 commencement speaker and confirmed he will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree at the graduation.

“The invitation to President Obama to be our commencement speaker should not be taken as condoning or endorsing his positions on specific issues regarding the protection of human life, including abortion and embryonic stem-cell research,” said Holy Cross Father John F. Jenkins, president of the University of Notre Dame.

Yet, we see this as a visit for further positive engagement,” he said in a March 23 statement.

The announcement on Obama was promptly followed by a flurry of criticism from Catholics, who said the president’s support of legal abortion and embryonic stem-cell research makes him an inappropriate choice to be the commencement speaker at a Catholic university.

Shortly after the announcement, the Cardinal Newman Society—a Manassas, Va.-based Catholic college watchdog group—began collecting signatures in an online petition that calls for Notre Dame to rescind its invitation to Obama to be this year’s commencement speaker.

“We fully expected some criticism and have received it, though nothing more than we anticipated,” said Dennis K. Brown, a spokesman for Notre Dame. “I can’t foresee us rescinding the invitation.”

Brown told Catholic News Service on March 23 that he has heard anecdotally that many students are pleased with this year’s choice of Obama as the commencement speaker.

“Most students are pleased with this year’s choice of Obama as the commencement speaker,” he added.

See NOTRE DAME, page 2
Dr. Melanie Margiotta, director of the Kolbe Center in Indianapolis in 2006. She had originally planned on specializing in addiction medicine, but was persuaded to open to treating Catholic couples practicing NFP because “I never was in a Catholic hospital, and didn’t feel like I was taking care of the whole person.” She eventually was hired at Honey Grove Medical Family in Beech Grove. “I definitely think that God put me there and wanted me to get to know him,” she said. “It’s absolutely a huge impact on me and on my life.”

Since completing her residency, Bajuyo has found that being an NFP-only doctor has limited her employment opportunities. But she eventually was hired at Honey Grove Medical Family in Greenwood, owned by the Sisters of St. Francis Health System.

“I just have a great deal of peace now, knowing that there’s no inconsistency,” Bajuyo said. “Whether at home or at work, there’s no question of who I am.”

USCCB (continued from page 3)

“Increasing abortion access increases abortion rates,” the USCCB lawyers said. “The administration cannot reasonably assert that the scheme has not increased access to abortion.” For instance, the bishops said, states with laws requiring parental consent or allowing minor patients to access abortion without parental consent have shown lower abortion rates. “What the administration has said is not borne out by the evidence,” the bishops said.

In soliciting public comment on the proposed rescission, HHS asked whether the regulation “would create access to information and health care services, particularly by low-income women, as some groups such as Planned Parenthood and NARAL Pro-Choice America have advocated.” The USCCB attorneys said rescinding the conscience regulation “would have uncertain effects on access to abortion.”

USCCB (continued from page 3)

Dr. Melanie Margiotta spent a lot of time teaching residents in family medicine atMethodist Hospital and the Community Hospital network, both in Indianapolis. At Methodist, she accepted the Church’s teaching on natural family planning, but was hesitant to talk about this teaching with her fertility patients. “I tried trying to teach about NFP because I was never in a Catholic hospital, and didn’t feel like I was taking care of the whole person,” she said. When Margiotta saw the great desire in many Catholic couples for a physician with such principles, she felt called to go that route.

Now she is receiving training at the Pope Paul VI Institute in Omaha, Neb., in its Creighton method of NFP, and in ways of educating clergy on the moral and religious convictions that motivated them to provide life-affirming health care in the first place, the bishops said. But, in some cases, none at all,” they added.

The USCCB attorneys said rescinding the conscience regulation “would have uncertain effects on access to abortion.”

“For me it meant that I could use the science behind it to benefit the Church in 1998 when I found that being an NFP-only doctor has limited her employment opportunities. But she eventually was hired at Honey Grove Medical Family in Greenwood, owned by the Sisters of St. Francis Health System.”

Margiotta was actually angry. “I couldn’t [persuade] people from a religious basis because they don’t care, and they wanted a refill on progesterone-estrogen balance and been having a hysterectomy, and the main reason why was because I had fibroid tumors. "And now I’m learning that, all along, I could have been much more likely treated with the progesterone-estrogen balance and been able to preserve my own fertility … " But the choice to stop prescribing the pill wasn’t related solely to his re-discovering faith. Bolton also studied its side effects and spoke about them with his patients. “I couldn’t [persuade] people from a religious basis because they don’t care, and half of my patients are Protestant,” he said. “I needed to tell them how the pill was for bad medically – the risk of breast cancer, the risk of cervical cancer.”

A through Brown persuaded some of his elderly patients to stop with him and welcomed new patients who appreciated his stance. It took three or four years before he was treating enough patients to make his practice sustainable.

“By understanding my faith and being able to integrate that with the way I treat my patients medically, [using] faith and reason, it’s just made such a big difference because I feel like I’m taking care of the whole person now,” Brown said. “I mean, I was just not taking care of a part of a person.”

"It's going to be all right. We'll be there waiting if you give us two weeks' notice. It's going to be all right. We'll be there waiting if you give us two weeks' notice."
In Africa, pope challenges attitudes and cultural trends

LUA NDA, A Angola (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI's in-flight statement opposing condom distribution in AIDS prevention drew sharp criticism and was seen by many people as a distraction from his main message in Africa.

But a closer look reveals that very little of what the pope had to say during his March 17-23 African journey was easy or accommodating. In issues ranging from abortion to corruption, from women's rights to economic development, he preached the Gospel in a way that took issue with common practices and prevailing attitudes.

His conviction, expressed on his first day in Cameroon, is that Christianity is the answer—the only real answer—to the chronic problems plaguing Africa. His fear is that Africa, caught up in economic and cultural globalisation, will follow the secularized West and lose touch with its own best values.

Condom campaigns are, to Pope Benedict, a small but very real part of this threat. But his concern extends to virtually every area of social, economic and political life.

"At a time when so many people have no qualms about trying to impose the tyranny of materialism, with scant concern for the most deprived, you must be very careful," he told Africans in Cameroon.

"Take care of your souls," he said. "Do not let yourselves be captivated by selfish illusions and false ideals."

News accounts usually leave out the words that inevitably followed these papal warnings, but for the pope they were the most important part of his message in Africa.

"Only Christ is the way of life." "The Lord Jesus is the one mediator and redeemer." "Christ is the measure of true humanism."

The transformation the pontiff asked of Africans was, as he described it, one that must begin with a radical conversion to Christ that redirects every aspect of life.

"The Gospel teaches us that reconciliation, true reconciliation, can only be the fruit of conversion, a change of heart, a new way of thinking. It teaches us that only the conversion to Christ that redirects every aspect of life.

