



The Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960

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Easter Supplement

Read faith stories on pages 9-18.



Good Friday Meditation

**O crown of thorns—
What cruel whim
Would fashion pain
Meant just for Him?**

**How helplessly
We view the scene,
Not one stepped forth
To intervene.**

**Can we amend
Such heinous crime?
We only have
The rest of time.**

By Dorothy M. Colgan

(Dorothy M. Colgan is a member of St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad.)

For Pope John Paul II, beatification process may be on final lap

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—They brought flowers and messages to his grave. They sang songs evoking his memory. And they prayed for his beatification.

The fourth anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II on April 2 was marked by a sense of anticipation following reports that the late pontiff would be beatified on the fifth anniversary next year.

The Vatican has played down those rumors. But among the thousands who flocked to his tomb and gathered in St. Peter's Basilica for a memorial Mass, the feeling was strongly hopeful.

"There's all kinds of talk about him being beatified. It's only a matter of time before it happens. He's heading so fast toward sainthood that they're only waiting to give him a little bit more legitimacy, I guess," said Samantha Coveleski, 22, of Lewes, Del.

Coveleski was among hundreds of people who jammed the crypt area of St. Peter's Basilica on April 2 to pay their respects at Pope John Paul II's tomb. They left candles, photos and letters, and whispered prayers in many languages. On the white marble tombstone lay three red roses.

"So many people loved this guy so much. When you're at the tomb, you can really see what the big deal is," Coveleski said. "He was so accessible during his papacy, and here you can really see and feel how much he was loved."

Pope Benedict XVI celebrated the commemorative Mass and said he was praying for "the gift of beatification" for his predecessor. In 2005, Pope Benedict set Pope John Paul on the fast track to beatification by waiving the normal five-year waiting period for the introduction of his

sainthood cause.

That seemed to respond to the "Santo subito!" ("Sainthood now!") banners that were held aloft at Pope John Paul's funeral.

The initial diocesan phase of the cause was completed in April 2007. Last November, a team of theological consultants to the Congregation for Saints' Causes began studying the 2,000-page "positio," the document that makes the case for beatification, according to Archbishop Angelo Amato, head of the congregation.

Archbishop Amato told Vatican Radio that once the theological study of the "positio" is completed, the cause will be considered by the cardinal and bishop members of the congregation. If approved, it will then go to the pope for a final decision on a decree of "venerability," which means that the person lived the Christian virtues heroically.

Meanwhile, a presumed miracle through the intercession of the late pope—involving a French nun said to have been cured of Parkinson's disease—is being studied in a five-step process that involves medical experts, a medical board, theological consultants, the members of the congregation and, finally, the pope.

With the decree of venerability and a confirmed miracle, beatification can take place.

Archbishop Amato emphasized that the Vatican could not promise a timetable for all this. The fact that the Vatican is expediting the cause doesn't mean "haste or superficiality," but on the contrary demands methodical attention to detail, he said.

Five years from death to beatification may not strike people as "subito," but it would be a modern record in the Church. Even for Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, who was described by many as a "living saint" and for whom the waiting period was also waived, it

took six years to complete the process.

Still, the Vatican loves anniversaries, and no one has ruled out next April 2 as the big day. Polish Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz of Krakow, personal secretary to the late pope and one of his biggest beatification boosters, said in March that the process would be completed in a few months.

Cardinal Dziwisz, in Rome for the fourth anniversary, told reporters that a presumed miracle had recently occurred at Pope John Paul II's tomb in St. Peter's Basilica.

A 9-year-old Polish boy from Gdansk, suffering from cancer of the kidneys and unable to walk, was brought to the tomb by his parents, Cardinal Dziwisz said. When they left St. Peter's, the boy told them, "I want to walk," and began walking in good health, he said.

Vatican officials are not publicizing what are said to be 251 "inexplicable" healings or other events attributed to Pope John Paul II's intercession, and which have been filed away. Like Archbishop Amato, the officials emphasize the seriousness of the study being undertaken and insist there are no foregone conclusions.

The Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, has marked this year's anniversary with the same serious tone, saying sainthood was more than the elevation of a popular personality.



People pray near candles on the fourth anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II at the Vatican on April 2. The candles form the initials of the late pontiff.

"The cry of 'Santo subito!' after the death of John Paul II had strong meaning. But its repetition by the media is mistaken. The official recognition of sainthood must be connected to the Church's process of sanctification," said a front-page article on April 2.

The same article related an interesting anecdote about the relationship between Pope John Paul and Pope Benedict who, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, served more than 23 years under the late pope as head of the doctrinal congregation.

When meeting to review the drafts of important documents with his top collaborators, it said, Pope John Paul would sometimes sit back at the end of the conversation and say, "We need to go back to this topic again. From his expression, I can see that Cardinal Ratzinger is not fully convinced. We need to reflect some more."

At the memorial Mass, Pope Benedict underlined the thematic continuity between the late pope and his own pontificate. Then, like many before him, he went down to the pope's tomb and knelt in prayer. †

Pope offers condolences and prayers for victims of Italian earthquake

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Just hours after an earthquake hit the city and province of L'Aquila in central Italy, causing more than 200 deaths and major damage to churches and other buildings, Pope Benedict XVI offered his prayers for the dead, their loved ones and rescue workers.

The quake struck on April 6 at 3:30 a.m. local time and was felt strongly even in Rome, about 70 miles west of L'Aquila.

Among the victims was Abbess Gemma Antonucci, head of the Poor Clares' Convent of St. Clare in Paganica, outside L'Aquila.

In an interview with SIR, the news agency of the Italian bishops' conference, Father Dionisio Rodriguez Cuartas, the pastor in Paganica and director of Caritas L'Aquila, said the roof of the Poor Clares' convent caved in.

In the early afternoon, rescue workers were able to recover the body of the abbess and to free another nun from the debris. Two of the dozen members of the community were hospitalized with broken bones; the others were unharmed.

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said on April 7 that 207 people were confirmed dead and 15 people were still missing and feared dead. In the first 36 hours after the quake, more than 150 people were extracted alive from fallen buildings, he said.

Using different measuring methods, Italian seismologists said the main quake registered a magnitude of between 5.8 and 6.3 on the Richter scale.

In a telegram to Archbishop Giuseppe Molinari of L'Aquila, the Vatican secretary of state said Pope Benedict had asked him to convey his "participation in the pain of the dear population struck by this tragic event."

"In assuring fervid prayers for the victims, particularly the children, His Holiness invokes the Lord to comfort the families, and while he addresses affectionate words of encouragement to the survivors and those involved in the rescue operations, he sends all a special apostolic blessing," Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone told the archbishop. †

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Correction

In the April 3 issue of *The Criterion*, the dates for the Easter Monday and Easter Tuesday liturgies at Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad were incorrectly listed. On April 13, there will be a 9:30 a.m. Easter Monday Mass and 5 p.m. Vespers. On April 14, there will be a 7:30 a.m. Easter Tuesday Mass and 5 p.m. Vespers. †

On the cover

Christ crucified is shown in this detail of an altarpiece from the Abbey of Liesborn in Germany dated around 1470. The painting is a holding of the National Gallery of London. Good Friday, on April 10, commemorates the Passion and death of Jesus Christ. (CNS photo/courtesy of the National Gallery, Art Resource)

The Criterion

4/10/09

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Reaction to Notre Dame's choice of Obama for commencement continues

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Bishops from across the country continued to express their disapproval of the University of Notre Dame's choice of President Barack Obama as the May 17 commencement speaker.

Their comments, in publicly released letters to Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins,

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein responds to the University of Notre Dame's invitation to President Obama. Read his letter to Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins, Notre Dame president, and other letters on the subject on page 4.

president of the private Indiana university, have used words such as "travesty," "disappointment" and "scandal" that Obama would not only address graduates, but would also be given an honorary degree.

Critics of Obama said his support of legal abortion and

embryonic stem-cell research make him an inappropriate choice to be commencement speaker at a Catholic university.

In criticizing Notre Dame's decision, announced on March 20, most of the bishops referred to their 2004 document, "Catholics in Political Life," which states in part that "the Catholic community and Catholic institutions should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They should not be given awards, honors or platforms which would suggest support for their actions."

Bishop John M. D'Arcy of Fort Wayne-South Bend—the diocese where Notre Dame is located—said he would not attend the graduation in protest of Obama's policies regarding life issues.

Phoenix Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted called the university's decision "a public act of

disobedience to the bishops of the United States."

Some U.S. bishops have urged Father Jenkins to rescind the offer to Obama. Among them are Archbishop John C. Nienstedt of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Bishop Edward J. Slattery of Tulsa, Okla., and Bishop Thomas G. Doran of Rockford, Ill.

Father Jenkins has not issued any statements beyond what he said on March 23 when he said the invitation to Obama "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."

He also said the university community sees "his visit as a basis for further positive engagement."

Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in an April 2 letter to the U.S. bishops that he has requested a meeting to discuss the issue with Father Jenkins and Holy Cross Father David Tyson, superior of the Indiana province of the Congregation of Holy Cross as well as Richard Notebaert, chairman of Notre Dame's board of trustees.

The cardinal said he wrote to Father Jenkins to express his "dismay about the action of Notre Dame, taken without consultation or consideration of the consequences for the wider Church."

During an archdiocesan-sponsored conference in Chicago on March 28, the cardinal called Notre Dame's decision an "extreme embarrassment" to Catholics. He also said university officials "didn't understand what it means to be Catholic when they issued this invitation, and didn't anticipate the kind of uproar that would be consequent to the decision."

A video of the cardinal's remarks was posted on www.LifeSiteNews.com.

Cardinal George urged people "to call, to e-mail, to write letters" of protest, but he also said Notre Dame was not likely to "disinvite the president of the United States."

"What happens around the ceremony is still up to many people," he said, without elaborating.

Retired Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco questioned whether a rescinded invitation would do more harm than good.

In a March 30 editorial in Jesuit-run *America* magazine, he said: "We must weigh very seriously the consequences if the American bishops are seen as the agents of the public embarrassment of the newly elected president by forcing him to withdraw



People hold rosaries during a rally at the University of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, Ind., on April 5. Hundreds of pro-life advocates protested on the campus against the school's invitation to U.S. President Barack Obama to speak at the May 17 graduation ceremony.

from an appearance at a distinguished Catholic university.

"It is in the interests of both the Church and the nation if both work together in civility, honesty and friendship for the common good, even where there are grave divisions, as there are on abortion," he added.

Bishop Robert N. Lynch of St. Petersburg, Fla., said in a March 27 blog entry on the diocesan Web site that the university "may have acted way too early and too generously" in its invitation to Obama.

However, he said he was "more alarmed that the rhetoric being employed is so uncivil and venomous that it weakens the case we place before our fellow citizens, alienates young college-age students who believe the older generation is behaving like an angry child and they do not wish to be any part of that, and ill-serves the cause of life."

As of April 7, the Cardinal Newman Society—a Manassas, Va.-based Catholic college watchdog group—had received more than 246,000 signatures for an online petition calling for Notre Dame to rescind its invitation to Obama.

On campus, about a dozen student groups formed a coalition called Notre Dame Response to express their opposition and held a prayer rally on April 5.

At the event attended by 400 people, Chris Labadie, a senior majoring in theology and chairman of Notre Dame Response, called university administrators to task for not only inviting Obama to speak, but for plans to confer upon him an honorary doctorate of law degree.

"To award a Notre Dame law degree to a lawyer and politician who has used the law to deny equality to the unborn diminishes the value of the degree itself," Labadie said. "And so we pledge ourselves to acts of witness that will be characterized by respect, prayerfulness, outspoken fidelity to the Church and true concern for the good of our university."

St. Joseph County Right to Life president Tom Gill was among those who attended the campus rally. He commended the Notre Dame students, and said his group would be following their lead and suggested that other pro-life supporters do the same.

"Get on their Web site," Gill said, referring to www.ndresponse.com, "so you can receive e-mails from them. I think they have things planned regularly from now until graduation."

Charles Rice, professor emeritus of law, who is on the law school faculty, wrote in the March 31 issue of Notre Dame's student newspaper, *The Observer*, that "on-site demonstrations would be counterproductive," and urged those against Obama's presence at the school to pray the rosary at the campus Grotto during the commencement.

The Associated Press reported that, less than a week after the university announced its commencement speaker, Notre Dame's student newspaper received more than 600 letters—almost equally divided among alumni and current students—about it.

Seventy percent of the alumni letters said they opposed the invitation to Obama, and 73 percent of students supported it. Of the 95 seniors who wrote to the paper, 97 percent supported the school's decision. †



Chicago resident and Notre Dame alumnus Jeff Heinz, right, drops his hand-written letter to University of Notre Dame President Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins into a box on April 5 during a rally at the university in Notre Dame, Ind.

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



The Archdiocese of Indianapolis still needs volunteers to help at the May 3 Mass celebrating the archdiocese's 175th anniversary.

About 350 people are needed to carry out a variety of ministries during the Mass to be 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 when they arrive at Lucas Oil Stadium.

(Volunteers are encouraged to register online at www.archindy.org/175th. Look for the volunteers' link. If you have registered online in the past two weeks and have not heard back from the archdiocese, please e-mail Steve James at steve.james@archindy.org. Call James at 317-236-1451 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1451, if you have questions.) †

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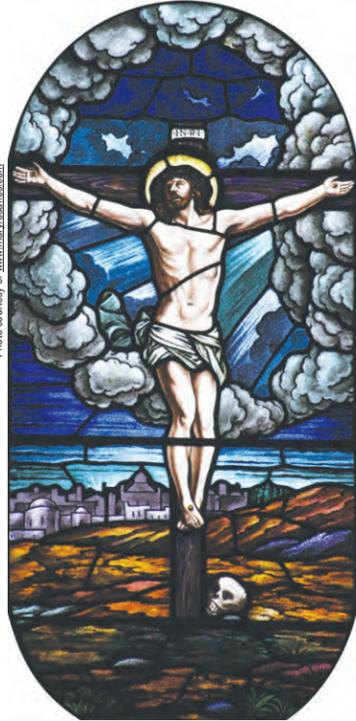
This position requires a flexible work schedule, including weekends, evenings, and some travel. Please send a cover letter and résumé by April 17, 2009 to sjderocher@indy.rr.com, or to St. Alphonsus Liguori Church, 1870 West Oak St, Zionsville, IN 46077, attention Sonya Derocher.



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Editorial



Good Friday is an appropriate time to meditate on Jesus' seven last words while he hung on his cross, writes editor emeritus Jack Fink.

Jesus' seven last words

If you were unable to get to a Good Friday liturgy today, we hope you will spend some time meditating on Jesus' crucifixion.

We suggest you read Chapters 18 and 19 of John's Gospel, which was proclaimed during today's liturgy. Or perhaps you could pray the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary, make the Way of the Cross or meditate on Jesus' seven last words.

They weren't just seven words, but seven things that the Gospel writers quoted Jesus as saying as he hung on the cross. We're not sure exactly how long he hung on the cross. Mark's Gospel says, "It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him" (Mk 15:25) while John's Gospel says "it was about noon" (Jn 19:14) when Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified.

None of the four evangelists quoted all the words we think of as Jesus' last words, but those they considered, for their own reasons, as the most important.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34). Jesus asked forgiveness for the soldiers who had nailed him to the cross. They were carrying out their orders, not knowing who Jesus was. Indeed, they were instrumental in carrying out our redemption.

"Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Lk 23:43), he told one of the criminals dying with him after the man said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Lk 23:42). This is a lesson to us that it is never too late to repent.

"Woman, behold your son" (Jn 19:26), Jesus said to his mother, referring to John, and, "Behold your mother" (Jn 19:27) to John. This scene has been interpreted both literally, as Jesus' concern for his mother, and symbolically with Mary as a symbol for the Church. If Jesus was only concerned about his mother, he could have made arrangements for her at any time, not waiting until he was on the cross. Mary was given as the mother of us all.

As Jesus hung on the cross, the mockery by those passing by continued:

"He saved others but can't save himself," and "Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him" (Mt 27:42). How strong the temptation must have been to do exactly that! But Jesus had said earlier, at the time of his arrest, "Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me at this moment with more than twelve legions of angels?" (Mt 26:53).

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46 and Mk 15:34). These are the opening words of Psalm 22, and Jesus probably prayed the entire psalm. How accurately the psalm described what was happening: "All who see me mock me; they curl their lips and leer" (Ps 22:8), "They tear holes in my hands and feet" (Ps 22:17), "They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots" (Ps. 22:19).

"I thirst" (Jn 19:28), Jesus said, perhaps still echoing Psalm 22. "My throat is dried up like baked clay, my tongue cleaves to my jaws" (Ps 22:16).

