Discovering a greater truth

By Sean Gallagher

A person’s teenage and young adult years can be the most crucial of his or her life. During this time, young men and women confront questions that have lifelong implications. What should I major in? What career is more important to me? Earning a lot of money? Earning less but finding fulfillment and peace of heart? Other questions that have eternal consequences loom even larger, but are sometimes not given as much attention. What vocation is God calling me to? Am I going to have a mature relationship at all? Sometimes not given as much attention.

Dominican Father Robert Keller, pastor of the St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, baptizes Hillary Brooks, a senior at Indiana University in Bloomington, during the parish’s Easter Vigil on April 11.

Relationships bring youths, young adults into the Church

By Sean Gallagher

Hillary Brooks is a senior at Indiana University in Bloomington and is majoring in Germanic studies. She was baptized during the Easter Vigil celebrated at the St. Paul Catholic Center on campus. Although she grew up an hour north in a tiny village on the shore of Lake Michigan, taking her to Germany and Italy.

As their friendship grew, the Italians invited Brooks to short prayers before lunch, to Mass and eventually to a Communion and Liberation conference in Rimini, Italy, that drew 7,000 people. “A journey that will never end”

175th anniversary Mass to be celebrated on May 3

By Sean Gallagher

The genuine and deep way that her faith with God or is that not really important? Does God even exist? Father Rick Nagel, archdiocesan director of young adult ministry, said teenagers and young adults often explore these questions and come closer to God and the Church through relationships.

“It’s all about relationships,” he said. “They’ll attend a Mass or they’ll see another young adult living out their Catholic faith and sense that there’s a greater truth there that they desire.”

A teenager and two young adults made such a discovery over the past year, and chose to be baptized in parishes across the archdiocese during the Easter Vigil on April 11.

“A journey that will never end”

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Mary Ann Glendon

WASHTON (CNS)—Citing concerns about plans to honor President Barack Obama despite his views on “fundamental principles of justice” that are contrary to Catholic teaching, former U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican Mary Ann Glendon has turned down the prestigious Laetare Medal from the University of Notre Dame.

In an April 27 letter to Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins, Notre Dame’s president, Glendon said she will not participate in May 17 commencement exercises during which the award was to have been presented. The letter, posted on the blog of the magazine First Things, does not mention specific justice principles, but Glendon was critical of Notre Dame’s decision to give Obama an honorary degree.

Obama supports legal abortion and his administration recently proposed new regulations that would allow the use of federal funds for embryonic stem-cell research. Both are in direct conflict with fundamental Church teaching.

The Laetare Medal is presented annually to an American Catholic layperson for outstanding service to the Catholic Church and society.

A spokeswoman for the Indiana university confirmed on April 27 that Glendon, who served as ambassador from 2007 until earlier this year, was the first person to accept and then later decline the award.

Father Jenkins offered a two-sentence response on the university’s Web site. “We are, of course, disappointed that Professor Glendon has made this decision,” his statement said. “It is our intention to award the Laetare Medal to another deserving recipient, and we will make the announcement as soon as possible.”

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friends and the people at the conference approached their faith impressed Brooks. “When you were on the bus going to the convention center for the lectures, they asked you to remain silent,” she said. “It was an outward sign that we respected the work that we were going to do.”

They were also quiet during the lectures, presentations and liturgies—a marked change from the Pentecostal events she would go to as a youth. “If you’ve ever seen 7,000 Italian people being brought together, it’s pretty impressive.” After the conference, Brooks began to consider what God might be calling her to through these friendships.

“It wasn’t just about making friends with these people and practicing my German,” she said. “It was something that was relevant to my life.”

When she returned home for her senior year, Brooks entered St. Paul’s R.C.IA. Christ, which was evident.

Erica Guerini of Milan.

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St. Paul’s who had a commitment to their Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A) even though she knew few Catholics at 10 and was an ocean away from the friends who had led her to the Church.

But she found a group of people at St. Paul’s who had a commitment to their faith that was similar to her Italian friends. “With some of the parishioners and priests that I’ve gotten to know, you feel that it’s just completely clear that these people … are completely dedicated to their faith,” Brooks said. “For people. living without their faith in God and living without the Church … is not an option, because then they would not be living their lives to the fullest.”