"The dominant societal culture is not helping Africa. His first speech on the continent reminded Africans of their traditional values and said the Church was the institution best able to preserve and purify them—unlike agencies that want to impose "cultural models that ignore the rights of women."

In a speech to foreign diplomats, he laid down a direct challenge to international organizations that, in his words, were undermining society's foundations by promoting abortion as a form of reproductive health care. The working document for next October's Synod of Bishops, delivered by the pope to African bishops, said globalization "infringes on Africa's rights" and tends "to be the vehicle for the domination of a single, cultural model and a culture of debt."

The pope hit hard on African wars and ethnic conflicts, and repeatedly held out Christianity as the answer. If Africans grasp that the Church is "God's family," he said in Cameroon, there is no room for ethniccentrism or factionalism. In effect, he presented the Church as the only institution capable of bringing Africans together in a way that goes beyond political or economic expediency.

A through the pope had two one-liners about corruption, typically portrayed in the West as the quintessential "African" problem, he did not engage in finger-pointing—even in Cameroon, which is usually at the top of the corruption charts of human rights organizations. Indeed, he called Cameroon a "land of hope" for Africa.

The reason is that he knows local African Church leaders are already on the front lines in denouncing political corruption. In Cameroon, for example, a year ago Cardinal Christian Wiyghan Noundou of Douala took the unprecedented step of publicly opposing President Paul Biya's constitutional meddling that allowed the president to serve yet another seven-year term—a position the cardinal reiterated during the pope's visit.

Significantly, the pope treated corruption not as a problem to be eliminated in return for foreign aid, but as a practice incompatible with the demands of the Gospel. He added, however, that Africa deserves a similar change in attitude from the developed world—not "more programs and protocols," but "conversion of hearts to sincere solidarity."

His visit to the sick in Cameroon illustrated that the Church must invest its resources in love and care for the needy, but with a special focus. Human suffering can only make sense in light of Christ's crucifixion and his "final victory" over death, he said.

Even the pope's defense of women's rights in Africa was very much a "Benedict" approach, based not on human rights declarations, but on the biblical account of creation. Here, too, his point that men and women have "complementary" roles will no doubt find critics.

The pope's method in Africa was not to lay down the law, but to lay down a challenge, asking people to examine their own lives and their relationships in the light of the Gospel. He believes that Christianity is a perfect fit for Africa, but that, in view of cultural trends, it won't necessarily be an easy fit.
Abstinence education

In our Feb. 13 issue, we published a feature by senior reporter Mary Ann Wyand about Stephanie and Christopher Fenton, who were so moved by the fact that they had waited until marriage to have sexual intimacy that Stephanie fastened her A Promise to Keep chastity pin to her wedding bouquet.

The young couple had been part of the archdiocese’s A Promise to Keep: God’s Gift of Sexuality program, an abstinence education peer mentors and encouraging younger teenagers to refrain from having sex.

A nearly exact time that our article was published, other periodicals published articles questioning the effectiveness of abstinence programs like A Promise to Keep.

For example, the Feb. 14 issue of The Economist stated, “Abstinence-only education programs have been controversial ever since they were introduced under [President] Ronald Reagan in 1981. Some liberals have labeled them ineffective and most favor a curriculum that includes discussion of both abstinence and contraception.”

It continued, “Since the start of abstinence-only programs, the federal government has spent over $1.5 billion on them, but the United States still has one of the highest teen-pregnancy rates of any developed country.”

The Economist article said that the false idea of abstinence education is uncertain since the Obama administration and a Democratic Congress. A bill that would fund “medically accurate” comprehensive sex education in schools is expected to be passed by legislators.

A弩 אחר, our Sunday Visitor, reported in its March 1 issue that a researcher at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health compared teenagers who made pledges to remain abstinent with other teenagers who shared similar values but did not make a pledge, and concluded that a virginity pledge had no impact on whether or not teenagers had sex.

However, that was not the case, was disputed by the RAND Corporation, a non-profit research and development organization, in a study which found that girls who took pledges became sexually active at a lower rate than comparable teenagers who did not take pledges. The idea of a pledge, of course, is to make teenagers feel more acceptable to their families and friends as well as to themselves.

In our sex-saturated society, it is remarkable that any teenagers can remain chaste. Movies and television sitcoms give the impression that the search for a sex partner is the most important part of life and that everyone is “doing it.”

Despite society’s pressures and teenagers’ raging hormones, it is not true that most teenagers are having sex, although the number of the fact that they are comforted by parents of teens.
Easter gift of empty tomb shows that our sins can be forgiven

Easter gift of empty tomb shows that our sins can be forgiven

M e cuenta creer que estamos a punto de comenzar la quinta semana de la Cuaresma. Resulta oportuno pensar anticipadamente sobre la observancia del Domingo de Ramos y de la entrada triunfal de Jesús en Jerusalén. Las palmas de este año se quemarán y se convertirán en cenizas para el próximo Miércoles de Ceniza cuando las recibiremos junto con el recordatorio formal: “Recuerda que eres polvo y en polvo te convertirás.”

No está de más tener presente que las palmas de la victoria se convierten en un recordatorio severo de la pecaminosidad de nuestra condición humana. Ellas reflejan lo que ocurre en la liturgia impresionante del Domingo de Ramos. La entrada triunfal de Jesús en Jerusalén termina en un dolor repentino.

Durante la Semana Santa Jesús es sometido a prueba. E incluso los soldados romanos paganos pueden verlo. El cinismo denota la falta de esperanza en un mundo que no puede ver que Jesús murió por ellos, pero aún así es incapaz de buscar el perdón porque no es un hombre de fe, se arrepienten rápidamente de su pecado.

La verdad es que Jesús no nos amó como nosotros amamos a nadie. Sin embargo, a pesar de que nos traicionó, Jesús fue el primero en entrar en la pálida vacía de la Pascua. El don del sepulcro vacío de la Pascua nos demuestra que nuestros pecados pueden ser perdonados. La pascua promete la posibilidad de que nuestros pecados sean perdonados.

No se puede decir que Jesús fue un hombre de fe, pero su muerte fue un acto de fe. Jesús murió para que sus pecados sean perdonados. La pascua promete la posibilidad de que nuestros pecados sean perdonados.

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

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

Archbishop Buechlein’s intention for vocations for March: Youth: that they may be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit so that they can truly discern their role in the Church, especially God's call to priestly and religious life.

El don del sepulcro vacío de la Pascua nos demuestra que nuestros pecados pueden ser perdonados.