"It is finished" (Jn 19:30), he said, perhaps the most important of his seven last words. His mission on Earth was complete. He had accomplished what his Father had sent him to do—restore the harmony with God that had existed before sin disrupted it.

No mere human, no matter how holy, could take on the sins of all humanity and offer himself as a sacrifice for all. Only Jesus could do so because only he was both God and man. He redeemed us by his death.

In that way, he showed his love for us. As St. Paul wrote, "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). And St. John's Gospel tells us that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

Therefore, Jesus prayed, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46), part of still another psalm (Ps 31:6). And lowering his head, he died.

—John F. Fink

Archbishop Buechlein responds to Notre Dame invitation to President Obama

(Editor's note: Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein sent the following letter to Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins, president of the University of Notre Dame, to express his disappointment and concern about the school's invitation to President Barack Obama to speak at the university's commencement on May 17.)

Dear Father Jenkins:

I join my voice to the chorus of thousands of faithful Catholics around the United States, and those of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in particular, who are appalled and embarrassed by your recent invitation to President Obama to address the 2009 graduates of Notre Dame.

I was stunned and angered upon hearing the news of the invitation; in the

end, I am among the thousands of good people who are profoundly saddened by it.

There isn't a single reason that would justify Catholic sponsorship of the president of our country, who is blatantly opposed to the Catholic Church's doctrine on abortion and embryonic stem-cell research.

You dishonor the reputation of the University of Notre Dame and, in effect, abdicate your prestigious reputation among Catholic universities everywhere.

Like other people of good faith, I await some action that indicates your regret concerning a truly wrong decision.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.
Archbishop of Indianapolis

Letters to the Editor

President Obama's invitation to speak at Notre Dame is a cause for great sadness

It was with great sadness that I read in *The Criterion* that President Barack Obama has been invited to speak at Notre Dame's commencement this year.

I commend and thank Bishop John D'Arcy of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese for his public statement denouncing this decision and his refusal to attend the commencement address.

Two years ago, our son, a Notre Dame scholar, voluntarily withdrew from the University of Notre Dame for just such reasons. He stated that the Catholic Church he studied and knew during his parochial high school years was "not" the Church that he found at Notre Dame.

Instead, our son became gravely disillusioned with the hypocrisy he found on that campus. We supported him in his difficult decision to leave, and he is now very happy at a secular university.

As followers of Jesus, it is vital that we be able to discern truth from false teaching. In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned of false teachers

by saying thus: "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit, you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?" (Mt 7:15-16).

Likewise, all Catholics know that President Obama's stance on human life and stem-cell research is contradictory to Church and biblical teaching.

While we shall continue to pray for our president and those in leadership, we must not quietly stand in acceptance of such views.

I consider it a sham and disgrace that the University of Notre Dame has invited President Obama to speak at this year's commencement, and I encourage all Notre Dame parents, alumni and others in the community to speak loudly and vehemently against this blasphemous decision.

Susan Martin
Aurora

Has Notre Dame's invitation to President Obama already set the Holy Spirit in motion?

Some will say "Touchdown Jesus" was smiling, others that Jesus was frowning the day that President Barack Obama addressed the University of Notre Dame's 2009 graduating class.

Forgive my astonishment at first hearing the president of Notre Dame will welcome the president of the United States to this historic campus.

Yet, is denouncement rightfully directed at Notre Dame, or might we more precisely understand reasons for asking Obama to come to South Bend just four months into his presidency?

Why not have waited until his second or third year in office, allowing time for redemption? Perhaps the very issuance of this invitation has already set the Holy Spirit in motion.

At times, it is effortless to be a reliable

Roman Catholic, at times not. This Notre Dame business takes some exertion to understand at a glance. Are all the questions answered, no more surprises to come?

As a result of his stopover, will there be just a wee bit more attraction to Obama's profferings about human life only because he was honored on the soil of America's leading Catholic university?

Maybe, rather than lamenting his visit but because of it, we may, with the help of the same Holy Spirit, become more aware that life is really worth living.

How appalling it will be if Catholics and others "couldn't care less" about any of this.

Joseph M. Mucha
Pittsboro

Reader: I see no respect for life issues where President Obama is concerned

A public thank you to Bishop John M. D'Arcy of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese for his principled stand not to attend graduation ceremonies at Notre Dame because the university has seen fit to invite President Barack Obama to address the graduates and receive an honorary degree. American Catholics need Bishop D'Arcy's kind of example and

teaching.

In his public letter of explanation, Bishop D'Arcy states that, "President Obama has recently reaffirmed, and has now placed in public policy, his long-stated unwillingness to hold human life as sacred. While claiming to separate politics from science, he has in fact separated

See LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, page 7

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



SEEKING THE FACE OF THE LORD

BUSCANDO LA CARA DEL SEÑOR

Witnesses of simple faith can be instruments of evangelization

So now we live in the afterglow of the Solemnity of Easter. We also live with a certain Christian realism about Easter joy.

During the weeks leading up to Easter, I experienced a certain melancholic joy associated with our faith.

At one of the rites of election of this year's catechumens and candidates for reception into our Church, I was touched by an experience of a family whom I greeted after the ceremony.

As they approached, the family members reminded me that we had exchanged messages a year ago while I was undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatments for Hodgkin's lymphoma.

I remembered immediately that the father of the family, whom I was meeting for the first time, also had Hodgkin's and was undergoing the same therapy at the same time.

But there was a moving difference.

Because of his responsibility for providing for his family, he had to continue working while undergoing the ordeal.

We rejoiced that both of us are in remission even as we experience some of the effects of chemotherapy and radiation.

His wife and family of five beautiful children were with him at the rite of election. It was a privileged, if somewhat bittersweet, meeting. I had been praying very specifically for all of them over the past year—and they for me.

A few weeks earlier, I presided at

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral during the annual presentation of religious awards to both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. The cathedral was packed as usual.

Afterward, I greeted folks and was photographed with many of the parish groups and individuals.

Toward the end of the line, one of the dads asked if I was willing to pose for one more individual photo.

I was tired but, before I could respond, a small disabled boy literally dove at me, abandoning his "walker on wheels." He embraced me, not really posing for a photograph.

Frankly, I was more humbled than surprised. His dad remarked that that encounter and photo were worth more than a million bucks.

I don't think the young guy even gave me his name, but I can tell you he is etched in my memory and prayer.

I admire him and his family, who were with him as he wanted to celebrate the religious award for which he had worked. His faith is obviously important to him even at a young age. I am moved.

At yet another rite of election on the first Sunday of Lent, I had another touching experience. A long line of newly elected folks wanted to greet me and have a photo taken.

After awhile, I saw a young fellow about 9 or 10 years old helping his disabled little brother, who appeared to be about 5 years old, struggling to walk up to where I was standing.

Finally, the younger disabled boy fell at my feet. One of his sisters and I tried to raise him up for the photo, but he wasn't really interested in having a picture taken. He just turned himself and wanted to look at me with all the intensity of a radiant and pure look I will not forget.

He was speechless, and so was I. We had never met before and, obviously, this trusting kid saw me as a symbol of faith that he wanted to embrace. I don't think I will forget him.

He, too, is on my special prayer list along with his family, who seem to accept him and the difficulty he has walking as if it is not a problem.

And all of them were there because they have divine faith and they want to express it and to be part of our community of faith. I was thinking: "And a child shall lead them."

As you can tell, these pre-Easter experiences touched my faith as much, if not more, than it did theirs.

That happens often in the ministry of a priest. The familiar saying is true: "It is in giving that we receive." The priesthood provides many opportunities to share the lives of other believers.

The three experiences that I describe (with difficulty) are powerful examples of

you folks, who are not only witnesses of simple faith but are, perhaps inadvertently, witnesses of the hope that accompanies no-nonsense faith.

Our Catholic faith and its ritual give life and encouragement to you who suffer, whether that is physically, spiritually, emotionally or morally.

And despite the personal cost to yourselves, you, in turn, mirror faith, hope and love to us who must seem to have life better than you.

Thanks to you who inspire us whether you take us by surprise or do so in ordinary ways.

I hope you see that your crutches and walkers, illnesses and disabilities are instruments of evangelization. †

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

Archbishop Buechlein's intention for vocations for April

Priests: that they may joyfully and faithfully live out their priestly promises and encourage other men to embrace God's call to the priesthood.

Los testigos de una fe sencilla pueden ser instrumentos de evangelización

Así que ahora nos encontramos en el resplandor crepuscular de la solemnidad de la Pascua. También vivimos con un cierto realismo cristiano en cuanto al júbilo de la Resurrección.

Durante las semanas conducentes a la Pascua experimenté una alegría un tanto melancólica asociada con nuestra fe.

En uno de los ritos de elección de los catecúmenos y candidatos para ser recibidos en nuestra Iglesia de este año, me sentí conmovido por la experiencia de una familia a quien saludé después de la ceremonia.

Al acercarse, la familia me recordó que habíamos intercambiado correspondencia hace un año mientras yo estaba sometiéndome a quimioterapia y a tratamientos de radiación para combatir el linfoma de Hodgkin.

Recordé inmediatamente que el padre de la familia, a quien estaba conociendo por primera vez, tuvo también Hodgkin y estaba siguiendo la misma terapia, al mismo tiempo.

Pero hubo una diferencia conmovedora: debido a su responsabilidad de proveer para la familia, tuvo que continuar trabajando mientras padecía esa dura prueba.

Ambos nos alegramos de que el cáncer estuviera en remisión, aunque experimentáramos algunos de los efectos de la quimioterapia y la radiación.

Su esposa y su familia compuesta por cinco hermosos niños estaban con él en el rito de elección. Resultó ser un encuentro privilegiado y un tanto amargo. En el curso del último año yo había estado rezando muy específicamente por todos ellos, y ellos por mí.

Unas semanas antes, presidí la entrega

anual de premios religiosos para las Niñas y Niños Exploradores, en la Catedral de San Pedro y San Pablo. Como siempre, la catedral estaba repleta.

Al concluir, saludé a la gente y me fotografié con muchos de los grupos parroquiales, así como también parroquianos.

Llegando al final de la fila, uno de los padres me preguntó si estaba dispuesto a posar para una foto individual más.

Estaba cansado, pero antes de que pudiera responder, un pequeño niño incapacitado literalmente se abalanzó sobre mí, soltando su "caminadora con ruedas." Me abrazó y realmente no estaba posando para una foto.

Francamente, me sentí más avergonzado que sorprendido. Su padre comentó que ese encuentro y esa foto valían más que un millón de dólares.

Creo que el pequeño ni siquiera me dijo su nombre, pero les aseguro que él se encuentra grabado en mi memoria y en mis oraciones.

Lo admiro tanto a él como a su familia, que lo acompañaba mientras quería celebrar el premio religioso por el cual se había esforzado. Su fe es obviamente importante para él, aún a tan corta edad. Me siento conmovido.

Y justamente en otro rito de elección del primer domingo de la Cuaresma, tuve otra experiencia emotiva. Una larga fila de personas recientemente electas esperaba para saludarme y tomarse una foto conmigo.

Después de un rato vi a un pequeño, de aproximadamente 9 o 10 años, que ayudaba a su hermano menor discapacitado, que parecía tener 5 años, y que tenía dificultad

para caminar hacia donde yo estaba parado.

Finalmente el niño discapacitado cayó a mis pies. Una de sus hermanas y yo tratamos de levantarlo para la foto, pero él en realidad no estaba interesado en que le tomaran una foto. Tan solo se volteó y quiso mirarme con toda la intensidad de su mirada pura y radiante que nunca olvidaré.

Se quedó sin palabras y yo también. No nos habíamos conocido antes y, obviamente, este niño esperanzado me veía como un símbolo de la fe que quería adoptar. Creo que no lo olvidaré.

Él también se encuentra en mi lista de oraciones especiales, junto con su familia que parece aceptarlo a él y a su dificultad para caminar como si no fuera un problema.

Y todos ellos estaban allí porque tienen una fe divina y desean expresarla y formar parte de nuestra comunidad de fe. Se me vino a la mente: "Y un niño los guiará."

Como pueden ver, estas experiencias anteriores a la Pascua me llegaron al corazón, tanto o más que a ellos mismos.

Eso sucede con frecuencia en el ministerio de un sacerdote. El dicho popular es cierto: "Dando es como recibimos." El sacerdocio ofrece muchas oportunidades para compartir las vidas de otros creyentes.

Las tres experiencias que describí (con dificultad), son poderosos ejemplos de aquellos de ustedes que son no solamente testigos de la fe sencilla, sino que son además, quizás sin darse cuenta, testigos de

la esperanza que acompaña a la fe que no admite ambivalencias.

Nuestra fe católica y sus ritos dan vida e imprimen valor a aquellos que sufren, ya sea física, espiritual, emocional o moralmente.

Y a pesar del costo personal, ustedes son, a cambio, espejo de la fe, la esperanza y el amor para aquellos que parecen tener una vida mejor que la de ustedes.

Gracias a aquellos que nos inspiran, ya sea tomándonos por sorpresa o de manera cotidiana.

Espero que puedan darse cuenta de que sus muletas, caminadoras, enfermedades y discapacidades constituyen instrumentos de evangelización. †

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

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

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

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en abril

Sacerdotes: ¡Que ellos realicen sus promesas como sacerdotes con júbilo y fe y den ánimo a otros hombres para que contesten la llamada de Dios al sacerdocio!

Events Calendar

April 10

Calvary Cemetery, Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Stations of the Cross**, Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general, presider, noon. Information: 317-784-4439.

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery, Mausoleum Chapel, 9001 N. Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Stations of the Cross**, Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general, presider, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898 or www.catholiccemeteries.cc.

St. Monica Parish, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. **Living Stations of the Cross**, performed by St. Monica School eighth-grade class, 9 a.m. Information: 317-255-7153.

St. Joan of Arc Parish, 4217 N. Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Rosary**, 6:30 p.m., **Stations of the Cross**, 7 p.m. Information: 317-283-5508.

St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, 4052 E. 38th St., Indianapolis. **Fish fry**, 3-8 p.m. Information: 317-546-1571.

St. Pius X Parish, 7200 Sarto Drive, Indianapolis. **Fish fry**, 5:30-8 p.m., \$8 per person. Information: 317-255-4534.

St. Mary Parish, 415 E. Eighth St., New Albany. **Via Crucis—Outdoor Way of**

the Cross, 7 p.m. Information: 502-494-3264.

St. Mary Parish, 212 Washington St., North Vernon. **St. Mary Youth Ministry, Living Way of the Cross**, 1 p.m. Information: 812-346-3604.

April 11

St. Lawrence Parish, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. **Easter Egg Hunt and breakfast**, breakfast with the bunny, 9-11 a.m., \$5 per person, children 3 years and under free, Easter egg hunt and activities, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., children 10 years and under, bring your own basket. Information: Michele_kolosso@sbcglobal.net.

St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis. **Easter Egg Hunt**, 9:30 a.m., children 10 years and under, bring your own basket. Information: 317-297-7014 or www.stgabrielindy.org.

St. Roch Parish, Family Center, 3603 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Single Seniors**, meeting, 1 p.m., age 50 and over. Information: 317-784-4207.

April 12

MKVS, Divine Mercy and Glorious Cross Center, Rexville, located on 925 South, .8 mile east of 421 South and 12 miles south of Versailles.

Mass, noon, on **third Sunday holy hour and pitch-in**, groups of 10 pray the new Marian Way, 1 p.m., Father Elmer Burwinkel, celebrant. Information: 812-689-3551.

April 13

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 316 N. Sherwood Ave., Clarksville. **Catholics Returning Home**, informal sharing session, 7:30-9 p.m. Information: 812-945-3112 or www.olphna.org.

April 14

St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Ave Maria Guild, Mass**, 11 a.m., lunch following Mass. Information: 317-885-5098.

St. Nicholas Parish, 6461 E. St. Nicholas Drive, Sunman. **Pro-life Mass**, 7 p.m., discussion on pro-life matters following Mass. Information: 812-623-8007.

April 15

Vito's on Penn, 20 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis. **Theology on Tap series, "Show Me the Money"**, Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general, presenter, 7 p.m. Information: indytheology.ontap.com.

St. Nicholas Parish, 6461 E. St. Nicholas Drive, Sunman. **"New Life in the Spirit," seminar 2**, eight-week series, 7-9 p.m. Information: 812-623-8007.

April 16

Riverwalk Banquet Center, 6729 Westfield Blvd., Indianapolis. Fifth annual **Catholic Radio Indy dinner**, reception, 6 p.m., dinner, 7 p.m., Teresa Tomeo, speaker, \$55 per person. Information: 317-842-6583.