Though they live thousands of miles away, Brooks lived at the Easter Vigil any three of her Italian friends, including Erica Guerini of M ian.

When asked about her role in bringing Brooks to embrace the faith, Guerini was reluctant to take credit, but the importance of relationships was evident.

“I actually didn’t do anything special,” Guerini said. “I just spent time with a girl I met in Germany that I was able to get to tell her who we were—because it was essential to us—that she could make the same commitment to the faith that they had already made.

“The baptism will be the beginning, it’s just the gateway,” Brooks said. “It’s a journey that will never end.”

“I felt like I was a part of everything. Relationships are real. Laura A. Scheibler was to be baptized during the Easter Vigil at St. Michael Parish’s in Bradford.

A 18-year-old senior from North Harrison High School in southern Indiana, Laura Scheibler had this surgery done twice on both knees.

Injury while playing basketball. She ended up having her anterior cruciate ligaments reconstructed in one knee. All told, she had this surgery done twice on both knees.

“She seems like this time around it’s been easier on me to handle it,” Laura said. “I expected it to be different because it was the fourth thing I had to do … The people I’ve met have definitely helped them. They’re all encouraging and very nice people.

The human relationships she has made and her physical trials along her journey of faith have led Laura to deepen her relationship of prayer with Christ.

But before she started going to R.C.I.A. and to church, I pray whenever I thought about it. It’s all I had. At the Easter Vigil, there was a severe knee injury while playing basketball. She ended up having her anterior cruciate ligaments reconstructed in one knee. All told, she had this surgery done twice on both knees.

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At the Easter Vigil at the parish, Laura was baptised, confirmed and received his First Communion he not only felt his connection to his wife, Natalie. Natalie and Travis Scheibler on April 11 in the parish’s church after the celebration of the Easter Vigil.

The pair, both 26, married in 2007 and are members of St. Teresa Benedecta of the Cross Parish in Bright in the Batesville Deanery. Travis was baptised, confirmed and received his first Holy Communion at the Easter Vigil there on a Saturday.

As a Travis progressed through the parish’s R.C.I.A., he not only felt his bond with Natalie strengthened, but his relationship with God blossomed as well.

“Learning to have a relationship with God is the main change that I’ve seen in me,” he said. “The more that I’ve learned about the faith and the more that I’ve become a part of the Church, the more I’ve learned about how to pray.

‘I just kind of feel that presence. He’s there all of the time.’

A few days after the Easter Vigil, Travis said he still has “a feeling of peace over the top of him.” He also has a new and deeper appreciation for his wife, Natalie.

“Having her come into my life was the way [that God] touched me.”

On life issue, Cardinal George says Obama on ‘wrong side of history’

KENNER, La. (CNS)—President Barack Obama is a “very gracious and obviously a very smart man,” but he is on the “wrong side of history” when it comes to his fervent support of abortion rights, Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George said during the 2009 Louisiana Priests Convention on April 21.

Cardinal George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, noted that, while he wants Obama to succeed in his term, the president’s support of abortion rights, Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George said during the 2009 Louisiana Priests Convention on April 21.

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One by one, they walked onto the stage to receive their awards—five people who are examples of “how to live the good life” for Catholic college graduates. The oldest—the 86-year-old Robert Sullivan—knows the personal fulfillment that comes from running a successful business, and sharing a family’s success with schools, parishes and Catholic agencies that reach out to people who need help.

The youngest—21-year-old Jenna Knapp—lives the good life by trying to make a difference to children in need. The other six—31-year-old Miriam Ferguson, 34-year-old Lynne O’Day, 36-year-old Pat Sullivan, 42-year-old Patty Schmalz—and 53-year-old3 Mary Bethuram—made each give seminars on how to grow rich in life by sharing your talents and giving away your love.

By John Shaughnessy

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AIDS and condoms

Can it be true that the distribution of condoms only makes the problem of AIDS worse? That is what Pope Benedict XVI said during a press conference while flying to Africa in March. A number of questions from reporters were submitted to him in advance and he chose to answer one concerning the AIDS epidemic in Africa. He said that the Church can help bring answers to the AIDS problem, but then he said: “One cannot overcome the problem with the distribution of condoms. On the contrary, they increase the problem.”