Sus últimas palabras fueron: “Dios mío, Dios mío, ¿por qué me has abandonado?” (Mc 15:34). Sin embargo, al final, un soldado romano pagano habla de esperanza cuando dice: “Verdaderamente este hombre era el Hijo del Dios viviente” (Mk 15:39). Durante la Semana Santa Jesús es sometido a prueba. E incluso los soldados romanos pueden verlo. El cinismo denota la falta de esperanza en un mundo que no puede ver que Jesús murió por él, pero aún así es incapaz de buscar el perdón porque no es un hombre de fe, se arrepienten rápidamente de su pecado.

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La pascua promete la posibilidad de que nuestros pecados sean perdonados. El sacramento de la reconciliación es un don pascual que Jesús conquistó por nosotros, de modo que la hoja de la pálma junto con la cruz representan un símbolo de victoria.

Este don se encuentra en disposición en la quinta semana de la Cuaresma y durante la Semana Santa. Tenemos tiempo para confesar nuestros pecados, ya sea esta semana o durante la Semana Santa.

Si lo hacemos, la hoja de palma nos guiará más allá de la oscuridad y de la cruz radiante al júbilo de la Pascua. ¡El joven que acepte el ánimo del Espíritu Santo, para que puedan discernir su papel en la iglesia, especialmente la llamada de Dios a hacerse sacerdote y entrar en una vida religiosa.

Pascue promete la posibilidad de que nuestros pecados sean perdonados.

Las intenciones vocacionales del Arzobispo Buechlein para marzo:

Los jóvenes: que ellos acepten el ánimo del Espíritu Santo, para que puedan discernir su papel en la iglesia, especialmente la llamada de Dios a hacerse sacerdote y entrar en una vida religiosa.

Se debe tener en cuenta que el intención que se debe incluir la lista de oración del Arzobispo Buechlein puede enviar su correspondencia a:

Lista de oración del Arzobispo Buechlein
Arzobispado de Indianapolis
1400 N. Maryland St.
P.O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1410

Traducido por: Daniela Guigno, Language Training Center, Indianapolis
### Events Calendar

**March 27**
- St. Paul Hemitage, 501 N. 17th Ave, Beech Grove.
  - Ave Marie Guild, rummage sale, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Information: 317-887-5508.
- St. Joan of Arc Parish, 4217 N. Central Ave, Indianapolis.
  - Mass, rosary, Stations of the Cross, 6 p.m. Information: 317-283-5517.
- A new ride at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 400 N. Resart Ave, Indianapolis. Fish fry, 4-3:30 p.m., carryout available. Information: 317-357-8332 or tom@olmhp.org.
- St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, 1401 N. Rosart Ave, Indianapolis. Fish fry, 4-3:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m., carryout available. Information: 317-838-5551.
- St. Elizabeth Seton Parish, 8805 West street, Indianapolis. Fish fry, 4-7 p.m., $6 adults, $3 children. Information: 317-838-5551.
- St. John’s Passion, 7-3 p.m. Information: 317-846-3850.

**March 27-29**
- St. Mary-of-the-Woods, 125 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. “Come and See,” vocation retreat for women ages 18-42. Information: 317-525-3985 or tgp@smw.rose.org.

**March 28**
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Wagner Hall, 1752 Scheller Lane, New Albany. Easter breakfast and bus trip to Lafayette, 9-3 p.m., $15 includes bus fare, $5 for lunch. Information: 812-945-2374.

**March 29**
- St. Mary-of-the-Woods, 125 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. “Come and See,” vocation retreat for women ages 18-42. Information: 317-525-3985 or tgp@smw.rose.org.

**Via Crucis**

*Joel Luis Gandara*

**‘Treasuring Womanhood’ conference to address spiritual weapons**

*“Treasuring Womanhood,”* the sixth annual Indian Catholic Women’s Conference, will address “Spiritual Weapons” on April 18 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.
- **Roundtable speakers are:**
  - Johanne Benkovic, the founder and president of Living His Life Aundantly and Woman of Grace as well as a popular Catholic TV and radio speaker.
  - Elizabeth Ficolli, an award-winning Catholic author of nine books.
  - Mercy Father Christopher Crotty, vicar general and pastor of Our Lady of the Most Holy ROSARY Parish in Indianapolis, is the principal celebrant and homilist for the conference Mass.
- Elizabeth Welich, a teacher at Lumen Christi School, in Indianapolis will provide the music ministry with violin accompaniment by Teresa Fletcher.
- The conference begins at 8 a.m. and concludes at 4:45 p.m. It is sponsored by the Indianapolis archdiocese Office for Pro-Life M inistry.

*Register online to receive a $5 discount.* Information: 317-788-5701 or www.indianacatholics.org.
School choice bill that passed in Senate awaits House action

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

In past years, school choice has been a partisan issue. Traditionally, Republicans have supported it, and Democrats have opposed it. However, recent national trends indicate that when school choice legislation is presented in tax credits rather than vouchers, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle support it.

This trend is apparent in Indiana when looking at this year’s school choice bill, Senate Bill 528, which passed the Senate in February with bipartisan support.

The proposal, known as the scholarship tax credit bill, authored by Sen. Carlin Yoder (R-Middlebury), would offer a 50 percent tax credit incentive to corporations or individuals for donations made to qualified Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGO's).

These organizations would then provide grants to lower-income families for school tuition or other school-related costs at the public or private school of the parents’ choice.

The tax credit would allow individuals and corporations who contribute to a qualified scholarship program to deduct 50 percent of the amount of that donation from their state tax liability.

For example, a donor who gives $5,000 to a participating scholarship program would be able to claim a $2,500 credit against what they owed in state income tax liability. The SGO program receives the $5,000 private donation, which would then be used to fund scholarships for lower-income students. A $2,500 state tax credit thus helps leverage $5,000 in private scholarship donations.

Sen. John Broden (D-South Bend), who supported the bill, said, "The focus was narrowly tailored. It really focuses on those children that are in the 200 percent of poverty category. I very much welcome the opportunity to help those families that are obviously having a very difficult time, and yet very much want the option and opportunity to send their children to a school of their choice." He said, "I like very much the way the bill was tailored to reach those working-class folks. I generally oppose those types of bills, like voucher bills or school transfer bills, but because this bill was so well-crafted and targeted to reach those families that really need it is the reason why I supported the bill," Sen. Broden said, "It also wasn’t school specific. The contributions are going to scholarship granting organizations rather than directly to a particular school."

Sen. Robert Dieg (D-Mount Vernon), who also voted for the bill, said, "The way I look at it is that the families that send their children to parochial schools pay taxes, but don't receive any benefit. This will allow lower-income children to attend a parochial school. "I know a number of families that would like to send their child to parochial schools, but they simply can't afford to do that.