St. Francis Hospital, lobby, 8111 S. Emerson Ave., Indianapolis. **St. Francis Hospice, advance health care decisions**, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

April 16-19

Cathedral High School, theater, 5225 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"A Year with Frog and Toad,"** Thurs.-Sat. 7:30 p.m., Sun. 3 p.m., tickets \$10 and \$15 per person. Information: 317-968-7436 or jselse@aol.com.

April 17

Northside Knights of Columbus Hall, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Mass, 6:30 a.m., followed by buffet breakfast, Lori Borgman, columnist, presenter, \$14 member, \$20 non-member. Information and registration: www.catholicbusinessexchange.org.

April 17-19

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Worldwide Marriage Encounter** weekend. Information: 317-888-1892 or

jbradleylevine@msn.com.

April 18

Indiana Convention Center, 100 S. Capitol Ave., Indianapolis. **Sixth annual Indiana Catholic Women's Conference, "Treasuring Womanhood,"** 8 a.m.-4:45 p.m. Information: mariancenterofindianapolis.com or indianacatholicwomen.com.

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Helpers of God's Precious Infants Pro-Life Mass**, Father Paul Landwerlen, celebrant, 8:30 a.m., followed by rosary outside abortion clinic and Benediction at church. Information: Archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, 317-236-1569 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1569.

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, 7575 Holliday Drive E., Indianapolis. **Couple to Couple League, Natural Family Planning class (NFP)**, 9-11:30 a.m. Information: 317-465-0126.

April 19

St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Choir and handbells concert to benefit Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), "Music for the Mind,"** 7 p.m., \$20 per person. Information: 317-767-7653 or www.namiindy.org.

Seton East, Richmond Catholic Community, 701 N. "A" St., Richmond. **Charismatic prayer group**, 7 p.m. Information: dicksoncorp@parallax.ws.

St. Mary School, gymnasium, 415 E. Eighth St., New Albany. **Hispanic Ministry of Floyd, Clark and Harrison counties, Health Fair for Spanish-speaking people**, 3-5 p.m. Information: 812-944-0527.

April 21

Franciscan Hermitage, 3650 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. **"Power of the Mind,"** Franciscan Father Justin Belitz, presenter, 7:30 p.m., no charge. Information: 317-250-6888 or www.FrJustin-Hermitage.org.

April 23

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Card party**, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Information: 317-885-5098.

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Christian Leaders and Leadership lecture series, "Vision to Action: The Time Is Now,"** 7 p.m. Information: 317-402-1636 or perigo5068@msn.com. †

Retreats and Programs

April 13

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. **"Men's Night at the 'Burg,"** men's spirituality, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 812-933-6437.

April 14-19

Monastery Immaculate Conception, Kordes Center, 841 E. 14th St., Ferdinand, Ind. (Evansville Diocese). **"Awakening: A Rebirth of Enthusiasm in Vocations,"** Information: 812-367-1411 or spirituality@thedome.org.

April 16-19

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. Parish administrative staff retreat,

"Cooking Up a Recipe for a Full Life," Benedictine Father Jeremy King, presenter. Information: 800-581-6905 or MZoeller@saintmeinrad.edu.

April 18

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Michaela Farm, Oldenburg. **Earth Day celebration**, 9-11:30 a.m. Information: 812-933-6437.

Monastery Immaculate Conception, Kordes Center, 841 E. 14th St., Ferdinand, Ind. (Evansville Diocese). **"Saturday Morning at the Dome,"** Benedictine Sister Karen Joseph, presenter, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., \$35 includes continental breakfast and lunch. Information: 812-367-1411 or spirituality@thedome.org. †

Divine Mercy services are scheduled in archdiocese

Divine Mercy Sunday services are scheduled on April 19 at various parishes in the archdiocese. All the prayer services are open to the public.

The late Pope John Paul II instituted the observance of Divine Mercy Sunday—which is based on the visions of St. Faustina Kowalska, who was a member of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy—on the first Sunday after Easter.

Catholics are encouraged to go to confession and receive the Eucharist on Divine Mercy Sunday in order to obtain forgiveness for their sins.

Divine Mercy Sunday prayer services on April 19 reported to *The Criterion* are as follows:

- St. Augustine Home for the Aged Chapel, 2345 W. 86th St., Indianapolis—3 p.m. Divine Mercy chaplet. Information: 317-872-6420.
- St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis—2 p.m. eucharistic adoration followed by 3 p.m. Divine Mercy chaplet, sermon, eucharistic procession and Benediction, Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general, presider, with Father Varghese Maliakkal, parish administrator. Information: 317-926-7359.
- Christ the King Church, 1827 Kessler Blvd., East Drive, Indianapolis—2 p.m. eucharistic adoration followed by 3 p.m. prayer service, Divine Mercy chaplet, Benediction and eucharistic procession, Father Tony Volz, pastor, presider. Information: 317-255-3666.
- St. Mary Church, 317 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis—following 1:15 p.m. Mass, eucharistic adoration and Divine Mercy chaplet in Spanish. Information: 317-637-3983.
- St. Michael Church, 101 St. Michael Drive, Charlestown—1 p.m. bilingual Mass followed by 2 p.m. eucharistic adoration and

reconciliation then 3 p.m. Divine Mercy chaplet. Information: 812-738-2742.

- St. Bartholomew Church, 1306 27th Ave., Columbus—3 p.m. eucharistic adoration followed by Divine Mercy chaplet and Benediction. Information: 812-379-9353.

- St. Michael Church, 519 Jefferson Blvd., Greenfield—2:30 p.m. eucharistic adoration followed by Divine Mercy chaplet and Benediction. Information: 317-462-4240 or deaconwayne@att.net.

- St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Church, 23455 Gavin Lane, Lawrenceburg—3 p.m. eucharistic adoration, Divine Mercy chaplet and Benediction. Information: 812-656-8700.

- Holy Family Church, 235 S. 5th St., Richmond—2:30 p.m. Divine Mercy prayer service and eucharistic adoration, reconciliation begins at 12:30 p.m. Information: 765-962-3902.

- St. Vincent de Paul Church, 4218 E. Michigan Road, Shelbyville—2 p.m. Eucharistic adoration, Benediction and Divine Mercy chaplet. Information: 317-398-4028.

- St. Nicholas Church, 6461 E. St. Nicholas Drive, Sunman—2 p.m. Divine Mercy chaplet, eucharistic adoration, reconciliation, 1-3 p.m. Information: 812-623-8007.

- St. Vincent de Paul Church, 1723 "I" St., Bedford—3 p.m. Divine Mercy prayer service, reconciliation begins at 1:30 p.m.

(For instructions on how to pray the Divine Mercy chaplet, log on to http://thedivinemercy.org/message/devotions/pray_the_chaplet.php. For instructions on how to pray the Divine Mercy novena, log on to www.ewtn.com/devotionals/mercy/novena.htm.) †



St. Rita fashion show

As part of their 90th anniversary celebration, St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis is sponsoring a "Tea and Hat Fashion Show" at 2 p.m. on April 18 at the parish gymnasium, located at 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., in Indianapolis. Event participants are, first row, from left, Pat Brown, chairperson, and models Domonic Woodson, Angie Scheck, Glodene Carter and Erma Hidalgo, and, back row, from left, Kaycee Mbidoaka, Gail Guynn, Donna Moss and Dabrice Bartet. Tickets are \$10. For more information, call 317-632-9349 or 317-926-8759.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

continued from page 4

science from ethics and has brought the American government, for the first time in history, into supporting direct destruction of innocent human life.”

Bishop D’Arcy refers to Obama’s executive order that now allows the creation of embryos for the sole purpose of destroying them to conduct research, but he could have as easily cited Obama’s overturning the pro-life Mexico City policy or his decision to fund the United Nations Population Fund that will subsidize destroying unborn children around the world.

Now, the president promises to roll back conscience protections for pro-life medical professionals and to sign the misnamed Freedom of Choice Act, which he hopes Congress will deliver to his desk.

Respect for life? I see “none.” Does Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, president of the University of Notre Dame, really think rewarding such Obama actions will encourage him to have greater respect for life?

To issue such an invitation, Father Jenkins ignores the 2004 statement of the U.S. Catholic bishops, which states: “The

Memo to Notre Dame: If address must be given, no honorary degree for President Obama

In response to the March 27 story regarding the University of Notre Dame’s invitation to President Barack Obama: Is the golden dome ego so big that Holy Cross Father John Jenkins (the university president) does not report to a board of governors?

The Notre Dame board should give the good Father a leave of absence with an order to seek help. The last count reported shows the number of people who signed the petition (www.notredamescandal.com) opposing the president’s visit was at more than 246,000.

If the ego won’t allow terminating the

Church must take a consistent stand on its positions based on teachings, reader says

Your article on the invitation of President Barack Obama to speak at, and to receive an honorary degree from, the University of Notre Dame was interesting—but also very disappointing as coming from the official archdiocesan newspaper.

Notre Dame is “the” Catholic educational institution of higher learning of this state. The very idea that this institution has issued the invitation—and the even worse one of conferring an “honorary” degree on a man who so widely and actively rejects basic tenets of our religion—is abhorrent to those of us who try to live by all the teachings of the Church.

Holy Cross Father John Jenkins says the invitation “... should not be taken as condoning or endorsing his positions on specific issues” This seems to be the equivalent of asking Willie Sutton to speak on ethics while asking the audience to overlook his attitude about bank robberies.

Has this (formerly) great university fallen to the level of “cafeteria”

Catholic community and Catholic institutions should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They should not be given awards, honors or platforms which would suggest support for their actions.”

Father Jenkins says his invitation does not imply such support. I wonder if even he believes that. He acknowledges that he has received many complaints from alumni and Catholics in general.

A university spokesman claims “anecdotal evidence” that Notre Dame students are happy with the selection. If the invitation and statement are indicative of what those students are being taught, that is not surprising.

Father Jenkins says Notre Dame “will honor Mr. Obama as an inspiring leader who faces many challenges ... and is addressing them with intelligence, courage and honesty.”

Intelligence? Courage? Honesty? Regarding life issues, I see “none.”

Rose B. Kehoe
Indianapolis

visit, at least please, no honorary degree. Because President Obama speaks at the U.S. Naval Academy and Arizona State University makes a Notre Dame invite all good? The Naval Academy happens to be part of the U.S. Department of Defense. President Obama runs the DOD. Understand?

Arizona State University is state supported. We thought Notre Dame was a “Catholic” university. We should all thank God for the presence of Bishop John D’Arcy.

Edward J. and Dolores C. Woods
Indianapolis

Catholicism? Can this travesty be justified by playing the race card? Will the “honorary” degree be meaningful when this man decides a nurse, doctor or hospital must carry out infanticide without regard to conscience?

You ran this story without comment on Obama’s many anti-Catholic positions immediately adjacent to another story lauding doctors for following their conscience on the question of family planning.

Did you really see no irony in this? What will happen to these doctors, and others like them, when Obama’s ideas are enacted into law with the help of “good Catholics” like House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Vice President Joseph Biden?

When is the Church going to take a consistent stand on its positions and set people like Father Jenkins straight? Offering great honors to a man who wants to set the power of government against the Church tends to confuse those of us still sitting out there in the pews.

Fredrick K. McCarthy
Indianapolis

Letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

Letters must be signed, but, 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.

Retreat for caregivers is set for April 30 in Beech Grove

By Mary Ann Wyand

It was a priceless gift, even a miracle.

Jerry Erlenbaugh somehow managed to sign his name several times in shaky cursive script on an anniversary card for his longtime wife, Mary.

He was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease three years ago, but experienced a brief, lucid moment that enabled him to write and spell his name correctly on the greeting card purchased by his daughter, Jan Erlenbaugh Gaddis.

As the part-time parish nurse at Holy Cross Parish in Indianapolis, Erlenbaugh Gaddis has helped many families cope with a variety of health challenges that change all the dynamics of their daily life together.

But everything is different, she said, when your father is the patient and your mother is the full-time primary caregiver.

Erlenbaugh Gaddis is happy that her mother will participate in “Seeking Serenity Step by Step—A Caregivers Retreat” on April 30 at the Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., in Beech Grove.

Her 13 years of experience in parish nursing helped with planning the retreat, which focuses on 12 steps for caregivers and the Serenity Prayer as well as ways they can gain perspective, comfort and insight as they fulfill their daily responsibilities for loved ones.

Father Lawrence Voelker, pastor of Holy Cross Parish in Indianapolis, will discuss an overview of the Serenity Prayer and 12-step spirituality as it relates to caregiving.

Presentations include talks by Michael Heinz, Ph.D., on accepting things that can’t be changed and author Nancy Ballard on having the wisdom to take care of yourself.

Jerry and Mary Erlenbaugh are longtime members of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis. They were married in the parish church on Valentine’s Day in 1953, and raised their seven children in a neighborhood near the church. He worked as a builder, and she kept busy as a full-time homemaker and frequent volunteer at their parish as well as Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis.

Now Mary Erlenbaugh relies on her faith more and more because of the challenges that she faces while providing loving and constant care for her husband, whose health continues to decline from day to day. Their children helped them move out of the longtime family home and into an apartment on the east side of Indianapolis.

“Our children are all willing to help me,” she explained on March 26. “I’m very fortunate that my whole family is very caregiving. I get good care for me as well as for him. At first, I thought I could do errands later. I’m realizing now that maybe I can’t get out later and I do need help. This winter was a big lesson to me because of so much bad weather. I would have to call if I needed something.”

At first, Mary Erlenbaugh explained,



St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) parishioners Jerry and Mary Erlenbaugh of Indianapolis have seen their marriage and daily life change dramatically since he was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease in 2006. She is looking forward to attending a retreat for caregivers based on the Serenity Prayer from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on April 30 at the Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center in Beech Grove. The retreat is for both personal and professional caregivers.

she didn’t need to provide constant caregiving for her husband and only had to watch him more closely.

“It’s only been since we moved here [to the apartment a year and a half ago] that he has progressively gotten worse,” she said.

“His balance is bad now, and it’s a 24/7 job caring for him. I stay close to him. His brain isn’t telling him what to do, and he has trouble walking.”

She will be 76 in April and he will celebrate his 79th birthday in August. Amazingly, he could still water ski at age 70, but now he can’t keep his balance when he tries to walk. TV programs help

entertain him as do arranging blocks and working on puzzles.

“He sleeps a lot during the day,” Mary Erlenbaugh said. “I sit with a book and read. That’s what I do for enjoyment and relaxation.”

A professional caregiver stays with her husband on Wednesdays so she can volunteer or go shopping and take care of business.

“He has been such a good husband,” she said, even as their roles have shifted.

“He’s not the same person anymore,” she explained, “but he’s still in there. He took care of me and our children for over 50 years so I can take care of him now.”

The caregivers retreat will be a relaxing break from her busy schedule.

“If you don’t take care of yourself, you can’t take care of the person that you’re caring for,” she said. “You need that time off so you will be more relaxed, invigorated and refreshed when it’s over, and you can be better equipped to come back home. It will be nice to get away and renew myself.”

(To register for the Caregivers Retreat, call the Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center at 317-788-7581 or log on to the Web site at www.benedictinn.org before the April 22 registration deadline.) †

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in *The Criterion* as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (*Communio et Progressio*, 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, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit

General Assembly considers child poverty commission

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

The words "child poverty" may conjure up an image of a youngster from a developing country, not a child from the heartland of the United States.

But Indiana has its share of child poverty—as high as 28 percent in some counties, according to U.S. Census information compiled by the Indiana Youth Institute.

Of the 92 counties in Indiana, 83 of them have at least a 10 percent rate or higher of children ages 0-17 in poverty. Eighteen counties have a 10 percent to 15.2 percent child poverty rate, 47 counties have a 15.2 percent to 20.1 percent child poverty rate, and 18 counties have a 20.1 percent to 28.1 percent child poverty rate, according to the Indiana Youth Institute.

Why is the child poverty rate in Indiana so high?

Lawmakers in the Indiana Senate overwhelmingly supported a bill to investigate the problem by creating a two-year government commission to study the issue, and make recommendations to combat the situation affecting Indiana's children.

The proposal, Senate Bill 260, authored by Sen. Dennis Kruse (R-Auburn) and passed in the Senate by a 41-7 vote, would create a 23-member panel composed of child poverty experts from governmental agencies, non-profit advocacy groups, faith-based community groups and area academia from Indiana University, the

University of Notre Dame and Purdue University.

The goal of the panel is to design a plan with biannual benchmarks to achieve a 50 percent reduction in childhood poverty in Indiana by 2020. The bill requires the commission to issue a final report by 2011.

The plan also must incorporate provisions which assist the parents of children living in poverty, including workforce training, educational opportunities, affordable housing, child care and early education programs, after-school and mentoring programs, and access to affordable health care, including access to mental health and substance abuse programs.