Not surprisingly, the secular media ridiculed his statement. How could the distribution of condoms possibly increase the problem? Didn’t he know that condoms are the solution to the problem of AIDS?

That has been the conventional wisdom. The reason is that condoms, when used properly, greatly decrease the transmission of HIV. That is why AIDS prevention programs have always included their distribution. In 1995, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) together estimated that 10 billion condoms would be necessary to make a dent in the spread of AIDS in Africa. It was written by Green, a senior research scientist at Harvard University’s School of Public Health, who has studied AIDS prevention in developing countries. Green took the mainstream media to task for its criticism of Pope Benedict and noted that several studies published recently in several major scientific journals confirmed the pontiff’s statement.

In his column, Green made it clear that he is not “anti-condom” in general, but does not support them as the primary way to fight AIDS in Africa. This fact actually should lend greater weight in society at large to the pope’s argument since Green is agreeing with the pope on scientific grounds alone.

In making his argument, Green noted a successful AIDS prevention program in Uganda, Kenya’s southern neighbor. Its president, Yoweri Museveni, has long championed sexual abstinence as the best way to conquer AIDS. He has accused the United States of promoting the use of condoms in Africa “for selfish reasons.”

Uganda has done better than any other country in Africa in slowing down the rate of HIV infections.

One of the reasons that Pope Benedict chose to speak about AIDS during that press conference on the plane is because the Catholic Church has made real progress in helping to fight AIDS, especially by encouraging the use of anti-retroviral drugs and encouraging sexual abstinence for young people.

It works. The Economist reported in its June 3, 2006, issue that figures from UNAIDS show that the proportion of people having sex before they reached the age of 15 had dropped in eight of the 11 African countries studied — parts of Africa where prevention methods hadn’t worked before.

“Today it’s softly in the halls of activism,” the article stated, “but abstinence before marriage and fidelity within it may actually be working.” —John F. Fink
La fe humilde necesita el sustento y la fortaleza de la oración

**Humble faith needs the nourishment and fortification of prayer**

Ftend a last-minute invitation to our 170th jubilee celebration at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis this coming Sunday at 3 p.m.

It will be a grand celebration of God's blessings on our local Church over many years.

As we enter the month of May dedicated to Our Blessed Mother, I am reminded that our founding missionary bishop, the Servant of God Simon Bruté, had a special devotion to Our Blessed Mother Mary.

He had wanted to consecrate a bishop on the feast of the Holy Rosary in October of 1834, but it couldn't be worked out.

Our Jubilee is a good time to refresh our devotion to Our Mother Mary. We don't worship Mary, but we do venerate her as our other Mother.

I often think about a pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Poland a few years ago. It is the third most-visited Marian shrine in Europe.

On that visit, I had the privilege of celebrating Mass before the treasured icon of Our Lady. Two things stuck me at this shrine.

First was the fact that the face of Our Lady is scarred from being attacked with a sword by an enemy of the Church. Because of that incident, the sacred icon is protected behind a decorative silver screen except for certain hours of the day.

Before our Mass, the screen was raised with musical fanfare. It was riveting to see, encased next to the sacred icon, the spot where Pope John Paul II was wearing when he was shot in St. Peter's Square by his would-be assassin.

And there are visible bullet holes.

It is as though the image of Our Lady and the sash of Pope John Paul II are, in effect, a catechesis telling us the cost of living the message of the Gospel of love.

While I was celebrating Mass and while I was preaching, off to my left pilgrims were approaching the sanctuary on their knees. Elderly people, young adults and children were shuffling on their knees.

Some had come from a great distance.

In the shrine, there were long lines of people waiting to go to confession. Some years ago, I had witnessed the same devotion at the sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico.

At first, I was distracted and tempted to think that I wish they would wait until the end of Mass. Then I thought, no, these devout folk are also a witness to us and call us to strengthen our faith.