"I very much welcome the opportunity to help those families that are obviously having a difficult time, and yet very much want the option and opportunity to send their children to a school of their choice."—Sen. John Broden

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—Sen. John Broden

St. John Passion by Johann Sebastian Bach

It is with great pleasure that we announce two performances of Johann Sebastian Bach’s masterpiece, the St. John Passion.

Friday, March 27 – 7:30 p.m.
St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church
Carmel, Indiana

Sunday, March 29 – 3 p.m.
Trinity Episcopal Church
Indianapolis, Indiana

The critically acclaimed, Indianapolis Baroque Orchestra (IBO) along with the Meridian Vocal Consort (MVC) will perform with soloists Steven Stolen, Kyle Ferrill, and Alan Dunbar, as well as with the parish choirs of St. Elizabeth Seton and Trinity. These performances feature Baroque period instruments and historically informed performance practice. The work in its entirety lasts for two hours, there will be an intermission between Parts 1 and 2.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House

A Pilgrimage to the Marian Shrines
Portugal, France, Spain

October 18-30, 2009

Francis J. Farrell
Director of Fatima Retreat House

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Niece of late civil rights leader is key speaker at pro-life prayer vigil

By Mary Ann Wyand

The late Rev. M. Artin Luther King Jr. inspired hundreds of thousands of people to march for the civil rights of African-Americans during the 1950s and 1960s.

He preached tirelessly about equal rights for black people, endorsed the idea of black pride in his own family, and was assassinated because of his belief that all people deserve respect regardless of the color of their skin.

His niece, Dr. Alveda King of Atlanta, continues his civil rights campaign for equality for all people, especially for defenseless unborn babies whose mothers are experiencing crisis pregnancies, as a pastoral associate of Priests for Life and spokeswoman for the national “Silent No More Awareness Campaign.”

She regrets her abortion years ago, and also ministers to women and men harmed by abortion.

King likes to reflect on and quote from her famous uncle’s speeches.

“The Negro cannot win,” Rev. M. Artin Luther King said about five decades ago, “if he is willing to sacrifice the future of his children for immediate personal comfort and safety.”

She enthusiastically champions his message, emphasizing in all her talks that “abortion is never just about a child or the mother…. How can the dream survive if we murder the children?… African-Americans, like many Americans, are pro-life and uphold procreative marriage.”

King was the keynote speaker for a spring “40 Days for Life” pro-life prayer vigil on March 10 in front of the Planned Parenthood abortion clinic at 5590 N. Geenough Road in Indianapolis.

Ironically, the pro-life rally was held on the same day that the Planned Parenthood “40 Days for Life” pro-choice prayer vigil on March 10 in front of the Planned Parenthood abortion clinic with several prayers.

“President Obama, in the name of Jesus, let the babies live,” she said.

As a Christian, she said, “we have the authority to make that demand and make that claim. And we do believe that this clinic will close and babies will stop being murdered here.”

King also led a large group of women carrying “Silent No More” signs and other pro-life supporters of all ages in the “Prayer to End Abortion.”

The Tuesday afternoon prayer rally attracted about 100 people who also are participating in the “40 Days for Life” spring campaign during Lent.

“I remember meeting David Bereit [a ‘40 Days for Life’ campaign founder and national director of Priests for Life] is very devoted and committed to standing with [Beret] and many (pro-life) leaders across the country and many lay people. So when we make that commitment of 40 days of sacrifice and prayer, we should pray every day, all day. We know that, but specifically to pray for life. Certainly, together for 40 days, that makes a difference.”

Pro-life supporters have an obligation “to let our light shine” for others, King said. “‘Jesus said, ‘Let your light shine that people will see it and glorify God in heaven’ (Matt 5:16).”

People who think they need to go in the clinic can see our light. Most of the time when women get abortions, … it’s because [they] don’t see another way out. But it’s our responsibility as Christians who support life not to condemn, not to judge, not to point fingers, but to open our hands in love and say, “Let us help you so you don’t have to do this.”

King asked the pro-life supporters to raise their hands if they have helped save the lives of unborn babies.

“As dozens of people held up their hands, she said, ‘Each of us can give testimonies that God is moving on this Earth. … We are making a difference, each of us doing our part.’

(For more information about the “40 Days for Life” spring prayer campaign, log on to www.40daysforlife.com/Indianapolis.)
175 years of history

Faith on display in Vincennes as jubilee pilgrims travel back in time

By Mary Ann Wyand

VINCENNES—Archdiocesan pilgrims who traveled to historic Vincennes, Ind., with Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein on March 18 enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate a 175th anniversary Mass at the beautiful Old Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis Xavier. It was a memorable liturgy as the 51 pilgrims from central and southern Indiana prayed and offered thanks for 175 years of the Church’s presence in Indiana that began with the establishment of the Diocese of Vincennes by Pope Gregory XVI on May 6, 1834.

An apostolic brief during the papacy of Pope Leo XII dated March 28, 1829, changed the name to the Diocese of Indianapolis and moved the episcopal seat there. On Oct. 21, 1844, Pope Pius XII issued an apostolic decree that created the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

After welcoming the pilgrims, Archbishop Buechlein led a rosary at the start of the one-day jubilee bus trip to southern Indiana, which will be offered again on Sept. 12.

“It’s good to have you all here,” he said. “We’ll pray for the canonization of [the Servant of God] Bishop Simon Bruté as well today, and say thanks to God for 375 years of grace and blessings upon our local Church.”

During his prayer, the archbishop offered thanks for “our ancestors in faith”—those who carried the Catholic faith to Indiana and those who passed it on to new generations.

In Vincennes, the pilgrims began the day with Mass at the restored basilica, which is Indiana’s oldest church.

During his homily, the archbishop recalled the faith and dedication of Bishop Bruté, who was appointed the first bishop of Vincennes in 1834.

“Bishop Bruté, because of his simplicity, was called a silent power in the Church in its infancy here in the United States,” Archbishop Buechlein explained.

“He was respected for his strong prudence, and he was admired for his holiness. ... He was a man of hope in very trying times and circumstances.”

With only three priests to assist him, the archbishop said, Bishop Bruté overcame overwhelming challenges to establish the Church in Indiana.

“I lift up our first bishop as the model for us in our baptismal call to holiness,” he said. “Let our anniversary prayers keep us close to Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life. Let’s make the extra effort to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. Bishop Bruté ... had a great devotion to the Eucharist. May I say to learn to love the Eucharist more and more.”