Sen. Kruse said he got involved with the issue in June 2008 when he, along with four other state lawmakers, attended a conference hosted by the National Conference of State Legislatures and learned about the problems facing the working poor in America.

Following the conference, the lawmakers divided the legislative tasks, and Sen. Kruse's assignment was to address childhood poverty.

"The purpose of the bill is to continue to keep the children of poverty before the Indiana General Assembly," Sen. Kruse said. "Poverty has been with us since the

beginning of man and will probably always be with us, but that doesn't mean we ignore it or accept it. I think we have an obligation for our generation to do what we can do to reduce childhood poverty.

"The commission will be an effort in Indiana to reduce childhood poverty by 50 percent by the year 2020. There are roughly 20 other states that have similar commissions in place to address the problem," Sen. Kruse said.

One critic of the plan, Rep. Cindy Noe (R-Carmel), who serves as the ranking Republican on the House Family, Child and Human Affairs Committee, believes that the proposal doesn't get at the root cause of the problem—family fragmentation.

Rep. Noe supports an alternative proposal offered by Sen. Luke Kenley (R-Noblesville). Senate Current Resolution 26 requests that the Legislative Council establish an Interim Study Committee on the economic impact of family fragmentation.

According to "The Taxpayer Costs of Divorce and Unwed Childbearing," a study released by the Institute for American Values, the cost of family fragmentation to state and local taxpayers in Indiana is at least \$839 million annually.

Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, who testified before the House panel in support of Senate Bill 260, agrees that family fragmentation does contribute to childhood poverty, and hopes that the commission will recommend governmental policies to promote family unity.

"The commission, which will be composed of the real experts in child poverty, like those from our own Catholic Charities, academia, governmental agencies and community outreach organizations, are precisely the group best equipped to address the heart of the problem and address the full range of issues contributing to childhood poverty," Tebbe said. "Issues like employment, career development, access to health care and affordable housing must be addressed in addition to family fragmentation. This comprehensive approach provides Hoosier families in poverty the best opportunity to get out of poverty."

A legislative study committee as set forth in Senate Current Resolution 26 is composed exclusively of lawmakers. The panel would begin its work in July and make a recommendation to the General Assembly prior to the 2010 legislative session.

"Due to the nature and limited scope of a legislative study panel, Senate Current Resolution 26 alone would be insufficient to accomplish the goal of reducing child poverty," Tebbe said.

Tebbe is not alone in his thinking. Sen. Kruse said that while there has been some opposition to his bill, it has been limited.

"The vast majority are favoring it," Sen. Kruse said. "My anticipation is that the bill will pass this year and become law, and the governor will hopefully sign it."

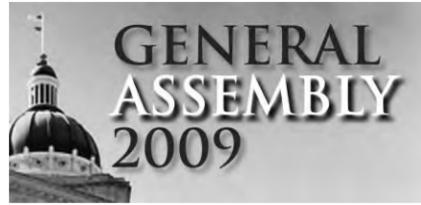
The bill now moves to the full House floor for approval. The last day that the House or Senate can approve bills sent over by the opposite chamber is April 15.

The Indiana General Assembly must adjourn by April 29.

(Brigid Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion. To learn more about the Indiana Catholic Conference, log on to www.indianacc.org.) †



Sen. Dennis Kruse



'The purpose of the bill is to continue to keep the children of poverty before the Indiana General Assembly. Poverty has been with us since the beginning of man and will probably always be with us, but that doesn't mean we ignore it or accept it.'

—Sen. Dennis Kruse



Glenn Tebbe

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Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein's weekly radio broadcast. Indianapolis Catholic Radio also streams on the Internet and can be heard statewide by logging on to www.catholicradioindy.org and clicking on the "Listen Now" button. †

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The Resurrection is depicted in this Renaissance fresco from the Chapel of St. Sebastian in Lanslevillard, France. Easter, the feast of the Resurrection, is April 12 in the Latin rite this year.

Easter Supplement

A Roman soldier writes about the Resurrection

By John F. Fink

My name is Marcus Aurelius. I'm an old man now, a retired soldier of the Roman Empire. I'd like to tell you about something that happened years ago when I was only XIX (19) and a soldier for only a year.

I was sent to Palestine in the Middle East, where I was assigned to the forces commanded by the governor there, a man named Pontius Pilate. It was, quite frankly, a terrible assignment because Palestine's residents, who called the place Israel, were Jews who greatly resented us Romans. Of course, you could hardly blame them since they considered us as occupiers of their country and they wanted their freedom.

Every now and then, one of their leaders would start an uprising and the soldiers who were there ahead of me would have to put it down. It always ended with the leader's crucifixion—a horrible way to die but the common Roman form of capital punishment.

We were usually stationed in Caesarea Maritima on the Mediterranean coast. It was a magnificent city built by King Herod the Great, but he had been dead for XXXIV (34) years when I arrived. That's where Governor Pilate lived most of the time.

However, every year, during the spring, Pilate moved to the praetorium in Jerusalem, the Jews' principal city, and, of course, our whole cohort—about DC (600) soldiers—went with him. We went there because Jews from all over the Middle East congregated there to celebrate their feast of Passover, and the arrival of so many pilgrims in the city posed a danger of riots. We had to be prepared just in case.

The first year I was there, the day before that feast of Passover, the leaders of the Jews brought a man named Jesus to Governor Pilate. They said that he was claiming to be the king of the Jews. It seemed strange to me because there hadn't been any signs of an uprising that we soldiers heard about.

Nevertheless, Jesus was brought before Pilate and those Jewish leaders demanded that Pilate put him to death. I wasn't present during Pilate's questioning of Jesus, but I got the impression that Pilate thought that he was innocent of the charges.

I was standing guard, though, when Pilate brought Jesus out to the crowd that had gathered at the praetorium. The crowd, urged by their chief priests, demanded that Jesus be crucified.

Finally, Pilate acquiesced to their demands. We soldiers thought it was good that he did since a riot seemed about to break out. Pilate proclaimed his innocence by asking for a basin of water and washing his hands, but he then turned him over to us soldiers to carry out the sentence.

Prior to the actual crucifixion, it is customary to scourge the prisoner. That task, thankfully, was not part of my duties. It was done by more experienced soldiers. It's brutal the way we Romans do it—usually two men on either side whipping the prisoner with straps with lead weights at the ends that dig into the prisoner's flesh. It causes the loss of a lot of blood.

Some of the other soldiers decided to mock Jesus. One of them found some long thorns and formed a crown with them. He placed the crown on Jesus' head and some of us hit him over the head with a reed. I admit that I participated.

We then tied the crossbeam of a cross around Jesus' shoulders and led him out of the city to a place called Golgotha, where crucifixions took place. He was badly weakened from his loss of blood and fell several times under the weight of the cross. It looked to me that he wasn't going to make it, so I grabbed a husky man out of the crowd and made him carry the cross. I heard later that his name was Simon and that he was from Cyrene, the capital of Cyrenaica on the north coast of Africa.

I watched while the more experienced soldiers crucified Jesus and two other men. As is our custom, we first stripped the prisoners of their clothes so they were naked while hanging on the crosses, further humiliating them. Then we divided the clothing among us by casting lots. I didn't win.

It can sometimes take a long time for a man to die by crucifixion. He is either tied or nailed to the cross in such a way that he can keep pushing himself up with his feet so he can breathe. Eventually, his legs cramp so he can no longer push himself up. To hurry it along, we sometimes break the man's legs with a heavy sledge hammer.

After the men were hanging on the cross for about three hours, our centurion ordered me and another soldier to break their legs. It seems that the Jewish elders didn't want the bodies hanging on the cross during Passover.

So we broke the legs of the other two men. But it was obvious that Jesus was already dead so we didn't break his legs. I did, though, take a lance and thrust it into his side. I saw blood and water flow out. I knew for certain that he was dead.

We took the bodies down from the cross. There wasn't



A Roman soldier watches as Simon of Cyrene assists Jesus in carrying his cross to Golgotha.

anybody there to claim the other two bodies, but several men and some women took Jesus' body and buried it in a tomb that happened to be in a nearby garden.

I thought that was the end of it. Frankly, I was glad it was over. However, the next morning, I was called for a new assignment. The Jewish chief priests and some of their people called the Pharisees went to Pilate and asked for soldiers to guard the tomb. Yes, guard a tomb, of all things!

It seems they remembered that, while Jesus was alive, he predicted that he would be killed, but then said that, after three days, he would be raised up. So these priests wanted the tomb to be guarded so that Jesus' disciples couldn't steal the body and then say that he had been raised from the dead.

So Governor Pilate told them that his guard was theirs. Since this wasn't exactly a plum assignment, my centurion selected me and several others of the younger men to go guard the tomb.

It was a boring assignment at first, but then the most amazing thing happened, the reason I'm writing this account. First, there was a great earthquake. Then we all saw a man whose appearance was like lightning, with clothing as white as snow. All of us were scared to death as he approached and rolled back the stone that was covering the entrance to the tomb. When he did so, we could see that the tomb was empty!

Some women approached, who were planning to anoint Jesus' body. The man with the shining clothing just sat on the stone and told the women that Jesus wasn't in the tomb because he had been raised from the dead.

They quickly ran away to tell Jesus' disciples while we just stood there dumfounded. But we saw Jesus—the man who I was sure was dead when I pierced his side with a lance—meet the women. They were too far away, though, for us to hear what he said to them.

Finally, coming out of our trance, we had to go into Jerusalem and tell the chief priests what had happened. Frankly, we were afraid that we might be court-martialed. But the opposite happened. We were actually given a large sum of money and told to keep quiet. We were told, if anyone should ask us what happened, to say that Jesus' disciples stole his body while we were asleep. That, of course, was a lie, but we did what we were instructed.

That's not quite the end of my story. After a couple years in Palestine, I served in many other parts of the Roman Empire, including Africa and Spain, before retiring. When I returned to Rome, I was surprised to find a group of people who called themselves Christians, followers of that man Jesus.

They believe that he had been crucified in order to redeem the world and that he had risen from the dead. I didn't know about the redemption part, but I was sure about the resurrection part because I was there. I didn't see Jesus rise, but I did see the empty tomb. I'm positive that his dead body had been in it and I saw him alive, talking to those women.

I have been a Christian for about XX (20) years now.

(John F. Fink is editor emeritus of The Criterion.) †

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Resurrection is not to be confused with resuscitation

By David Gibson

Catholic News Service

A father told me that his child died for a few moments after falling seriously ill and being rushed to the hospital, where the child's vital signs were revived. After a recovery period, the child's life journey resumed.

Such accounts no longer are rare. Contemporary medicine sometimes restores life and sometimes extends it. Patients are enabled to continue the life they have known.

Was Jesus' resurrection like that? Did life continue as before?

Not exactly.

The early Christians saw Easter as the day of new life. A new creation was born with Jesus' death—and resurrection!

The new creation even gained a title as "the eighth day." If a seven-day week characterized our world's original creation, the eighth day signified that time itself now was transformed.

Passionist Father Donald Senior, in a 2008 speech, discussed bodily resurrection—including the resurrection of the dead that all Christians anticipate.

The American biblical scholar said St. Paul, addressing the Corinthians, made clear that bodily resurrection should not be confused with resuscitation.

Bodily resurrection is not some kind of rescue from a near-death experience, he said. "It is not more of the same."

Christian faith affirms, Father Senior said, that "Jesus, who truly died, who lost his life, was transformed by the power of God and given renewed life, new corporeal, bodily life."

Yes, this still was Jesus, but his "body-spirit is transformed and has new power."

No wonder the early Christians took the resurrection seriously!

Like Christians today, early

Christians struggled with Easter's implications—what it meant for Jesus and them. But they grasped that he had risen and that they shared in his new, transformed life.

So Easter was to become an annual celebration not solely of what happened "to" Jesus long ago. Easter would celebrate his new life, and how it transformed people and their world.

Easter also would become the premier time of year for baptisms, a development that makes complete sense. Isn't baptism the sacrament of new life in Christ, who died and rose?

St. Paul wrote that Christians were incorporated by baptism into Christ's body. Though members of the community differed in ethnicity or talents or wealth, each one was a valued, needed part of Christ's body.

That Christians are joined with Christ's body is no small statement to make. Christ's life, this suggests, gives baptized Christians vitality.

My wife and I photographed the "old creation"—stunning mountain settings and glistening waterways—when we visited Alaska on a recent vacation.

The new creation, however, is visible whenever God, neighbors and enemies are loved. Christ's new life is glimpsed when people sacrifice, live simply, act selflessly and serve as healing agents in troubled situations.

The new creation's horizons are wide. Participants in Christ's new life, his body's members, are impelled to serve life, transform it and not give up on it, even in highly difficult circumstances.

In the new creation, life often is restored and revitalized, but not just in order to continue as before.

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

CNS photo/Bill Witman



"Easter also would become the premier time of year for baptisms, a development that makes complete sense," notes David Gibson. "Isn't baptism the sacrament of new life in Christ, who died and rose?"

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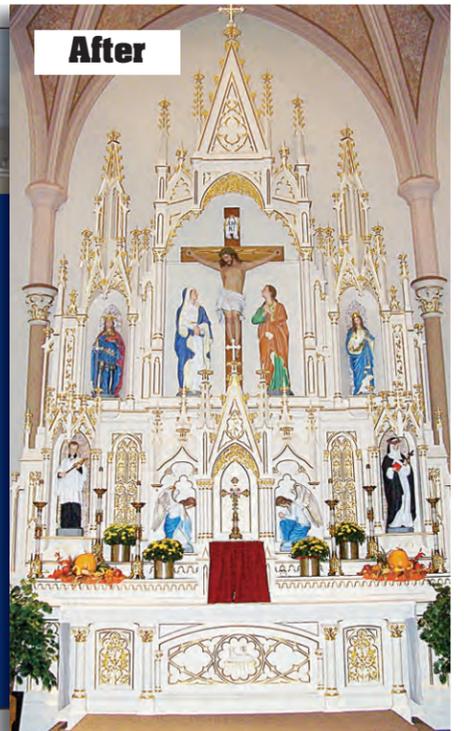
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After

St. Paul's letters refute mistaken notions of the Resurrection

By Sheila E. McGinn

Catholic News Service

"Alleluia, Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed, alleluia!"

This paschal acclamation of the ever-ancient, ever-new mystery of the dying and rising of the Lord Jesus Christ derives from the earliest Easter proclamation.

The heart of the Christian faith, this resurrection message forms the basis for the earliest and most fundamental of Christian creedal statements: "Jesus is Lord."

Without the Resurrection, Jesus of Nazareth would have been merely one more Jew killed by gentile rulers and Christianity would never have existed.

Christ's resurrection changed everything.

Through the Resurrection, God manifested to the entire world that Jesus is the Christ, the goal for which creation groans in labor and toward which the universe is being drawn enticingly, ineluctably, until it reaches its ultimate fulfillment in God.

Many of my students focus on Jesus' death and more or less ignore the Resurrection.

When reading the First Letter to the Corinthians, we often find that the Corinthians have redefined "resurrection" exactly as did that early Church, spiritualizing a very "earthy" claim about the transformation of human life.

St. Paul corrects that view, emphasizing that Christ's resurrection is a bodily event.

"Resurrection" does not mean afterlife of the soul or a disembodied heavenly existence, St. Paul explains. Nor, for that matter, is it an event in which only the dead can participate.

When Christ returns in glory, Paul says, even the living will be transformed. "In an

instant, in the blink of an eye ... the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor 15:52).

Several Pauline letters discuss the Resurrection, which suggests that many early Christians needed help exploring its significance.

Most first-century Jews believed in resurrection, especially in light of the prophet Ezekiel's graphic vision of God raising the righteous dead (Ez 37).

Paul's pagan converts, however, would likely be confused by the idea. Two common misunderstandings would be that "resurrection" refers to the resuscitation of a corpse or a disembodied, spiritual afterlife. Paul refutes both mistakes.

A resuscitated person gains a temporary reprieve, but eventually, inescapably, death will come.