Clearly, the pilgrims that I observed are humble people of deep faith and hope. They were approaching the holy Mother of Jesus Christ, whose own humility went as far as the Cross. These folk have a sense of what is true.

There is still a wonderful sense of the sacred in the Catholic culture of the people in Poland and in Mexico. But we would be mistaken to dismiss this sense of humble faith as something that is unique to the Polish and Mexican culture and not applicable to ours.

A humble faith and a deep reverence for sacred mystery and for the Mother of God is not a matter of national reclamation.

Depth of faith in divine Providence and the place of the Mother of God is a good point for our reflection at this jubilee time. With God and through Mary Our Mother's intercession, all things are possible.

There is something else about this lesson in faith. Where did the late Holy Father get such faith that would support him when there was an attempt on his life? I think of his telling that one night when he woke up he saw his father kneeling beside praying. He never forgot that witness of his father.

Humble faith needs the nourishment and the fortification of prayer. If we do not live close enough to Jesus and His Mother, we can lose the strength of our faith. Unless we keep close contact with God by prayer, we lose that living power of faith that can make great things happen.

Secondly, we lose humility. What we should see and do for the glory of God we forget. I encourage us to seek the truth of our humanity on our knees before Christ and His Holy Mother.

Our ancestors who followed Bishop Bruté to the territory that became the state of Indiana were courageous pioneers of our Catholic faith and, not surprisingly, like our founding bishop, they brought with them a devotion to the Blessed Mother.

In 1846, St. Theodora Guérin established the Sisters of Providence at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and, through the influence of her teaching sisters, a special devotion to Mary was infused in the Diocese of Vincennes and beyond.

Our Lady of Providence, pray for us.

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

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

**Compete the line below as an example:**

**Seminaristas:** Que ellos sean fieles a la oración y estudien, y continúen en su deseo de servir a Dios y la Iglesia como sacerdotes!

**Our ancestors who followed Bishop Bruté to the territory that became the state of Indiana were courageous pioneers of our Catholic faith and, not surprisingly, like our founding bishop, they brought with them a devotion to the Blessed Mother.**

**Humble faith needs the nourishment and fortification of prayer.**

**La fe humilde necesita el sustento y la fortaleza de la oración**

Quiere extenderles una invitación de última hora a la celebración de nuestro aniversario número 175 en el estadio Lucas Oil en Indianapolis, el próximo domingo.

Será una celebración por todo el año de las bendiciones de Dios en nuestra Iglesia Local a lo largo de todos esos años. A medida que nos adentramos en el mes de mayo, dedicado a nuestra Santa Madre, me viene a la memoria que nuestro fundador, el Obispo Simón Bruté, sentía una devoción especial hacia nuestra Santa Madre María.

Habrá que querer que se le consagre como obispo durante la Festividad del Santo Rosario, en octubre de 1834, pero no pudieron hacerlo los arreglos pertinentes.

Nuestro aniversario resulta una ocasión oportuna para renovar nuestra devoción a la Madre María. No adoramos a María sino que la veneramos como nuestra Madre. A menudo recuerdo una peregrinación al Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Czestochowa, en Polonia, hace algunos años. Se trata del tercer santuario mariano más visitado.

En 1846, San Theodora Guérin fundó las Hermanas de la Providencia en Santa María de los Bosques y, mediante la influencia de sus hermanas destacadas, se inició una devoción especial a María en la Diócesis de Vincennes y sus alrededores.

Nuestra Señora de la Providencia, ruega por nosotros.

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Nuestros amigos que siguieron al Obispo Bruté al territorio que luego se convirtió en el estado de Indiana, fueron pioneros valientes de nuestra fe católica y, no es de sorprender que, al igual que nuestro obispo fundador, trajeron con ellos la devoción a la Santa María.

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**La fe humilde necesita el sustento y la fortaleza de la oración.**

Si no vivimos lo suficientemente cerca de Jesús y de su Madre, nuestra fe puede debilitarse. A menos que mantengamos una estrecha comunicación con Dios mediante la oración, perdemos ese poder vivo de la fe que puede hacer que sucedan grandes cosas.