Following Mass and lunch, the pilgrims toured the basilica and crypt, which contains the remains of the four bishops of Vincennes—Bishops Simon Gabriel Bruté, Celestine de la Hailandière, John Stephen Bazin and M. Aurice de St. Palais.

They also visited the Old Cathedral Library, which was founded in 1796 and is the state’s first library. About 12,000 historic documents preserved in the library’s valuable collection include rare volumes and Church manuscripts. A papal bull issued by Pope John XXIII in 1959 is the oldest document. An illuminated manuscript copy of Officium Sanctae Mariae on vellum dates to the 11th or 12th century and is the oldest book.

St. Lawrence parishioners John and Karen Carroll of Indianapolis said they are “history buffs” and wanted to learn more about the early days of the Church in Indiana.

“I have studied early Indiana history,” John Carroll said, “and was extremely impressed with the artifacts they had accumulated that survived all this time. ... I like to study the roles that Catholics played in the early years of the country and the role of the early French settlers.”

As the bus passed by Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis at the end of the day, Archbishop Buechlein invited the pilgrims to participate in the archdiocese’s 175th jubilee Mass there at 3 p.m. on May 3. †

The Old Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis Xavier in Vincennes, Ind., is the oldest church in Indiana and was restored recently. Pilgrims from all over the world have visited the historic church. A statue of Father Pierre Gibault, vicar general of “the Illinois country,” who lived in Vincennes, Ind., is the oldest church in Indiana.

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Volunteers needed to assist at 175th anniversary Mass at Lucas Oil Stadium

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is still seeking volunteers to help at the May 3 Mass as the archdiocese’s 175th anniversary. A bout 300 people are needed to staff about 100 stations of the cross as the Mass is celebrated at 3 p.m. at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, said Stephen James, director of the archdiocesan Office of Purchasing, who is coordinating the recruitment of volunteers.

Volunteers are needed to help with most aspects of the Mass, including assisting the bishops with confirmation. Ushers, sign bearers and Communion guides are also needed.

Volunteers will need to be able to walk up and down stairs, James noted. Jobs will be assigned to individuals as they arrive at Lucas Oil Stadium. (Volunteers are encouraged to register online at www.archindy.org/175.) Look for the volunteers’ link. You may also sign up to help by sending an e-mail to Steve James at 317-236-1451 or steve.james@archindy.org. Call Steve James at 317-236-1451 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1451, if you have questions.) †
St. Anne parishioners celebrate past, present and future

By Mary Ann Wyand

The past, present and future are closely linked this year in the history of St. Anne Parish in New Castle. St. Anne parishioners recently had an opportunity to look at artifacts representing their parish’s history, which were preserved in a time capsule sealed in the former church cornerstone.

The cornerstone dated 1923 was cemented in the foundation of their historic brick church, and the time capsule wasn’t meant to be opened yet. But after an arson fire gutted their beloved church on Holy Saturday, April 7, 2007, the damaged remains of the formerly sacred building had to be demolished for safety reasons and to make room for the construction of their new church on the same site at 102 N. 19th St. Franciscan Sister Shirley Gerth, the parish life coordinator of St. Anne Parish and St. Rose Parish in Knightsown, and several parishioners arranged a special ceremony on Feb. 18 so members of the 260 household parishioners would be there to help St. Anne parishioners look to—and prepare for—the future when he helps with the groundbreaking ceremony for the new church on March 29 on the parish campus.

Sister Shirley said construction is expected to be well under way before Easter so St. Anne parishioners will be able to celebrate a special resurrection in the life and history of their 136-year-old faith community.

(To view pictures of artifacts from the time capsule, log on to St. Anne Parish’s Web site at http://saintanne.us.to.)

Artifacts from the time capsule preserved in the cornerstone of St. Anne Church in New Castle include crucifixes, crosses, religious medals, a flag and historic documents.

Journals written by the pastor in 1923, were among the items preserved in the time capsule and he is expected to be well under way before Easter so St. Anne parishioners will be able to celebrate a special resurrection in the life and history of their 136-year-old faith community.

The architect had a wonderful idea about that,” Dyer said. “I thought that was a marvelous idea. I think with all the [architectural] plans we have really blended the old and the new, and I think that’s one reason why [the new church design has] been so well received by the parishioners.”

A richshop Daniel M. Buchlein will help St. Anne parishioners look to—and build for—the future when he helps with the groundbreaking ceremony for the new church at 2 p.m. on March 29 on the parish campus.

Sister Shirley said construction is expected to be well under way before Easter so St. Anne parishioners will be able to celebrate a special resurrection in the life and history of their 136-year-old faith community.

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INDY’S FAVORITE HOME MEDICAL COMPANY
Lent can give us a new appreciation of obedience

By Mary Jo Pedersen

Years ago, I visited the great basilica cathedral at the Abbey of Monte cassino in Italy with its rich marbles and exquisite mosaics. Fear of the remarkable mosaics depict the vows taken by Benedictine monks who built and rebuilt this magnificent church over a period of nearly a thousand years.

The mosaics above the high altar show figures representing the vows of chastity, stability, poverty and obedience. I could identify three of these figures easily, but the fourth was a mystery to me. Instead of a kneeling monk bowing before a superior, the mosaic representing obedience depicts the face of an attentive monk, with his hand behind his ear, leaning forward with a look of expectant listening on his face.

It is one of the most beautiful mosaics that I have ever seen in terms of color, texture and expression. I was so struck by it that I purchased a copy of the artwork in the basilica museum. The artistic representation of obedience intrigued me.

I had always associated obedience with childhood or servitude, with bowing and submitting one’s will to another person out of duty or fear. My husband and I left the word “obey” out of our wedding vows years ago because we regarded ourselves as equals and thought that obedience was not necessary for two adults forming a partnership of love in marriage.

As I looked into the radiant face of the mosaic monk, however, and began investigating the meaning of the word “obey,” I recognized the poverty of our understanding.

The English word “obey” comes from the Latin “obeire,” which means “to hear” or “to listen attentively,” like that obedience, but a generous listening that orients one’s will to God. His expression is not one of fear, but of expectancy and trust. His is the obedience referred to in the reading from the Letter to the Hebrews for the fifth Sunday of Lent.

Jesus, in some mysterious way, had to learn obedience. Jesus turned his ear to his Father, listening and trusting that, if he followed the path laid out by his Father who loved him, his life would be safe.

In the life of faith, to obey means to do what Jesus did—to be open to and to listen to our heavenly Father who loves us. This is not a blind obedience, but a generous listening that orients one’s will to God.

In the Greek version of the Letter to the Hebrews, the word for “obedience” used in the text means “to be persuaded, won over.” As a follower of Christ in this season of repentance, our life if we are willing to lose it, to give it away selflessly.