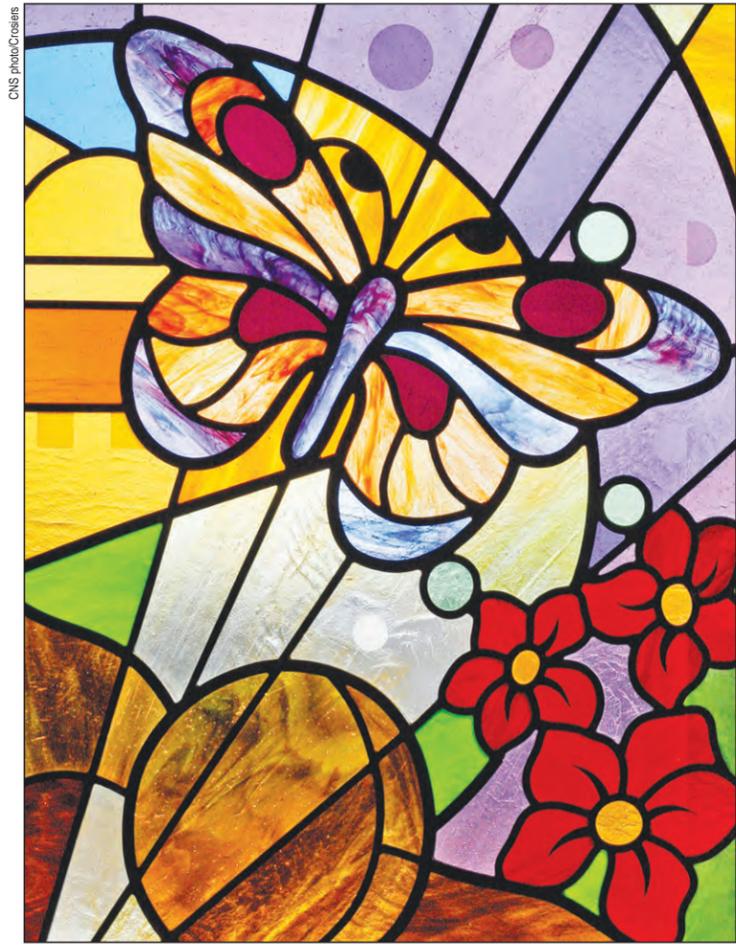
Resurrection involves a permanent, metaphysical change in a person's mode of existence, and denotes existence on a different plane altogether.

Of course, here is where the second type of misunderstanding arises. How easy it is to jump from the rather unusual notion of a radically transformed human life to the nearly ubiquitous notion of an afterlife.

Greeks believed in the immortality of the soul for 400 years before Paul came to Corinth. The death of the body meant the escape of the soul to the spirit world, untainted by corporeal realities.

Belief in a disembodied, spiritual afterlife was the logical consequence of their profoundly negative view of the material world.

Which, of course, is why the conflation of the resurrection proclamation with a disembodied afterlife of the soul is a profoundly anti-Christian move: "For if the dead are not raised,



The act of emerging from a cocoon into a beautiful creature makes the butterfly a Christian symbol of resurrection. The butterfly is also a symbol of every Christian's hope of resurrection from the dead.

neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain" (1 Cor 15:16-17).

Resurrection is the profound mystery of the perfection of all life—human life, yes, but as part of the entire cosmos.

The material world is God's creation and is fundamentally good. Resurrection is not an escape from embodied life, but rather its ultimate affirmation.

Resurrection is the reality of a truly human life, body and soul, transformed and restored to the fullness of the divine image in Christ.

Think about that the next time you are saying the creed.

(Sheila E. McGinn is a professor of biblical studies and early Christianity at John Carroll University in Cleveland.) †

A 'phone call' from God and a faith-filled message for Easter Catholics

By Dan Morris

Catholic News Service

The Catholic community has long been a bit conflicted about what they call Easter and Christmas Catholics.

One school of thought seems to say, "Nice to see you, but why don't you attend Mass during the rest of the year?"

Another school appears more hopeful and charitable: "Nice to see you at Easter Mass. We hope to see you again next week, and the week after that and the week after that."

Still, a soft condemnation or judgmental attitude colors the greeting. Unspoken is the opinion that, "We kind of doubt that we will see you here again before Christmas." Or, perhaps even, "You are less than we are if you don't come to weekly Mass."

A lot of us find ourselves in both

schools of thought, say many parish leaders, notably pastors and others who are frontline evangelizers. They tell stories of hurt, disenfranchised or poorly catechized Catholics who have found their way back to full participation in the life of the Church, for example, as the Easter liturgy's light of love and hope illuminates their faith anew.

The keyholes to those moments are often associated with tangibles, such as a homily, children's choir, warm and sincere greeting or caring remark. The conduits to grace are mysterious and myriad, say pastors, catechists and other ministry volunteers.

They consistently underscore that the potential impact of an Easter or Christmas homily cannot be overstated.

Now-retired Father Miles Riley of the San Francisco Archdiocese recalls vividly an Easter homily that he delivered many

years ago before the advent of the cell phone.

"I was casting about for some modern symbol as a reminder of the risen Christ," he said. "I came up with a telephone. A radio station engineer I know rigged the phone so that it would ring when I turned on a switch in the pulpit.

"I set it up by asking: 'Wouldn't it be great if the risen Lord could actually contact us, talk to us, even call us on the phone?'"

Father Riley smiled. "And then the 'God phone' begins to ring, and I ask the congregation, 'Should I answer it?'"

"And, of course, all the kids are cheering, 'Answer the phone, answer the phone!' And, eventually, I do.

"And in the hushed silence," the priest continued, "I say, 'Hello, Jesus.' And then Jesus and I proceed to have a great 10-minute conversation about everything

from baseball to church-going."

He shakes his head. "I'm not kidding. People remember that sermon now 30 to 40 years later, and tell me that the humor and hope they experienced then renewed their faith in the oh-so-human Church that Jesus established 2,000 years ago."

When he recalls the impact of that homily, Father Riley said, he often leaves out a touching postscript. A little girl of 7 or 8 came up to him after that Easter liturgy and asked, "Father, what did Jesus sound like?"

"She caught me completely off guard," he laughed. "I stammered and then replied, 'Well, he sounded Jewish,' which completely befuddled the little child, but it was the only answer I could come up with!"

(Dan Morris is a veteran Catholic journalist in Anacortes, Wash.) †

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Women were first witnesses of the resurrected Jesus

By Joseph F. Kelly
Catholic News Service

The Gospel narratives of Jesus' resurrection from the dead contain accounts of his appearances to several of his followers—those on the road to Emmaus and doubting Thomas. These stories are well-known.

Less well-known, however, is that all four Gospels recount that the first witnesses to Jesus' resurrection were all women.



The women, who went to anoint Jesus' body, encounter an empty tomb. A heavenly being informs them that Jesus has risen from the dead, and that they should inform the other disciples.

This may surprise some people today. In the ancient world, it would have stunned everyone.

Women played a diminished role in ancient society. They were considered weaker and less intelligent than men. They could not hold public office, nor could they bear witness in court by themselves. Their testimony had validity only if it was validated by their husbands or other men.

Yet the Gospels affirm that women were the first witnesses to the Resurrection.

This leads to two other points about women in the Gospels.

- First, the Gospels speak of the Twelve Apostles, but they also speak in general of "disciples" whose ranks included women. These women played a great role in supporting Jesus and the Apostles. The Gospel of Luke tells us, for example, that women

"provided for them out of their own resources" by helping pay for the lodging and food that a group constantly on the move would need.

- The second and far more important point about women in the Gospels is that Jesus rose above the prejudices of his day, prejudices shared even by those closest to him. In his account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, the evangelist John tells us that the Apostles "were amazed that he was talking with a woman." But to Jesus, all people were equal.

Luke's Gospel also emphasizes the role that Jesus' mother, Mary, played in the economy of salvation when she accepts the angel's announcement that she is to become the mother of the Lord. As such, a woman acted decisively when Jesus began his salvific mission to humanity, and the evangelists recount how several women acted decisively when Jesus completed his salvific mission, which he would soon turn over to his Church.

The four Gospel accounts do not agree exactly on all the details, but the combined accounts are of pious Jewish women who want to anoint Jesus' body, a ritual honoring the deceased.



Mary Magdalene encounters the risen Jesus, but she does not recognize him and thinks he is the gardener. Mary Magdalene represents all believers for whom accepting the risen Christ is a challenge.

But instead of finding a closed tomb, they encounter an empty tomb and a heavenly being who informs them that Jesus has risen from the dead and that they should inform his other disciples.

Women were the first people commissioned to accept and report the good news of Christ's resurrection.

Consider the description of Mary Magdalene's response in John's Gospel. Mary Magdalene encounters Jesus, but does not recognize him. She thinks that he is a gardener.

This follows a central theme of John's Gospel. People like Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, for example, do not initially understand Jesus, but in faith they come to know who he really is.

Thus, Mary Magdalene represents all believers for whom accepting the risen Christ is a challenge. But God's gift of faith enables us to embrace that challenge.

(Joseph F. Kelly chairs the Department of Religious Studies at John Carroll University in Cleveland.) †

The resurrected Jesus' encounter with his Apostles is crucial element in our faith

By Fr. Dale Launderville, O.S.B.
Catholic News Service

When the resurrected Jesus appears to the Apostles, he imparts to them a profound experience of his glorified, bodily presence.

This encounter not only gives them courage, but also moves them to reflect on who Jesus is.

During his earthly life, Jesus walked with the Apostles and shared a wide range of experiences with them. These types of human interactions are the privileged places in which God quietly lets us humans know that he is with us.

The Apostles were in the unique position of being able to make known the continuity between the earthly and the resurrected Jesus. They are the chosen ones who are to testify by their words and actions that Jesus is still present among them in the Spirit.

The resurrected Jesus' body is transformed, but still bears the marks of his earthly identity and experience because he eats and drinks with his Apostles.

This reality of Jesus' ongoing presence in the world is made known by the acts of faith, hope and love of the Apostles.

We join in the Apostles' Easter proclamation by embracing this Jesus who longs to be present with us. The truth of this proclamation becomes more vivid and persuasive as our way of life manifests the presence of the Spirit of Jesus and his Father.

As Jesus' resurrected body becomes incarnated in the community of believers, it becomes the primary place in which we acknowledge God's desire to draw us into the sphere of divine love.

The Apostles already saw Jesus' miraculous healings and the powerful impact of his preaching. But more importantly, they heard his prophecy that he had to suffer, die and rise from the dead, and now saw it fulfilled!

Their earlier expectation for a triumphant, earthly Messiah who would crush his opponents was transformed into an abiding hope that the resurrected Jesus conquered death and is imparting to them a love that is stronger than death.

This conviction that Jesus has opened a way through death to new life is strengthened by the Apostles' testifying to one another that this reality of the resurrected Jesus is a tangible reality and not simply a figment of their imaginations.

The resurrection of Jesus' body not only gives hope of a life after death, it also raises the value that we ascribe to the human body.

This body is a privileged place in which we come to know God.

God not only challenges us through physical trials, but also communicates his love to us through our interactions with



"When the resurrected Jesus appears to the Apostles, he imparts to them a profound experience of his glorified, bodily presence," writes Benedictine Father Dale Launderville, a Scripture scholar.

others and through our bodily perception of his divine presence.

With Jesus' resurrection, we learn that our bodies will be raised in a transformed state and will come to deeper communion with God. We do not simply discard our bodies at death, but continue to exist with Jesus in a physically transformed way.

Our experience of aging raises questions about who we are and what will become of our bodies.

At times, Jesus' dramatic triumph over death seems almost too good to be true. His resurrected reality seems to be a stumbling block along with his difficult message of loving one's enemies, and his claim that God's kingdom is at hand and is breaking into our lives even now.

The earthly and the resurrected Jesus is a paradoxical figure. He challenges the sufficiency of the judgments of our

common sense. His submission to the forces of violence goes contrary to typical ways of human behavior, and so he becomes a stone rejected by those who would build up their lives only with materials they can control.

But the truth of Jesus' paradoxical way of living is confirmed through his resurrection. "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone" (Ps 118:22).

We join in the Apostles' Easter proclamation by embracing this Jesus who longs to be present with us. The truth of this proclamation becomes more vivid and persuasive as our way of life manifests the presence of the Spirit of Jesus and his Father.

(Benedictine Father Dale Launderville is a Scripture scholar at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn.) †

Self-sacrifice is key to Christian life, pope says on Palm Sunday

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Celebrating Mass on Palm Sunday, Pope Benedict XVI said daily self-sacrifice in imitation of Christ is the key to the Christian life.

"Sacrifice and renunciation belong to the just life. Whoever promises a life without this continuing gift of self is fooling people," the pope said during the liturgy in St. Peter's Square on April 5.

The papal liturgy began with a procession of hundreds of cardinals, bishops, priests and lay people, who carried palms and olive branches in commemoration of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem a few days before his Passion and death.

At the head of the procession, nine young people from Australia carried the World Youth Day cross to the altar, where it was later consigned to a group of Spanish youths for the next international celebration of World Youth Day in Madrid in 2011.

The pope, his red vestments resplendent in the sunshine, carried a braided garland of palm fronds across the cobblestoned square. It was the first of seven major Holy Week events for the pope, who turns 82 later in the month.

In his homily, Pope Benedict commented on Jesus' words after his entry into Jerusalem: "Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life" (Jn 12:25).

Christ's message was that the person who wants to live only for himself and exploit all life's possibilities for personal gain finds that life itself becomes "boring and empty," the pope said.

The principle of love, which is at the heart of the Christian faith and is exemplified in Christ's crucifixion, demands a more universal vision that looks outward and not just inward, he said.

This orientation toward others involves not only a "single great decision" in a person's life, which is relatively easy, the pope said, but must be a continuing attitude implemented daily in everyday situations.

"No successful life exists without sacrifice. When I

look back on my personal life, I have to say that precisely the times when I said 'Yes' to a sacrifice were the greatest and most important moments of my life," he said.

The pope said the days Jesus spent in Jerusalem also highlight the fact that self-sacrifice produces inner doubt and anguish. Even Jesus asked whether he should turn to God and say: "Father, save me from this hour" (Jn 12:27).

That Jesus suffered in this way offers an insight into prayer, which sometimes involves questioning and lament in the face of suffering and injustice, the pope said.

Everyone can and should pray this way, he said.

"Before God, we shouldn't take refuge in pious phrases, in a fictitious world. To pray always signifies struggling with God, too," he said.

At the end of the liturgy, the Australian young people transferred the tall wooden cross and an icon of Mary to a group of young Spaniards, who were taking the two symbols on a spiritual pilgrimage ahead of the next



Pope Benedict XVI waves at the end of Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on April 5.

World Youth Day international gathering in Madrid in 2011.

The pope recalled that he presided over World Youth Day events in Sydney, Australia, last summer. He said the cross's pilgrimage was deeply symbolic.

"The cross is in movement from one side of the world to the other, from sea to sea. And we are accompanying it," he said.

A group of 150 Spanish Catholics—bishops, priests and young people—were in Rome for preliminary planning meetings for the 2011 youth encounter. They cheered and waved Spanish flags when the pope, speaking after the Mass, encouraged them to prepare a spiritual path toward the international gathering.

The 2011 encounter has as its theme "Rooted and built up in Jesus Christ, firm in the faith." The quotation is taken from Chapter 2 of St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians.

On April 6, the pope met with some 7,000 young Spaniards who traveled to Rome for the Palm Sunday liturgy, and spoke about World Youth Day as an opportunity to experience the joy of belonging to the Church.

"The World Youth Days demonstrate the dynamism of the Church and its eternal youth. Whoever loves Christ loves the Church with the same passion because it allows us to live in a close relationship with the Lord," he said. †



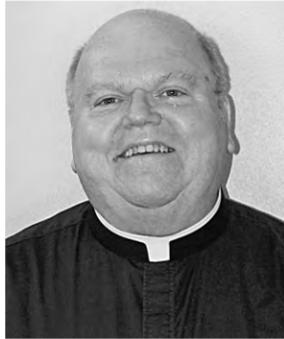
Spanish young people hold a wooden cross as a symbol of the next World Youth Day as Pope Benedict XVI leads Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on April 5. World Youth Day will be held in Madrid, Spain, in 2011.



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Catholic by Grace/Denise Bossert

Our Lord has promised us a great harvest as Easter people

My grandfather died when I was 9. He was an Iowa farmer, and on



one December afternoon he climbed to the top of a grain bin on the family farm. It was something he always did when the temperature was below freezing.

He would take a wrench and

break the crust that formed on the top of the corn so that the dryer could work more efficiently. But something went wrong that day. Whether he had a stroke and fell in or simply lost his balance, we never knew for sure. He suffocated in the grain bin, surrounded by the year's harvest.

I remember standing with my family at the funeral home a day or two later and seeing his body.

All I could think about were the Bible stories about Jesus raising people from the dead. So I prayed, "Even now, you can bring him back to us, Jesus."

And I watched his lifeless body for any sign of a miracle. I really believed that God could do it, too. That's how it is when you are 9 and you experience death for the first time. You expect things to be reversible. And you know that nothing is impossible for the God who made everything.

He could do it. He could bring Grandpa back to life.

But the miracle didn't happen.

I still remember my childlike faith when a loved one passes into eternity. I still pray, "You could do it, Lord. You could raise this one I love."

But this prayer means something even more profound. It isn't merely a prayer for the restoration of a physical body. It is a prayer for the eternal soul. "In your mercy, I trust that you will raise this person I love."