**La fe humilde necesita el sustento y la fortaleza de la oración.**

**El humilde de Dios se transforma en un verdadero gran santo.**

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**Archbishop/Arzobispo DANIEL M. BUECHLEIN, O.S.B.**

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May 1
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. Lumen Dei meeting. Mass, 6:30 a.m. Mass, broadcast and program at Prior Hall, Will McCallum, executive director of Indiana Coalition A.C.T. to Suppress Executions (INCASE), presenter, 20 percent per person. Information: 317-919-5316 or LumenDei@sacredheart.org.

May 2
St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Washington St., Oldenburg. Mass for Vocations, 6:30 p.m. Information: 317-376-1490 or cmitchell@archindy.org.

May 3
St. Francis Hospital, 811 S. Emerson Ave., Indianapolis. Couple to Couple League, Natural Family Planning class (NFP), 7:9 p.m. Information: 317-462-2246.

May 4
St. Francis Hospital, Cancer Center, 1201 Hadley Road, Mooresville. “A look, Food, Feel Better,” free workshop for women battling cancer, noon-2 p.m. Information: 317-728-4422.

May 5
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. M eat planning, “What’s for Dinner?” Erin K Em of R Bistro, presenter, 6:30-9:30 p.m. $25 includes dinner. Information: 317-788-7581 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

May 6

May 7

May 8
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Michaela Farm, Oldenburg. Fifth annual Women’s Conference, “A Day for Women,” Franciscan Sister Olga Wittke, keynote speaker, 9 a.m. 3:30 p.m. $25 pre-registration, $30 at the door. Information: 812-937-2727.

May 9

May 10
Cathedral High School, 5255 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. One-woman show, “The Life of St. Catherine of Siena,” 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-968-7352.

May 11
St. Roch Parish, Family Center, 3603 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Single Seniors, 10 a.m and over, meeting. Information: 317-784-4201.

May 12
Northside Knights of Columbus Hall, 2100 E. 17th St., Indianapolis. Catholic High School, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., $25 per person includes continental breakfast and lunch. Information: 317-826-1139. 

May 13

May 14

May 15

May 16

May 17

May 18-17

May 19

May 20
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Michaela Farm, Oldenburg. Fifth annual Women’s Conference, “A Day for Women,” Franciscan Sister Olga Wittke, keynote speaker, 9 a.m. 3:30 p.m. $25 pre-registration, $30 at the door. Information: 812-937-2727.

May 21

May 22-24

May 25
Oldenburgh Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “You Remember First Fridays” Franciscan Father Carl Haver, presenter, 1:3 p.m. Information: 812-933-6437.

May 26

May 27
St. Mary Parish, 317 N. New St. James R. and Jeanne A. (Huesing) Foundation, 3551. †

May 28

May 29

May 30
Cathedral High School, 5255 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. One-woman show, “The Life of St. Catherine of Siena,” 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-968-7352.

May 31
St. Roch Parish, Family Center, 3603 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Single Seniors, 10 a.m and over, meeting. Information: 317-784-4201.

Earth Day
Students at the Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception in Oldenburg celebrated Earth Day on April 22 by planting two flowering crabapple trees. One tree honored the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis based in Oldenburg, which sponsors the academy. The second tree honored academy alumni serving in the armed forces. Posing with one of the trees are, from left, Franciscan Sister Peg Roher and academy student J ele Martin, Michael) J ohston, Benjamin Newton and Patrick Sanders, all officers of the school’s student council.

Schoenstatt movement is active in archdiocese

Schoenstatt is a Catholic lay movement founded in 1934 in Germany, at a shrine near Koblenz, by Father Joseph Kenterich. The movement’s “Covenant Sunday” is celebrated there on the third Sunday of June.

Schoenstatt is one of only 22 artists to hold the title. 

VIPS
J. James R. and J ane A. (Huesing) Huser, members of Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 3600 W. 36th St., Indianapolis. J ames R. and J ane A. (Huesing) Foundation, 3551. †

May 2
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “You Remember First Fridays” Franciscan Father Carl Haver, presenter, 1:3 p.m. Information: 812-933-6437.