In John’s Gospel this Sunday, we hear the words of Jesus that we say we only gain our life if we are willing to lose it, to give it away selflessly.

Do I want to listen to that message this Lent?

In the life of faith, to obey means to do what Jesus did—to be open to and to listen to our heavenly Father who loves us.

I am really listening when I pray or ponder the Scriptures? Or do I come to God in this season of repentance with my own agenda, holding tight to my life as I have scripted it?

Lent offers us the opportunity to open our guarded hearts, trusting our lives to God—as Jesus did.

The monk in the mosaic puts his hand behind his ear to block out noise and listen intently. He is literally bent on listening.

In John’s Gospel this Sunday, we hear the words of Jesus that we say we only gain our life if we are willing to lose it, to give it away selflessly.

Do I want to listen to that message this Lent?

In the life of faith, to obey means following God’s will

This Week’s Question

How do you define “obedience” in your life of faith and in your everyday life? Are there different kinds of obedience?

“When I think of obedience, I think, in a sense, of freedom because obedience and the will of God go together for me. We obey by doing his will [which is to love]—like loving our neighbors as ourselves. Being obedient makes life easier because we know the way we act is in line with God. It’s almost like a circle. Obedience brings joy, peace and happiness, and we come more and more into his image and likeness.”

(Mary Ann Cottone, Moorestown, N.J.)

“To me, it is obeying authority—first the pope and the Church...then mothers, fathers and your boss. Teachers too, as long as they do not interfere with our freedom because obedience and the will of God go together for me. We obey by doing his will [which is to love].”

(Mike McNulty, Akron, Ohio)

“Both faith and everyday life, I think obedience is a matter of following God’s laws. I don’t think there’s a difference.”

(Mike M. Chitty, Akron, Ohio)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: What does it feel like to be a Catholic in a place where there are very few other Catholics? How does the Church survive in such areas?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to corresp@catholicnews.com or write to Faith Alive! at 3211 Fourth Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100.
Basic Catholicism: The divinity of Jesus

During recent decades, certain scholars have attempted to find “the historical Jesus” as opposed to the Jesus of the Christian faith. In the process of trying to make him as human as possible as Jesus, they sometimes overlooked the fact that he was a great man, but deny that he was divine.

But it is not sufficient for Catholics to follow Christ just because he was a great man. Some even hear that Jesus never claimed to be God.

Some, though, say that Jesus really never said such things, that the Gospel writers wrote those things decades after his death. But many believe that Jesus always existed. He told Nicodemus that he was a man. He claimed to be God. He said that he was the way, the truth, and the life. He told those scribes specifically that he was doing what his Father, the God of Israel, was doing. The Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth (Mk 2:10). If only God can forgive sins, Jesus obviously claimed to be God.

As a man, I can forgive you for injuring me, but I have no right to forgive you for injuring someone else. If you sin by breaking God’s laws, only God can forgive you. A man is not allowed to have the authority to do that. In this book Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis wrote, “I am therefore convinced that anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about [Jesus]: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God.’” A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—or on a level with the man who says he is a co-adventurer with Christ, for he would ask, “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?” (Lk 4:22).

When Jesus healed the paralytic, he told those scribes specifically that he was doing what only God could do. He said, “The Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth” (Mk 2:10). If only God can forgive sins, Jesus obviously claimed to be God.

For Jesus, I insisted that we stop. Hungry, and the service was well under way, I insisted that we stop.

Emmusah Walk/Debra Tomasselli

Abba, Father, I put my life in your hands

Years ago, frustrated with my life because it wasn’t the way I wanted it to, I found answers in an unexpected spot for a Good Friday liturgy at my parish church. Although it had been years since I had attended Lenten liturgies, I was flustered with the idea of going to church on Good Friday.

Each time that the thought surfaced, however, I dismissed it. After all, my husband and I had kids out for pizza, and I wasn’t going to disrupt our agenda.

But that night, as we were on our way to the pizzeria, I noticed the packed parking lot at our church, which was along our route, and it beckoned me. Although it was late, the kids were hungry, and the service was well under way, I insisted that we stop.

We found space on the grass and parked the car. I carried the baby on my hip while I held her preacher’s hands. A mild crowd, we rushed across the darkened parking lot and slipped into the back door of the church. A few empty pews remained, and we slid into them, blanketed by the reverence of the congregation. The church lights were dimmed, and paradise surrounded the life-sized crucifix on the altar draped with dark cloth. I bowed my head in perpetual prayer.

I remember nothing more than gifting the worship of the service to God, but the song we sang moments later still resonates today: “Abba, Father, I put my life in your hands.”

I remember nothing more than gifting the worship of the service to God, but the song we sang moments later still resonates today: “Abba, Father, I put my life in your hands.”

I’m trying to live it.

Abba, Father, I put my life in your hands

(Abbie Tomasselli lives in Altamonte Springs, Fla. Her column appears in several diocesan newspapers. Her e-mail address is atlomasselli@csfri.com.)

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Don’t grumble when carrying your daily cross

I like to think that I strive to follow Jesus” teaching. “Take up your cross and follow me” (Mk 8:34). But it is not always easy. Often I come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk 9:23).

I’ve been in the habit for a while now of waking up early to pray and have a quiet breakfast before my kids get up. For myself, at least, I know I can be really lazy and get into my own needs and wants and carve out some time for myself during the day, and the earlier the better.

But for a few weeks now, my youngest son, Victor, who will be 2 in April, has been waking up at 6 a.m. or earlier. And at the same age, Mr. Charming, my older two brothers wake up not too long afterward.

Goodbye, quiet time. Hello, cross. It’s easy for me to grumble at such times. But when I do that, I’m really grumbling at God. He has called me to be a father. It is an essential part of his will for my life. And so, I must be attentive to those periods (as they often do early in the morning when they’re hungry, need to use the bathroom or get dressed). God’s will is for me to be there for them.

When I grumble, I’m being prideful. In fact, I’m telling God that I know what’s better for my life than he does.

I need not to say that arranging for personal time for ourselves, hobbies or friendships is bad. Far from it. But what are the legitimate interruptions to such personal time, we need to accept as God’s will.

I remember when Paul knew this well. He was a 17th-century French priest who became well-known for his service to the poor. When a new parishioner came to him who interrupted the kind of personal time that I value early in the morning: “If a needy person requires medicine or other help during prayer time, do whatever has to be done with peace of mind. Christ has more need of prayer. Do not become upset or feel guilty because you interrupted your prayer,” he wrote. “Do not neglect if you leave for such service.”

If stepping away from prayer or any kind of pastoral time to serve the true needs of others is a part of God’s will, how much more is that true when we want to watch our favorite TV show, spend time surfing the Internet or work on a hobby?