I don't expect my loved one to sit up and start talking to me like I did as a child. Instead, I think of Easter promises.

It is odd—and fitting at the same time—that my grandfather died in a grain bin full of harvested corn.

Jesus told his disciples that, "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit" (Jn 12:24).

If we are honest, we know that some of the greatest spiritual growth has come after the death of someone we love.

We understand Easter more fully when we encounter loss.

We realize more deeply that fruit comes from death.

A crop is harvested so that the next one can be planted. Not just a replacement, not just having something new to take our mind off the old. No, it is life coming out of death.

We see it all around us as winter gives way to spring. We see it when we consider the saints, and we witness their powerful intercession.

I've lost many family members since that December of 1973. But I think the death that revealed this reality the most was the death of our beloved Pope John Paul II.

We forget, sometimes, that there is a promise with the death of a holy one. We sort through the harvested crop and find the good seed. With God's help, we

plant that seed, tend it and watch it grow.

Death is swallowed up in victory.

How long has it been since you asked a loved one who died to intercede for you?

How long has it been since you implored our beloved Pope John Paul II to help with the new harvest?

How long has it been since you knelt and said the words, "Even now you can raise him, Jesus?"

And then you went into the fields and got busy rather than sitting down and dwelling on the loss?

We are not meant to hold the seed in our hands and grieve forever. We are meant to get on with planting.

There are souls in need of intercession. There are saints ready to intercede.

And Our Lord has promised us a great harvest.

Blessed Easter! Alleluia! Amen!

(Denise Bossert lives in Wentzville, Mo., and has written for numerous diocesan newspapers and Catholic



Father Jonathan Meyer, administrator of St. Joseph and St. Anne parishes in Jennings County, holds a stalk of wheat during his homily at Mass on March 29 at St. Anne Church in Jennings County. The Gospel reading for that Lenten Sunday was from the Gospel of St. John, which read, "Jesus told his disciples that, 'Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.'" (Jn 12:24).

magazines. You can read her previous "Catholic by Grace" columns at www.catholicbygrace.blogspot.com.) †



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Easter baskets for children



Right, Roncalli High School sophomore and St. Mark the Evangelist parishioner Espie Moody of Indianapolis gets help from the "Easter Bunny" on April 2 as she fills baskets with candy for children from low-income families at the St. Vincent de Paul Society's Client Choice Food Pantry in Indianapolis.

Left, St. Mark parishioners, including members of all the parish organizations, donated candy and stuffed animals to fill 600 Easter baskets for poor children. A holy card depicting Jesus with children and a Christian booklet titled "New Life in Jesus" were included in each basket of candy.



Is the Easter Bunny a distraction from the true Easter story?

By Louise McNulty
Catholic News Service

It seems that just after parents fought to put Christ above Santa Claus in their children's holiday hierarchy then along comes the Easter Bunny.

Unlike Santa, whose origin can be traced to the person of St. Nicholas, the fourth-century bishop of Myra in Lycia, Asia Minor, the mythical creature that delivers colored eggs, candy and toys to children on the night before Easter is a rabbit with human qualities!

The treats are either left in plain view or hidden throughout the house and yard.

Talking to a couple of different generations of Catholic parents, it is somewhat surprising that most mothers and fathers don't believe that the Easter Bunny detracts from the most important Church celebration of the year.

Joan Treadaway of Montgomery, Ala., who was born and raised in New Orleans, is the mother of seven adult children and 11 grandchildren.

"We had a great advantage growing up," she explained, "because 95 percent of the

people around us were Catholics."

So observing nonreligious traditions in no way seemed to threaten or interfere with religious traditions and celebrations.

"We went to Mass on Easter just like we did every week," Treadaway recalled. "Then we had an Easter egg hunt."

She continued that tradition with her children and grandchildren, and doesn't see a conflict.

"Just as the Resurrection is a celebration of a new life in Christ," she explained, "the egg represents new life [in nature]. ... We always go to church for the religious part, and then we have the baskets and the egg hunt for the kids. I think [the Easter Bunny tradition] is a fun thing for children."

Sheri Gaines of Torrance, Calif., said that as a child she never thought the religious aspect of the holy day and the treat baskets were even related.

"I was raised in a nonreligious home and always found a basket on my bed on Easter morning," Gaines said. "It was like Christmas to me. There was no religious meaning. Both days were about the presents."

But things changed when she converted

to Catholicism, her husband's religion, five years ago.

Their children were 13, 10 and 6 at the time, and she continued the Easter basket tradition. Becoming Catholic "opened up the Lenten season to me and I've tried to pass that on to my kids," she added. Now Gaines' oldest daughter watches *The Passion of the Christ* on Good Friday.

Michele and Steve Lauenstein of Mequon, Wis., are the parents of children aged 9, 10 and 12. Their children now know that the Easter Bunny is a myth, but the family still enjoys the nonreligious aspects of holidays together and plan to have Easter baskets this year.

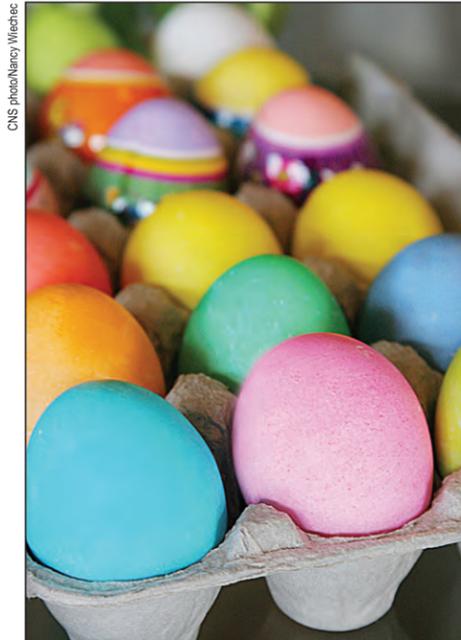
"My philosophy is that kids at a young age are not excited about Christ's birth or resurrection," Michele Lauenstein said. "But Santa and the Easter Bunny get them very excited."

As their children get older and learn what's real and what isn't, "they can transfer that excitement to the real meaning of those holidays," she said. "The magic stays with them."

She knows people who were raised Catholic, but refuse to ever let their children believe in Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny.

"I think that makes it sad," she said, "and boring for the kids."

As far as when parents should tell children the true story behind the fantasies they have enjoyed, Michele Lauenstein said, she believes in waiting until children ask if



Many parents believe the Easter bunny and Easter eggs are a fun way for children to get into the holiday and eventually learn the greater picture of what Easter is all about.

these mythical figures are real.

And in Mequon, which is about 60 percent Catholic, she said it's not hard to reinforce the religious traditions.

(Louise McNulty is a freelance writer in Akron, Ohio.) †

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For Missionary Benedictine Sisters, first the waiting then comes the joy!

By Mary Eileen Andreasen
Catholic News Service

Easter Sunday's Gospel reading (Jn 20:1-9) tells us that the stone that sealed the tomb of Christ is moved aside. He has emerged from the grave victorious, and centuries of waiting for salvation are over!

This means that the stones that sealed us in our own dark tombs have been removed as well, and we find comfort in

that verse in Romans that says that those who die with Christ shall also live with him (Rom 8:6).

Appreciation is certainly sharpened after a long wait!

Some 30 Missionary Benedictine Sisters in Norfolk, Neb., are about to finish what has been for them a particularly long wait.

These hardy souls are living in temporary housing while their beloved home is gutted and refurbished into a newer monastery and spirituality center.

It has taken about 18 months so far for the rebirth. But the waiting and enduring cramped living conditions on two floors of an apartment complex are almost over.

The sisters are a culturally diverse community whose members live and work in 18 countries on five continents. They seek to lead people to Christ by helping to build up and strengthen Christian communities, working in solidarity with the poor in particular.

I see the sisters in Nebraska as having lived a long Lent that was challenging, to

say the least. Their lives have been full of architects and contractors. New furnaces, boilers and bathrooms were installed. The chapel was to get new tile, but the company sent the wrong color.

Members of the community learned to wear hard hats over their veils when visiting the renovation site. I chuckled at this sight one day as they were walking with the work crew down dusty, gutted hallways with electrical wires hanging everywhere.

How appropriate it is that the sisters' time of freedom has come around Easter when we recall that, like Lazarus, we were dead spiritually, in need of God's mercy and our Savior's voice.

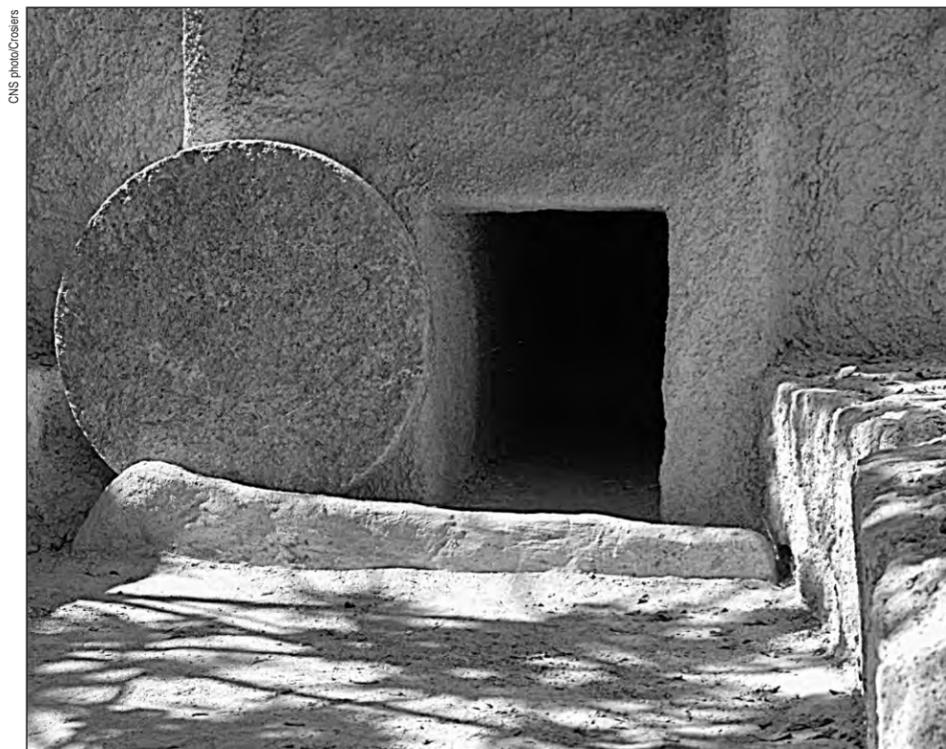
One elderly sister smiled and said to me very softly, "It will be so wonderful, you know, to finally go home."

I paused a moment to ponder what she meant. She betrayed longing and even a hint of desperation.

Another sister who was placed in a nursing home during the renovation greeted every visitor with, "Is it ready yet?"

But now that the wait is almost over, a committee has gathered to plan the archbishop's visit to rededicate the monastery. An invitation list has been started. The sisters have had a chance to get a first glimpse of their new rooms. And the maintenance crew is itching to start moving furniture back in. The new carpet smells wonderful.

For the sisters, the anticipated homecoming has given them a renewed desire to underscore the Good News of Christ as they serve the rural community around them. Local residents also are eager to participate in Mass once more in the monastery.



Easter Sunday's Gospel reading (Jn 20:1-9) tells us that the stone that sealed the tomb of Christ is moved aside. This means that the stones that sealed us in our own dark tombs have been removed as well.

The sisters' excitement builds when plans for their new spirituality center are discussed, and the anticipation leaves people breathless.

It's been a long, irritating wait, but definitely worth every moment.

How appropriate it is that the sisters' time of freedom has come around Easter when we recall that, like Lazarus, we were dead spiritually, in need of God's mercy and our Savior's voice.

Jesus instructed those mourning Lazarus to "take away the stone." The Lord shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" Then Jesus urged spectators to "untie him and

let him go" (Jn 11:39-44).

Likewise, Jesus calls to us to come forth from our private tombs, blink in the sunlight and smell the fresh scent of the earth.

The wait is over!

Like the Missionary Benedictine Sisters in Norfolk, Neb., we also can finally go home.

(Mary Eileen Andreasen is the program coordinator for Immaculata Monastery and Spirituality Center in Norfolk, Neb., and the regional coordinator for the Ignatian Volunteer Corps in Omaha, Neb.) †

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Jingle writers say their 'Rosary Tapes' encourage hope, prayer

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Jingle writers John Giaier and Bill Gildenstern have put a new spin on the rosary by combining the traditional mysteries and meditations with contemporary music.

Their product is called the "Rosary Tapes," and is made up of four compact discs, one for each of the rosary's four sets of mysteries.

"When Bill came up with the idea, at the time I thought he was kind of nutty," Giaier said, joking.

To change Giaier's mind, Gildenstern and his wife, Kelly, put together a sample to the tune of "Silent Night" for Giaier's wife, Debbie. Her tearful reaction was all it took for Giaier to agree to the rosary project.

Longtime friends and co-owners of GT Technotracks, a Michigan-based

advertising agency, Giaier and Gildenstern are best known for producing the Ford Motor Co.'s famous jingle "Have you driven a Ford lately?" The duo has produced more than 6,000 jingles in the past 40 years.

Giaier said the "Rosary Tapes" project has been a "real labor of love" over the years. They have controlled much of the production and distribution of the "Rosary Tapes" within their company.

Gildenstern, the lyricist of the collection, created meditation concepts for each piece. He consulted Catholic clergy as well as clergy from other Christian denominations to ensure the messages of his songs were accurate.

"The songs come right from the Bible and tell a story. It's the actual rosary with the Our Fathers, Hail Marys and meditations. It's inspirational and makes you think," Giaier told Catholic News Service in a telephone interview.

Giaier composed and arranged the music with Gildenstern in their own studio. He also provided male vocals on the albums. The outcome was a blend of rock, jazz, blues, country and pop music.

The songs were purposely created to have "staying power" across a wide demographic, said Gildenstern.

"We tried to blend the music so that listeners would never go past a track or two before hearing one of their favorite songs," Gildenstern said.

Since the "Rosary Tapes" project began in the early 1990s, Gildenstern and Giaier have sold about 50,000 sets of the four CDs. Songs from the Grammy-nominated album, "The Joyful Mysteries," which focus on Jesus' birth, are available on the "Rosary Tapes" Web site for free. The CD has had more than 2 million downloads.

The four CDs are titled after the joyful, sorrowful, glorious and luminous



Young people hold rosaries during the sixth annual Worldwide Children's Eucharistic Holy Hour at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington in 2008. Jingle writers John Giaier and Bill Gildenstern have developed a product called "Rosary Tapes," a set of four compact discs, one for each of the rosary's mysteries: joyful, sorrowful, glorious and luminous.



A candle and rosary lay in a Marian shrine at St. Michael School in Newark, N.Y., on Jan. 20.

mysteries of the rosary. Pope John Paul II added the luminous mysteries, or the mysteries of light, in 2002.

During his pontificate, Giaier and Gildenstern received a letter sent on the pope's behalf thanking them for their work on the rosary CDs. They also have received an apostolic blessing from Pope Benedict XVI.

Gildenstern and Giaier, who are Catholic, hope the "Rosary Tapes" will encourage people of all Christian denominations to pray more often.

"I'm trying to sell the rosary. To me, it's the perfect prayer," Gildenstern told CNS.

"It's a Christian prayer, not just a Catholic prayer. We want you to be

whatever you want to be [in order] to be comfortable with Jesus," he added.

Gildenstern suggested prayer as a way to find comfort during these tough economic times.

"It really goes past the 'Rosary Tapes.' It's all about hope," Gildenstern said.

"We have to work to overcome our problems. We have to put our hands to the plow, but in the same token, we've got to be praying like crazy. If we don't pray, it'll just be a mess," he said.

(The four-CD "Rosary Tapes" set is available for \$39.95 online at www.rosarytapes.com. Each order includes a fifth CD that contains only the songs from the other four albums.) †



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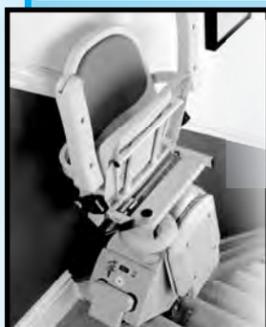
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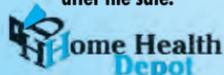
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Easter is our compass for Christian life and mission

By James M. Schellman

The four Gospels differ on many details of Jesus' life and ministry.

Strikingly, they all agree that Jesus was raised from the dead on Sunday, the first day of the week.

The Lord's appearances to the disciples described in the Gospels typically take place on the first day and are often accompanied by a meal, evidently similar to the Last Supper that the Lord shared with them on the night before his death (see Lk 24:13-35).