May 3

May 26
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TheCriterion Friday, May 1, 2009

The Indiana Catholic Conference’s (ICC) new online legislative action center is a raising success thanks to the Church’s efforts under General Assembly head back to their Catholic network.”

“More people subscribing to our electronic tool but, frankly, we really weren’t sure who received communication from the ICC opened the communication.

Thompson said that the system provides assurance that the message is received by the networker’s legislator, which they can edit, which

The use of this software by Catholics this year made a significant impact influencing lawmakers on two issues, the scholarship tax credit and the physicians admitting privileges requirement for abortion doctors.”

—Glenn Tebbe

Since the ICC launched its new software in January, nearly 2,000 Catholics contacted their state or federal lawmakers using the online tool, but many may have called or written letters using the available information.

More than 1,250 people were alerted, more than 1,500 people opened the alert either via e-mail or on the ICC Web page, and 420 people contacted their federal representatives on the issue using the online tool.

On the scholarship tax credit state alert, more than 1,250 people were alerted, more than 1,300 contacted lawmakers by e-mail and in turn contacted others, of course, taking much more than 30 seconds.

And, once a person follows the link, they’re provided with an e-mail message to their legislator, which they can edit, which from our report looks like many of them do this.”

Thompson said he wanted to encourage those who have become involved in the legislative process to “stay tuned.”

The Indiana General Assembly has adjourned, but lawmakers and government officials will continue to conduct business, look at ways to improve the state, and further investigate problems and policies through interim study panels.

The interim provides time for information gathering and analysis of complex issues leading up to the 2010 session, and the ICC will continue to send out periodic updates on important developments,” Tebbe said. “On the federal level, the Obama administration is moving quickly on numerous issues and there will be periodic federal action alerts.

For those who have not yet had a chance to visit our Web page, or who like to become part of the Catholic Action Network, there’s no time like the present. Please stop by our Web page. We are only a few clicks away.”

To explore the ICC’s online public policy tool and join the ICC network, go to the ICC Web page at www.indianacc.org and click on “Legislative Action Center.”

Since 1967, the ICC has worked to bring a consistent life ethic to Hoosier public policy making.

Brigid Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion. To learn more about the Indiana Catholic Conference, log on to www.indianacc.org Maybe
By Sean Gallagher

Catholics of Italian descent have called Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis their spiritual home since it was established in 1909.

A century ago, many Italians were moving from their homelands, where Catholics were ubiquitous, to places in the United States like Indianapolis, where they were a distinct minority.

This made parishes like Holy Rosary all the more important since they served as an anchor for newcomers to a country that seemed so different from their native place so far away.

A hundred years later, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those first Italian immigrants have fully integrated into American society. In the past generation, many moved away from their neighborhood parish on the near south side of Indianapolis.

But the Italian heritage of Holy Rosary Parish remains vital, both in the hearts of the descendants of the founders who remain and who regularly return, and in the many newcomers the parish has welcomed in recent decades.

That heritage will be displayed when the parish’s current members gather in its recently restored church at 4:30 p.m. on May 9 for its centennial Mass.

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein will be the main celebrant. A banquet will follow at Primo South Banquet and Conference Center, 6155 E. National Ave., in Indianapolis.

Vincent Gatto, 81, is the grandson of Rosario Gatto, a founding member of the parish. He has lived behind the church his entire life and plans on attending the centennial Mass.

“It will be wonderful,” Gatto said. “I’m almost 100 years old so I’m close to it. … [The parish] is my whole life. I depend upon it. My religion is Holy Rosary.”

Mgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general and Holy Rosary’s pastor for nearly 11 years, is also looking forward to the celebration.

“In the past 10 years, the parish has more than tripled in size. Sunday support and vitality all the way around,” he said. “We have much to celebrate. We need to honor those original members and those who came after them—they kept the parish and its traditions alive through thick and thin.”

Michele Venezia, 41, lives with her family about a block away from Gatto. She and her husband, John, both come from Italian families that go back deep in the history of Holy Rosary Parish.

She thinks the parish church’s restoration, which includes uncovering many stained-glass windows and prominently features a painting of Our Lady of Pompeii on the wall of the sanctuary, underscores its current vitality and its Italian roots.