In the end, picking up our cross daily and following Jesus in the footsteps of Jesus is about deliberately taking our attention away from ourselves and placing it with God and those around us.

Our first human instinct when considering this is that it’s a zero sum game: the more attention I give to others means the less I can give to myself and that I’ll be less happy as a result. Yes, I know. But if we put our needs and wants aside to serve others, we can’t help but make a journey through these final weeks of Lent.

Palm Sunday and Good Friday when we solemnly recall Jesus’ suffering and death, and the need to confront our own needs in the cross is never the end of the story. The story continues.

And so when, despite your guilt insticts, you take the risk of faith, lay down your own needs and wants to serve those around you, put in the front of your heart and mind that you can carry that cross joyfully, knowing that this is the work that God can ever imagine is waiting for us on the other side.”

Perspectives
Lord, were the Lord’s special students and were chosen to be the Lord’s representatives. They acted and spoke with authority.

Jesus brings an ominous overtone to this reading. He predicts death. He speaks of a grain of wheat falling to the ground, lifeless and tiny. However, from this small piece of reality, wondrous new life springs.

He speaks of the voluntary giving of life. Remember that, while these verses recall an event which occurred actually in Christ’s lifetime, they are part of a Gospel that was probably composed long after the earthly life of Christ.

The first people who heard this Scripture knew the story of the Crucifixion. These people would have long after the earthly life of Christ.

Jesus, the Son of God, willingly chose to die on Calvary. He was obedient to God’s will.

This reading refers to the Crucifixion. Jesus, the Son of God, willingly accepted the pain of death on the cross. He was not the helpless victim of circumstances or the scheming of others. He chose to die on Calvary. He was obedient to God’s will.

St. John’s Gospel supplies the last reading.

A force revealing prayer’s disguise

There is a joining at the heart,

Each whispered prayer a slice of love.

Then fall like manna from above,

Our leavened prayers must rise instead,

Heaven Help Us

Q I am a convert to the Catholic faith and do not understand Mass offerings. What do they mean? What happens when we are told that “this Mass is being offered for” a specific person? (Ohio)

A For well more than 1,000 years, Catholic people have had the custom of Mass offerings for the poor as well as for the Church’s ministers and other needs.

Along with this custom, however, we have carried on an almost continuous struggle to avoid any appearance of commercialism about the Mass and misunderstandings about the meaning of such offerings.

Language which is at least open to confusion is not uncommon, and the example that you give is a good one. We believe that each celebration of the Eucharist reaches out to everyone on Earth. It has the same broad, worldwide intention as the first offering of that sacrifice by Jesus on the cross.

In other words, as our eucharistic prayers make clear, every offering of this sacrifice includes not only the whole Church, but also the whole human family, living and dead. No priest, even should he wish to do so, can narrow down that universal embrace as Jesus renewed his sacrificial offering in the person of his Church on Earth.

When a priest accepts a Mass offering, he accepts, according to traditional theology, the responsibility to include that intention in his prayers at Mass.

This understanding also places in perspective the claim that richer families and individuals who are able to request Masses more frequently have some sort of advantage over those who cannot do so.

As the eucharistic prayers proclaim, the offering is for all our brothers and sisters who have died in the hope of rising again.

Q I certainly strive to avoid any appearance of commercialism about the Mass and misunderstandings about the meaning of such offerings. Language which is at least open to confusion is not uncommon, and the example that you give is a good one. I really think that people do use them with the intention of proclaiming their faith, but there are other sacramental—medals with sacred images, for example—that are more appropriate and respectful to accomplish that purpose.

A No. A Mass offering is not a jewel, it is a sacramental intended solely as a help to prayer and meditation on the lives of Jesus and his mother, and should not be worn as a necklace.

I realize that some people do use them with the intention of proclaiming their faith, but there are other sacramental—medals with sacred images, for example—that are more appropriate and respectful to accomplish that purpose.

Mass offering as memorial includes entire human family

Daily Readings

Monday, March 30
Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62
or Daniel 13:41c-62
Psalm 23:1-6
John 8:1-11

Tuesday, March 31
Numbers 21:1-9
Psalm 102:2-3, 16-21
John 8:20-31

Wednesday, April 1
Daniel 3:14-20, 91-92, 95
(Respons) Daniel 3:52-56
John 8:31-42

Thursday, April 2
Francis of Paola, hermit
Genesis 17:3-9
Psalm 105:4-9
John 8:51-59

Friday, April 3
Jeremiah 20:10-13
Psalm 18:2-7
John 10:31-42

Saturday, April 4
Isidore, bishop and doctor of the Church
Ezekiel 37:21-28
(Respons) Jeremiah 31:10-13
John 11:45-56

Sunday, April 5
Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion
Mark 11:1-11 (procession)
or John 12:12-16 (procession)
Isaih 50:4-7
Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18a, 19-20, 23-24
Philippians 2:6-11
Mark 14:1-15, 47
or Mark 15:1-39

Question Corner/By John Dietzen

I am a convert to the Catholic faith and do not understand Mass offerings. What do they mean? What happens when we are told that “this Mass is being offered for” a specific person? (Ohio)

For well more than 1,000 years, Catholic people have had the custom of Mass offerings for the poor as well as for the Church’s ministers and other needs.

Along with this custom, however, we have carried on an almost continuous struggle to avoid any appearance of commercialism about the Mass and misunderstandings about the meaning of such offerings.

Language which is at least open to confusion is not uncommon, and the example that you give is a good one. We believe that each celebration of the Eucharist reaches out to everyone on Earth. It has the same broad, worldwide intention as the first offering of that sacrifice by Jesus on the cross.

In other words, as our eucharistic prayers make clear, every offering of this sacrifice includes not only the whole Church, but also the whole human family, living and dead. No priest, even should he wish to do so, can narrow down that universal embrace as Jesus renewed his sacrificial offering in the person of his Church on Earth.

When a priest accepts a Mass offering, he accepts, according to traditional theology, the responsibility to include that intention in his prayers at Mass.

This is the meaning of the present Church law, which states, “It is lawful for any priest who celebrates or concelebrates Mass to receive an offering to apply the Mass according to a definite intention” (Canon #745).

For this reason, it is generally inappropriate to state, in the general intercessions, for example, or the eucharistic prayer, that a Mass is “being offered” for a specific individual or group to place undue attention and emphasis on that particular intention rather than on the entire church.

Obviously, to put it bluntly, no one “buys” major ownership as if it were in a particular offering of the Eucharist. If any announcement of a special intention is to take place, perhaps a good suggestion, theologically and liturgically, would be stated “John or Jane Doe is being remembered especially at this Mass.”