From the Gospels, we learn that from their very beginnings Christians assembled on Sunday, the day of Christ's resurrection and the day we are gathered to celebrate the Lord's passing through death to life. As it was for those first disciples, Sunday is the pre-eminent day of Eucharist.

Easter Sunday is the original feast day among all the feast days and Sundays of our Christian year. It concludes the great Easter Triduum and inaugurates the season of Easter.

We begin Easter Sunday with the Easter Vigil, where we baptize and confirm our newcomers to faith and renew our own baptismal covenant. We then gather our neophytes with us for the Eucharist of the Easter Vigil.

In the grace of these central mysteries of faith, we open the Easter season with all the power of the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit.

As the first Sunday of the Easter season, Easter Sunday points us toward what follows baptism—Christian life and mission. This is the whole point of our baptismal covenant. The readings and prayers offer a kind of template for the great 50 days of Easter that follow.

This is the only season in which the first reading for each Sunday is drawn from the Acts of the Apostles.

Acts should be understood less as historical accounts of events than as an inspired view of the work of the Spirit in the early growth of the Christian mission.

Acts was likely written during the first couple of decades following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (70 A.D.).

Acts reflects the struggle of our early ancestors in faith to understand this destruction, the resistance and persecution being experienced by the mission, as well as the authenticity of the mission, not only to the Jews but also to the gentiles.



The Gospel reading for Easter Sunday is from St. John. In a few brief lines, the story reveals the mystery of the disciples coming to faith in the resurrected Christ. They saw, but only the beloved disciple believed. The other disciples needed more encounters and the opening of their hearts and minds to understand the Scriptures about Christ.

In the first Easter Sunday reading (Acts 10:34a, 37-43), Peter testifies to what he has learned through his dream about the "unclean" animals and his experience with the faith-filled gentile, Cornelius.

Peter announces courageously the breadth of God's grace and the necessity of preaching Christ to whomever God chooses.

As Catholics, do we place limits on God's generosity and inclusivity?

How easily do we avoid the necessity to witness to Christ by word and example in the daily realities of our lives?

Is our sense of mission limited to Sunday Mass, a kind of willingness to "talk the talk," but not "walk the walk"?

Psalm 118 is the great psalm of Easter rejoicing. It is central to our understanding of Christ as the stone rejected by the builders—but now "becomes the cornerstone"—and may be used throughout the Easter season.

Is the Lord the cornerstone in our lives, the one who anchors our life's story?

Even when we reject Christ, he invites us back to his central role in our lives.

The second reading on Easter Sunday (Col 3:1-4) invites us as individuals and communities to embrace what God has accomplished for us in the resurrection of Christ. It claims for us a kind of resurrection. The resurrected life begins now with our eyes raised high.

The fullness of Christ's resurrection, which we all await together, includes even those who have gone before us through death marked with the sign of faith. It is promised at the end of time when Christ returns and brings the great story of redemption to fulfillment.

Thus, "When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory" (Col 3:4).

Do we long for that coming with all our heart?

Do we allow the brokenness of our world and the suffering of the innocent to speak to us so deeply that we cry out with heartfelt

longing, "Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life, Lord Jesus come in glory!"

The Gospel for Easter Sunday is from St. John. In a few brief lines, the story reveals the mystery of the disciples coming to faith in the resurrected Christ. They saw, but only the beloved disciple believed. The other disciples needed more encounters, and the opening of their hearts and minds to understand the Scriptures about Christ.

A longing for such understanding must be at the heart of Christian lives. We are never done. And so much of what we think we understand we come later to realize that we have barely begun to make our own.

So with the father of the boy possessed of a demon (Mk 9:24) whom Jesus drove out, we say, "I do believe, help my unbelief!"

(James Schellman is the executive director of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate.) †

Discussion Point

Scripture describes the Resurrection

This Week's Question

How do you believe in Christ's resurrection without being given physical proof?

"I believe in the teaching of the Church. That's No. 1. Also, I believe that the Bible is the inspired work of the Holy Spirit, and the teaching of the Church agrees with the Bible. ... There were people present at the time Christ was resurrected who told others." (Eleanor Willett, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio)

"[My belief comes] through the Eucharist, prayer, through [the understanding] the Holy Spirit has brought [to me], ... even through life itself. We have a time when we go through a period of death ..., experiences like job losses, marriage [ending in divorce], addictions and actual death. Hopefully, we survive to new life ... our resurrection. Even without direct proof, I go through that process and I have that faith." (Monte Hauserman, West Des Moines, Iowa)

"My belief in the Resurrection comes from that belief

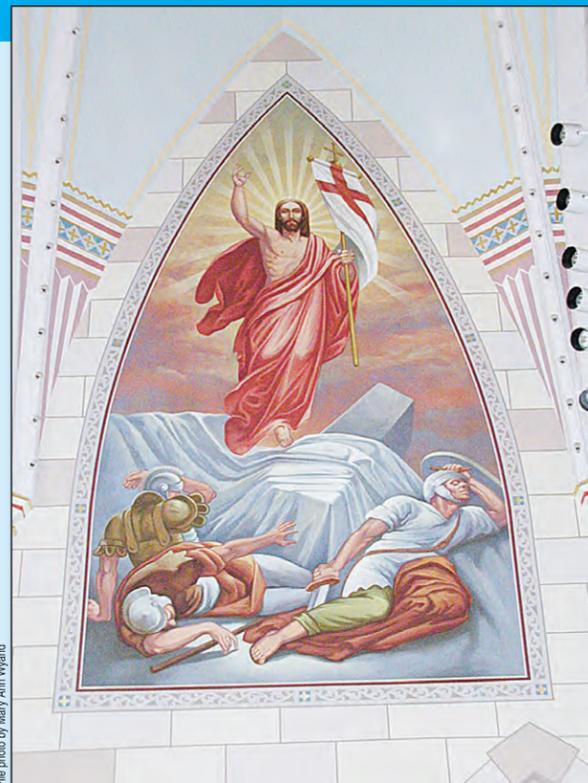
in Christ and the Church he started. It has had the same unchanging beliefs for 2,000 years, despite martyrdom, corruption and persecution. I can't believe people close to Jesus would have gone to their deaths unless [there was a resurrection]." (Cory Ruefer, Baraboo, Wis.)

"Meditation and prayer and feeling that connectedness to Jesus make me believe. Through prayer, I feel I gain more faith. It's something I carry within me in my heart. And even though it's hard to express, somewhere deep down I feel a certainty." (Simone Cooney, Oceanport, N.J.)

Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: Do you see the Church in Europe dying off? Will more Europeans return to the Church?

To respond for possible publication, send an e-mail to cgreene@catholicnews.com or write to *Faith Alive!* at 3211 Fourth St. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1100. †



File photo by Mary Ann Wyand

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Basic Catholicism: Belief in the Resurrection

(Ninth in a series of columns)

Catholics are convinced that the Resurrection is historical fact. Christianity, in fact, is based on that historical fact. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain" (1 Cor 15:17). It's easy to understand how people without faith can doubt the Resurrection. It just isn't within our modern sphere of experience. Well, it wasn't within the Apostles' sphere of experience either. Our belief in the Resurrection is helped by the fact that the Apostles doubted it. They didn't even believe the women who went to the tomb. It took Jesus' appearance to them before they believed.

People who don't believe that Jesus actually rose from the dead must think that the first Christians were awfully naïve to believe such a thing. Either that or

extremely clever to be able to concoct such a story, and then sell it not only to their fellow Jews, but also to Gentiles all over the world.

The fact that the Apostles refused to believe at first shows that they were not naïve. And Gospel accounts of the Apostles show that they were hardly the type of men who could plan and carry out a gigantic fraud.

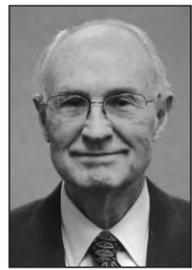
The news about Jesus' resurrection from the dead spread by word of mouth for decades before it was put down on paper. It was St. Paul who likely first did that in a letter he wrote in the year 56 from Ephesus, in modern Turkey, to the Christian community he started in Corinth, Greece. This was about 26 years after Jesus' resurrection, but still likely before any of the Gospels were written.

In that letter, Paul reminded his readers what he had preached: "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; that he appeared to Kephias [Peter], then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more

than 500 brothers at once, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. After that he appeared to James, then to the Apostles. Last of all, as to one born abnormally, he appeared to me" (1 Cor 15:3-8).

That is the basic teaching of Christianity about Christ's resurrection. Paul was quite insistent about it when he wrote to the Corinthians, saying that our very salvation depends upon the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. Christians are not given a choice in deciding whether or not to believe in the Resurrection.

Christians do not believe that Jesus was only resuscitated as he himself resuscitated Lazarus, the son of the widow of Nain and the daughter of Jairus. Jesus rose from the dead with a glorified body, one that could pass through the locked doors where the Apostles stayed, one that could appear to the disciples on the road to Emmaus and could just as quickly disappear. And yet it was Jesus' body, one that Thomas could touch when he was invited to examine Jesus' wounds. †



Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

Easter is the only hope for the human condition

The insignificance of the human creature was made more apparent to me recently when we received an e-mail video from a niece.



It was all about the vastness of the universe, described in a catchy song and pictures of cosmic distances and light years and galaxies. It really put me in my

place, namely hanging by a thread at the bottom of an intricate creation.

Of course, it reinforced my conviction that there is a God. But it also made me wonder why God would bother not only to make pitiful creatures like us, but also to love us unconditionally. Maybe it's just because for God all things are possible. Whatever the reason, I'm grateful. I love this human life.

But when we think about the history of time and the size and complexity of God's universe, we realize how limited we humans are. Our time on Earth is relatively short, and our skills do not extend to perfection. When we add in our faults and mistakes, we shrink even more. We gain dignity only through the scriptural assurance that God constantly

loves and forgives us, as though who we are at our worst and what sinful things we did had never happened.

We are indeed a sorry lot sometimes. We murder our own babies, who personify the only creative power we share with God. We rationalize private prejudices into world wars, ignore the poor because they make us uncomfortable, and generally defy laws of God and nature whenever it pleases us. Selfishness and greed mark our characters about as often as humility and kindness.

Specially at this time of year, we can't help but think about our place in the universe and its renewal. The tulips and daffodils are poking up, the breezes are warmer and the sun seems to shine more. We begin to hear the birds again and change winter clothing for summer clothes. We might even think about washing the windows or cleaning out the garage. Maybe.

At any rate, the inherent gift of this season is rebirth, renewal, refreshment and rededication to living a meaningful human life. The energizing we get from the natural scene, however, is merely an aid to the greater purpose because it is Easter that gives us the real motivation of hope.

Hope is built on trust. Children are so charming because they innocently believe in us adults, and always trust with certainty that we are the strongest, best and smartest people on Earth. Sadly, this is true even of abused kids.

Spouses, lovers and friends also must hope and trust in each other. Employers and employees need to be trustworthy in personal relations and with their customers. Even economic and political systems can be hopeful only when they're based on trust.

Nihilism, atheism and other similar ideas do nothing to produce hope in life. They are fatalistic, and eliminate the possibility of joy because they can allow no trust in anyone or anything "seen or unseen." They are death without the hope of resurrection and reunion with a loving God. This despite all the evidence around them of greater power and purpose.

It is hope in Christ's promise that lifts us above the human condition and sets us on the path to eternal glory, illustrated so dramatically in the universe. Happy Easter! Happy hope!

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

Our Turn/Therese J. Borchard

The disease of 'a thousand things to do'!

I'm the typical young adult—for two more years anyway. I have contracted an illness called "the disease of a thousand things to do."



That's how author Abby Seixas describes it in her insightful book *Finding the Deep River Within*.

It's a modern condition whereby human beings are always rushing, trying desperately to cross off every task on their to-do lists, and are bombarded by interruptions and information overload.

Does this sound familiar?

Consider these observations she makes to bolster her case of what has become a very unbalanced and frenetic culture:

- The average working couple in America spends 20 minutes a day together.
- Family time has become a goal, an achievement, rather than a natural consequence of being a family.

- Most Americans are trapped in a viscous cycle of overwork and over-consumption.

- Dropping in on a neighbor is practically nonexistent.

- Keeping busy and multitasking are praised, and slowing down frowned upon. My Lenten resolution was to adhere to six practices that Seixas offers as an antidote to this cultural epidemic of living so fast that we are blinded to the big picture, of having to multitask 24/7 and thereby squandering the opportunities to be present to the moment we are living. Here. Now.

Her practices include: taking time for yourself each week, erecting important personal and work boundaries, befriending feelings (especially those that you'd like to stuff), taming self-expectations, practicing presence and doing something you love.

In my life, this means starting my day with 20 minutes of prayer (when I read the *Lectionary* texts for the day and a meditation from a saint or spiritual writer); staying offline until noon and

keeping Sunday Internet work-free; and cramming an hour of personal time into each week where I get to do NOTHING but hear the dogs growl at the mailman.

I wanted these 40 days before Easter to be an exercise of jumping off the treadmill of my own packed schedules and expectations. I guess I wanted to stop living each day like a waitress taking orders, trying to remember all the special requests (skip the mayonnaise, skim milk only, coleslaw, no fries).

I was going after the results that Seixas promises if we are disciplined enough to slow down and take each minute at a time.

She writes, "Access to the deeper realms within us gives back to us our juice, our vital energy and resilience. ... We find a sense of connection to something larger than our own individual concerns, and a sense of meaning that makes what we do with our time feel worthwhile."

(Therese J. Borchard writes for Catholic News Service.) †

Twenty Something/
Christina Capecchi

No second thoughts: The Easter promise of a fresh start

Some days, life feels gray and predictable: moving in the same direction, making the same



turns, waiting at the same lights. Dirty dishes, unfolded laundry, nothing good on TV.

Some days, the notion of house swapping seems like just the ticket.

Which is why every day hundreds of people stuff messages in bottles and cast them into the

cyber sea, hoping their homes will appeal to others far away because of the hot tub, the gas stove, the nearby golf course ... or simply because of the novelty.

There's something for everyone on house-swapping sites like HomeExchange.com and Craigslis.org—whether you're trading for a weekend or a lifetime, moving in or out of the city, upsizing or downsizing, seeking sun or snow, pines or plains, East or West.

Some swaps are easy to understand. An Omaha, Neb., resident hopes for Honolulu, Charleston, W. Va., requests Istanbul, Turkey.

The incredible thing is that these desires go both ways. On one site, 1,328 Italians are looking to leave. Alfombra, Costa Rica, asks for Allentown, Pa. Alta Gracia, Argentina, yearns for Boston.

Other bids are broader, "open to all offers"—whoever e-mails first, any city they have never seen, any name they can't pronounce.

When you peak online, one picture will catch your eye and tickle your imagination as you take out the trash, teasing out some long-ago dream. Maybe you can write the Great American Novel under the Tuscan sun or take a cooking class in Paris or learn to salsa in Puerto Rico. Maybe you can get away, get a tan, get rich, get over him, get a life.

Maybe you can render the seemingly impossible possible with the swift click of a keystroke.

It's a heady antidote to an economy that can easily depress, instilling a sense of limitation, of blocked avenues and restricted paths.

The beauty of our Christian faith is that it offers us a fresh start every day. There is no such thing as a dead end for believers, no rut that can't be scaled, no sin that can't be forgiven. Every muddied slate can be wiped blank.

We can leave bad jobs, bad relationships and bad decisions far, far behind with the saving power of our risen Lord. We are Easter people; we believe in the ultimate triumph of life over death. Old made new. Sin turned into grace. Darkness shattered by light.

The Resurrection is not a one-time miracle. It's a lifestyle, something we can experience every day, an ongoing adventure.

This year, we remember St. Paul, the ultimate house swapper. He traded homes, names and religions. Friends and neighbors hardly recognized him. The man who had killed Christians was suddenly defending Christianity. He traveled through Asia Minor, sailed for Europe and preached in Philippi—a tireless Apostle, a changed man.

I love how Pope Benedict XVI chronicles this conversion. "Dazzled by the divine light on the road to Damascus," he wrote, "[Paul] did not hesitate to change sides to the Crucified One and followed him without second thoughts."

It sounds like a resolute house swapper: a swift click and no second thoughts. We are each called to follow Christ with that alacrity and authority, to be decisive disciples like St. Paul. "How timely his example is today!" the pope wrote.

No matter how dark your days or sinful your ways, don't despair. When you cling to Christ, you can make a swap.

(Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. Email her at christina@readchristina.com.) †

Feast of the Resurrection of the Lord/Easter/Msg. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 12, 2009

- Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37-43
- 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8
- John 20:1-9

A variety of biblical readings occur in the course of liturgical celebrations for Easter.

Nevertheless, all the readings center upon the event of the Resurrection itself.