This understanding also places in better perspective the claim that richer families and individuals who are able to request Masses more frequently have some sort of advantage over those who cannot do so.

As the eucharistic prayers proclaim, the offering is for all our brothers and sisters who have died in the hope of rising again. Indeed even more, as the second eucharistic prayer reminds us, the Eucharist that we offer is for all the departed, all the people in the world who have died. No one is ever left out.

We belong to a rosary-making club, and we make special all-black rosaries to wear around the neck. We were told that this is wrong, but in light of the claim that richer families and other jewelry someone might wear? (Michigan)

No. A rosary is not jewelry, it is a sacramental intended solely as a help to prayer and meditation on the lives of Jesus and his mother, and should not be worn as a necklace.

I realize that some people do use them with the intention of proclaiming their faith, but there are other sacramental—medals with sacred images, for example—that are more appropriate and respectful to accomplish that purpose.

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.

In addition, 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 157, Indianapolis, IN 46208 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.
Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to include a phone number. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in The Criterion. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituary pages on this page.

CONLEY, Patrick J., 59, St. Gabriel, Comersville, M Arch 14, Brother of William Conley.


DOLE, Geraldine, 89, Bloomington, Oct. 30. M Wife of James Dole. Mother of St. Joseph, St. Leon, Feb. 27. DOLE, Geraldine Desjardins. Sister of Marion and Mary, Christopher and Vincent Bloomington, Jan. 31. Mother of Nancy Amy, Phyllis DA VIS, Agnes CONLEY, Patrick J., 59, Archdiocese or have other Order priests before the week of publication; Please submit in writing to our page 14

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As number of uninsured rises, is Washington ready to act?

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Mary Salls of Charleston, S.C., proved unemployable after 18-year-old daughter, Saray, who has been accepted into each of the eight colleges to which she applied. But she’s also worried that she might have to send Saray off to college in the fall without any health insurance—or that the daughter, who has worked so hard might not be able to attend the college of her choice at all.

Salls was laid off from her job at an auto parts factory just before Christmas. With a more than $300 monthly house payment and weekly unemployment pay of $385, the $665 monthly cost to retain her health-care coverage under COBRA is out of the question.

COBRA is short for the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, which allows most workers who have lost or quit their jobs to buy into their former employer’s health coverage.


The Salls’ family is certainly not alone. In a report released in early March, the Center for a Democratic Process estimated that approximately 14,000 U.S. workers lost their health insurance every day in December and January.

The numbers come as no surprise to Nancy A. Ness, vice president of mission, advocacy and community affairs for St. Thomas Health Services in Nashville, Tenn., who said the system’s health clinics—which primarily serve the working poor—see a patient every 52 seconds.

“I have seen the uninsured population grow and grow,” she added. “We’re busier than ever.”

A recent report from the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Health Insurance Thematic Consequences shows that high rates of uninsured in a community affect the entire whole community, not just those living without health insurance.

“When rates of uninsured in communities are relatively high, insured adults in those communities are more likely to report difficulty obtaining needed health care and to be less satisfied with the care they receive,” said Dr. John Z. Ayanian, a professor of medicine and health policy at Harvard Medical School and a member of the committee, in a March 11 testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee.

“Privately insured, working-age adults in high-uninsurance communities significantly less likely to report having a place to go when sick, having a doctor’s visit or routine preventive care (including mammography), and seeing a specialist when needed,” he added. “They are also less likely to be satisfied with primary care and specialty physicians or to trust their doctor’s decisions.”

Although the Census Bureau estimates the number of Americans who were uninsured in 2007 at 45.7 million, a recent report from the Kaiser Family Foundation, FamiliesUSA and the National Federation of Independent Business catastrophic briefing sponsored by the organizations, Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, the ranking Republican on the Finance Committee, expressed concern that the uninsured about the need to get a health care reform proposal to the Senate floor before the

Washington Letter

President Obama

Appoints on May 13, and Mr. Obama has been a deep wound in America, and Mr. Obama has been a healer,” he said.

Cardinal Newman Society called it “an outrage and a scandal” for the university to honor Obama and asked Father Jenkins to “halt this travesty immediately.”

“This nation has millions of accomplished leaders in the Catholic Church, in business, in law, in education, in politics, in medicine, in science, in social work, in philanthropy, and in many other fields who would be far more appropriate choices to receive such an honor,” the petition says.

By late afternoon on March 24, the website www.notredame scandale.com reported more than 81,000 signatures on the petition.

“By inviting Barack Obama as our commencement speaker, Notre Dame is telling the nation that the teaching of the Catholic Church on this fundamental matter of abortion can be ignored,” said Robert M. Cnelly, a philosophy professor at Notre Dame, said in a March 23 column on his Web site, “The Catholic Thing.”

“For one whose 54-year career as a member of the Notre Dame faculty is coming to an end this June, it is a bitter thing to reflect on the 2009 commencement speaker,” he said.

Father Jenkins pointed out that U.S. presidents from both parties have come to Notre Dame for decades to speak on graduation, a wide range of pressing issues—from foreign policy to poverty to socialization to science.

“We will honor Mr. Obama as an inspiring leader who faces many challenges—the economy, the war in Iraq, health care, immigration and education reform—and is addressing them with intelligence, courage and honesty,” he said.

“The most special significance that we will hear from our first African-American president is a person who has spoken eloquently and movingly about race in this nation. Racial prejudice has been a deep wound in America, and Mr. Obama has been a healer,” he said.

Bishop D’Arcy: Has Notre Dame chosen prestige over truth?

(Editors’ note: On March 24, Bishop John D’Arcy of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese issued the following statement regarding the University of Notre Dame’s invitation to President Barack Obama to deliver the commencement address on May 17 and receive an honorary degree at its May 17 graduation ceremony.)

“On Friday, March 21, Father John Jenkins, C.S.C. (Notre Dame’s president), phoned to inform me that President [Barack] Obama had accepted his invitation to speak at the graduating class at Notre Dame and receive an honorary degree. We spoke shortly before the announcement was made public at the White House. I am pleased that it was the first time that I had been informed that Notre Dame had issued the invitation.

“President Obama has recently reaffirmed, and has now placed in public policy, his long-standing unwillingness to hold human life as sacred. While claiming to separate politics from science, he has in fact separated science from ethics and has brought the American government, for the first time in history, into supporting direct destruction of innocent human beings.

“This will be the 25th Notre Dame graduation during my time as bishop. A far greater number, I have decided not to attend the graduation, I wish no disrespect to our President. I pray for

Bishop John D’Arcy