These reflections refer to the liturgy for Masses during the day on Easter Sunday rather than the readings for the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday.

The first reading is from the Acts of the Apostles.

It will begin a pattern for the Easter Season. Throughout this season, the Church will draw from Acts its first Scriptural reading.

In this reading for Easter, Peter addresses a crowd. His sermon, one of several in the early chapters of Acts, summarized the Gospel message.

Jesus is Lord. John the Baptist foretold the coming of Jesus. Jesus was the gift and representative of God. Jesus died on Calvary for the sins of all humanity.

However, after dying on Calvary, Jesus rose and was seen by witnesses. The Lord commissioned the surviving Apostles to proclaim the Gospel as they went to places far and near.

The reading, while crisp and not too long, focuses attention upon the Lord and upon the basic message of the Christian Gospel. Jesus is the Savior. Jesus is God. His death redeemed the world since it showed perfect obedience to God. He rose from the dead.

All this was in space and time. Human witnesses actually saw the Risen Lord.

St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians provides the second reading.

It is short, but it is firm and insistent. Paul calls the Corinthian Christians to turn to Jesus. They are with the Lord. The Lord is with them. Such is the effect of the Incarnation, of the Redemption and of the personal decision to turn to God.

Death is everywhere. It is the universal

human experience. Jesus vanquishes death. Because of Jesus, we Christians also have defeated eternal death.

The Gospel of John furnishes the last reading.

Triumphantly, it reveals the excitement in which it was written as well as the sense that the Resurrection of Jesus was an event that was unique in earthly history, but ultimately it proclaims the Lord's victory over death and over sin.

Those disciples who were near to the Lord first experienced the meaning of the Resurrection. Mary Magdalene, forever faithful, actually discovered that the tomb was empty. She alerted Peter and the other Apostles to her discovery.

Peter and the Beloved Disciple hurried to see for themselves. The Beloved Disciple saw the empty tomb and remembered the Lord's prophecy of rising from the dead.

Reflection

This weekend, celebrating the Lord's Resurrection, the Church rejoices in the greatest triumph of Jesus over death and evil. He is risen!

The second reading from Paul's first letter to Corinth sets the stage. The Resurrection of Jesus has profound implications for each human being.

St. Paul was justifiably and totally taken with the realization that through the Incarnation—the fact that in the one person of Jesus the nature of God and human nature co-exist—we humans commune with God if we truly and willingly turn ourselves to God.

So the Church calls us to be joyful. United with Christ in the Incarnation, in our faith, we need not fear death. Death has been defeated. We can live eternally. The key to life eternal is in our will to love God.

We continue to meet God, drawing from God strength and courage, and we learn of God from the Church. The audience that heard Peter's sermon, repeated in Acts in the first reading, was typical of what we are. We are sinners.

Still, through Jesus, God touches us. Jesus revealed God most especially to the Apostles, of whom Peter was the chief. Peter spoke for them all. Through him, therefore, Christ spoke again.

Christ speaks still through the Apostles led by Peter. Christ lives! †

Daily Readings

Monday, April 13

Acts 2:14, 22-33
Psalm 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11
Matthew 28:8-15

Tuesday, April 14

Acts 2:36-41
Psalm 33:4-5, 18-20, 22
John 20:11-18

Wednesday, April 15

Acts 3:1-10
Psalm 105:1-4, 6-9
Luke 24:13-35

Thursday, April 16

Acts 3:11-26
Psalm 8:2a, 5-9
Luke 24:35-48

Friday, April 17

Acts 4:1-12
Psalm 118:1-2, 4, 22-27a
John 21:1-14

Saturday, April 18

Acts 4:13-21
Psalm 118:1, 14-15, 16ab-21
Mark 16:9-15

Sunday, April 19

Second Sunday of Easter
Divine Mercy Sunday
Acts 4:32-35
Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24
1 John 5:1-6
John 20:19-31



from the Acts of the Apostles.

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In this reading for Easter, Peter addresses a crowd. His sermon, one of several in the early chapters of Acts, summarized the Gospel message.

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Triumphantly, it reveals the excitement in which it was written as well as the sense that the Resurrection of Jesus was an event that was unique in earthly history, but ultimately it proclaims the Lord's victory over death and over sin.

Those disciples who were near to the Lord first experienced the meaning of the Resurrection. Mary Magdalene, forever faithful, actually discovered that the tomb was empty. She alerted Peter and the other Apostles to her discovery.

Peter and the Beloved Disciple hurried to see for themselves. The Beloved Disciple saw the empty tomb and remembered the Lord's prophecy of rising from the dead.

Reflection

This weekend, celebrating the Lord's Resurrection, the Church rejoices in the greatest triumph of Jesus over death and evil. He is risen!

The second reading from Paul's first letter to Corinth sets the stage. The Resurrection of Jesus has profound implications for each human being.

St. Paul was justifiably and totally taken with the realization that through the Incarnation—the fact that in the one person of Jesus the nature of God and human nature co-exist—we humans commune with God if we truly and willingly turn ourselves to God.

So the Church calls us to be joyful. United with Christ in the Incarnation, in our faith, we need not fear death. Death has been defeated. We can live eternally. The key to life eternal is in our will to love God.

We continue to meet God, drawing from God strength and courage, and we learn of God from the Church. The audience that heard Peter's sermon, repeated in Acts in the first reading, was typical of what we are. We are sinners.

Still, through Jesus, God touches us. Jesus revealed God most especially to the Apostles, of whom Peter was the chief. Peter spoke for them all. Through him, therefore, Christ spoke again.

Christ speaks still through the Apostles led by Peter. Christ lives! †

Question Corner/Fr. John Dietzen

'Irreformable' papal statements reflect authority of the Church

QIn a conversation about changes in the Church during the past 50 years,



someone remarked that many of these changes involved teachings that some pope, or maybe more than one pope, had said was "irreformable."

We're confused. How can something one pope says is permanent be changed by another pope? (New York)

AOne must understand what the word "irreformable" means in Church documents. Its wide use developed in relatively modern times in response to something that was happening in the secular world.

During approximately nine centuries, particularly in what is often called the Christian Europe of the second millennium, popes were commonly considered, even by themselves, as supreme over all other countries and governments.

Anyone who knows history is aware that this claim of supremacy rarely matched what was really happening, but it was there at least in theory.

Later on, this perception of who had what power changed dramatically, especially under the influence of such movements as the Enlightenment and the French Revolution in the late 1700s.

Political decisions of states and nations began to be seen as actions of the people of that region, which could not be changed even by the pope. Such actions were called "irreformable."

For these and other reasons, the influence of the Church, the papacy, even in religious matters, weakened enormously.

In their desire for greater religious "security" and independence similar to that in civil society, Christian—and particularly Catholic—people and leaders looked for ways to assure something similar to this civil authority for the Church.

It was in this light that popes characterized their decisions and statements as "irreformable." This meant only that no other authority outside the Church was competent to change them. It did not mean that future popes or councils or other responsible authorities in the Church could not change policies and practices, and even adapt and reformulate statements of faith in light of later circumstances and cultures.

This very concept explains, incidentally, much of the movement for the definition of

papal infallibility during Vatican Council I in 1870. It also clarifies what that council meant by describing the Church as a "perfect society."

They did not mean to claim that the Church is perfectly holy or, for that matter, perfect in any other way. It simply intended to proclaim that the Church was competent and autonomous in its own area of religious matters, and in appropriate ways in other concerns connected with religion in civil society.

QI was baptized Catholic and still consider myself Catholic. After numerous infidelities and mental abuse, I divorced my husband, whom I had married in the Catholic Church.

I was remarried by a judge to a good man, who is also Catholic. We've been going to Mass together.

My present husband's ex-wife recently obtained an annulment and is remarried in the Church.

What is his status now? What is mine? Am I excommunicated? (Illinois)

AA declaration of annulment in either Church or civil law means that for some reason no valid marriage ever existed between those two people. So your present husband is as free to remarry in the Catholic Church as she is.

You are not excommunicated. Please talk with a Catholic priest about your first marriage and ask for his help.

It's too bad that you didn't do this earlier so whatever process is needed could have taken place while the other annulment was under study.

For your own peace of mind, I hope you will follow my suggestion right away. †

My Journey to God

Surrender

Dear Lord, the load is so heavy
And I have lost my way.
I stumble through the dark valley,
I find it hard to pray.

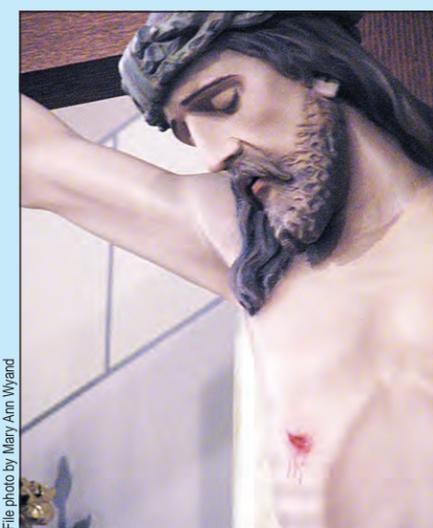
Unending pain engulfs me
Like an ever-swirling river.
Is there no surcease from this suffering?
Must I go on like this forever?

I grow weary trying day by day
To cope with growing despair
That hovers over me like a dark cloud
And banishes hope out there.

So many times I've asked you, Lord,
To listen to my plea:
I find it hard to carry on.
Please take this cross from me.

You who control the galaxies,
And set the moon and stars in place,
I know it is within your power
To heal me by your grace.

But remembering how you suffered
On the road to Calvary,
And hung on that bitter cross



To save someone like me,

From the depths, I now surrender
My life to your loving care.
Not my will, but Thine be done
In answer to my prayer.

By **Hilda L. Buck**

(Hilda L. Buck is a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg. She wrote this poem for "a family member who has been suffering from what seems to be an incurable medical problem.")

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the "My Journey to God" column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to "My Journey to God," The Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org. †

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 and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

ADAMS, George Washington, Jr., 64, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis, March 6. Husband of Lillie Marie Adams. Father of Ratonia Carpenter, Giovanna Fuller, Andrea Murphy, Corree Perrin, Lamia and George Adams III. Brother of Emma Anderson, Brenda Hall, Tiffany Hughes, Mary Thomas, Carrie Lee, Georgette, David, Dennis, Eddie, Jeffery, Herbert and Robert Adams and Wayne Carter. Grandfather of 14.

CRASK, Matthew J., 31, St. Peter, Harrison County, March 12. Father of Hayden and Hayley Crask. Son of Joseph and Teresa Crask. Brother of Michelle Kamber and Michael Crask. Grandson of Marie Morgenroth.

DOOLEY, Brenda, 64, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, March 25. Wife of Jerry Dooley. Sister of Ann McFarland and Danny Agee.

DWYER, Robert E., Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, March 21. Father of Judith Doran and Dennis Dwyer. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of 11. Great-great-grandfather of one.

GEBHART, Michael James, 54, St. Bernadette, Indianapolis, March 19. Brother of Karen Blacketer, Martha Gebhart, Carol Prater and Mary Stanger.

HUNTER, Dr. Walter R., 55, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis, March 20. Son of Ruth Hunter. Brother of Susan Rider and Richard Hunter.

MILLER, Lawrence E., 82, St. Louis, Batesville, March 26. Husband of Marcella Miller. Father of Pam Nordmeyer, Scott and Tom Miller. Brother of Arthur Jr., Bruce and Earl Miller. Grandfather of five.

REED, Helen, 86, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 20. Mother of Ann Martin, Sue Peoni and Jane Smith. Grandmother of five.

SALITROS, Leona, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, March 20. Mother of Mary McGinley. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of five.

STAMMERMAN, Mary Magdalene, 69, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Indianapolis, March 24. Wife of Patrick Stammerman. Mother of Marlene, Renee and Joseph Stammerman.

TUCKER, Diana M. (Burch), 52, St. Gabriel, Connersville, March 28. Mother of Anitra Tucker. Daughter of Virginia Burch. Sister of Jeff, Joe and John Burch II.

WILLIAMS, Raymund E., 79, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, March 27. Husband of Patricia Williams. Father of Kathryn Aebly, Karen Black, Keith and Kenneth Williams. Grandfather of 19. Great-grandfather of two. †

Ohio man's miraculous recovery follows gift of rosary blessed by Pope John Paul II

CLEVELAND (CNS)—Some people in Cleveland were connecting a 26-year-old local man's recovery from a gunshot wound to the head that doctors said should have killed him to a rosary blessed by Pope John Paul II that the man received from a hospital chaplain.



Pope John Paul II

People described the recovery of Jory Aebly, who was shot execution-style during a mugging on Feb. 21, as a miracle and were speculating that his case could help the sainthood cause of the late pope.

Neither the Cleveland Diocese nor Vatican officials have commented on the case.

Aebly and a co-worker, Jeremy Pechanec, 28, were both shot in the head in an apparent robbery when they were heading home after an evening out with friends in downtown Cleveland. Pechanec did not survive his injuries.

After the shooting, Aebly was taken to MetroHealth Medical Center, where doctors expected him to die. His family was told that he had suffered "a non-survivable injury," according to the hospital Web site.

Father Arthur Snedeker, a Cleveland diocesan priest who is a chaplain at the hospital, gave Aebly the last rites of the Church.

At a press conference on March 30, the day that Aebly was released from the hospital, the priest told reporters that he had prayed to Pope John Paul "to pray for Jory and to protect him."

Father Snedeker said he gave the young man the last of a dozen rosaries that the pope had blessed years before for the priest to give to patients.

"I stand before you today and can say, to my mind, Jory is a miracle," the priest told reporters.

Aebly, appearing at the press conference with the priest, attributed his recovery to prayers from family members, friends, co-workers and people he has never met who heard about his head injury.

His neurosurgeon, Dr. Robert Geertman, has called his patient's recovery "one in a million."

"I'd say it's pretty miraculous," the surgeon added. The hospital Web site said that, although he suffered from severe headaches, Aebly completed daily sessions in physical, speech and occupational therapy, and within his first week of recovery he could walk with the aid of a walker and supervision.

At the press conference, Aebly stood to speak at the microphone.

According to the hospital, Aebly will continue his rehabilitation at home and hopes to return soon to his job in the microbiology laboratory at the Cleveland Clinic.

Aebly's case has fueled speculation that it might be looked at by the Vatican as a possible miracle that could be credited to Pope John Paul's intercession.

But currently a presumed miracle through the intercession of the late pope—involving a French nun said to have been cured of Parkinson's disease—is being studied in a five-step process in Rome that involves medical experts, a medical board, theological consultants, the members of the Congregation for Saints' Causes and Pope Benedict XVI.

The initial diocesan phase of Pope John Paul's cause was completed in April 2007. Last November, a team of theological consultants to the congregation began studying the 2,000-page "positio," the document that makes the case for his life of heroic virtue, according to Archbishop Angelo Amato, head of the congregation.

The sainthood process generally requires two miracles occurring through the intercession of the candidate, one for beatification and one for canonization. †

Providence Sister Marie Ellen Sullivan was a teacher and principal

Providence Sister Marie Ellen Sullivan died on March 29 at Mother Theodore Hall at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 82.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on April 3 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

The former Marjorie Joan Sullivan was born on Aug. 21, 1926, in Chicago.

She entered the congregation of the Sisters of Providence on Feb. 2, 1945, and professed first vows on Aug. 15, 1947, and final vows on Aug. 15, 1952.

Sister Marie Ellen earned a bachelor's degree at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College and master's degrees at Indiana State University in Terre Haute and Loyola University in Chicago.

During 64 years as a Sister of Providence, Sister Marie Ellen ministered as a teacher for 40 years at Catholic schools in Indiana, Illinois, Maryland and Washington, D.C. For 16 years, she served as a principal.

In the archdiocese, Sister Marie Ellen taught at St. Philip Neri School in Indianapolis from 1947-50 and served as the principal of Our Lady of Providence High School in Clarksville from 1967-71.

In 1988, Sister Marie Ellen retired from teaching then served 15 years as a pastoral associate at a parish in Chicago. In 2004, she returned to the motherhouse and served full-time in the ministry of prayer. Surviving is a sister, Marian Kroes of Kenosha, Wis. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. †

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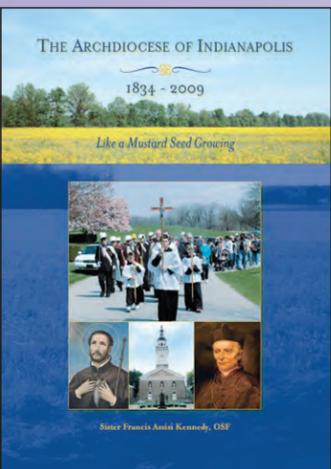
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