“That really put us back with our ties to Italy,” Venezia said. “It’s the way it looked when my grandmother made her first Communion here at Holy Rosary.”

As rooted as Venezia is in Holy Rosary’s Italian heritage, she gives credit to Mgr. Schaedel for maintaining and strengthening it.

“(He) has been very, very respectful of what the parish was in the past,” she said. “And I think that is one of the things that has endeared him to the people that are here, even though he’s not Italian.”

Venezia also acknowledged that the newcomers to the parish, many of whom do not have Italian ancestors, value its Italian heritage and work hard to nurture it, especially during its annual Italian Street Festival, which began in 1983 and this year will be held on June 12-13.

“The majority of the booths are run by old Italian families,” Venezia said. “But if you get into the background, the people who are inside working and do a lot of the set up are new parishioners. They’re becoming just as invested in Holy Rosary as some of the older people.”

Many of the new parishioners were attracted to Holy Rosary because of its traditional Latin Mass, which has been a part of the parish since 1998. Currently, the extra-ordinary form of the Mass is celebrated on a daily basis.

Marcus Shutta, 33, is one such new member, joining Holy Rosary Parish in 2006. He and his wife, Emily, and their nearly 1-year-old daughter, Marinn, regularly attend the Sunday morning traditional Latin Mass, and appreciate its tradition, beauty and reverence. That is also why Shutta values the Italian heritage of Holy Rosary.

“Tradition is one of the aspects of the Church that I just love so much. So to think about those families that are still here and the traditions that they’ve carried on through the generations—you don’t find that today.”

—Marcus Shutta

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St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford
Blayr Green (catechumen); Stephanie Pavey and St. Peter, Franklin County
Bob Bissett and Tiffany Robinson (candidates)
Kane Simon (catechumen); Courtney Bruns (candidate)
St. Anthony of Padua, Morris
Immaculate Conception, Millhousen
Shelby Radenheimer (candidates)
St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg
Matthew Slaben, Melanie Spears, Gregg Steinhofer, David Meek and Melissa Monroe (catechumens); Kahlel Nash, Elissa Murphy, Andrew Schuller, Neibert, Linda Baldwin and Sean Baldwin (candidates)
Juan Parada, Jack Plunkett, Mark Plunkett and Holy Spirit
Wilson, Tyler Wilson and Amy Wright (catechumens)
Jeffrey Brunner, Clarissa Culvahouse, Brice Gilman, Reed, Cherie Skidmore and Pamela Soper (candidates)
Christopher Kovatch, Martha Kuntz, Cassandra Maule, David Jones, Erin Jones, Kapaya Kaoma, Gayle Bond, Casey Bradburn, Steven Fouts, Haley Hittle, St. Mary, Rushville
Kelly Sams and Cynthia Sanders (candidates); John Phelps (candidate)
Robert Lemmon Sr. and Jeffery Hanes Jr. (candidates)
Dominican Father Robert Keller, pastor of the St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington, baptizes William Valentine during his parish's Easter Vigil on April 11.
Seth Broadstreet, Zackariah Johnson, Bradley Mead, Christopher McDonald, Jack McDonald, Regan McDonald, St. Gabriel the Archangel
Sharon Wright (candidates)
Madge Wethington, Gillian Winningham, Kayla Wright and Mayra Perez (candidates)
St. Malachy, Brownsburg
Lisa Keenan, Manuel Ochoa, Marcos Perez, Kelli Holthouser, Rachel Kirchgessner, Brooklyn Koetter, Kyle Craig, Katharine Finn, Nicholas Finn, William Popp and Candace Rollandson (candidates)
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Mass. Lucas Oil Stadium, can be found at www.CriterionOnline.com for information about the Mass, including driving directions to the stadium. People can use the southeast and northwest elevator banks to access the Mass, which will be available for $3 per bottle.

Before, during or after the Mass, but bottled water will be available for $3 per bottle. For more information on the archdiocese’s 175th anniversary, log on to www.archindy.org/175th.

The text of the opening hymn, “Come and See the Many Wonders,” was composed specifically for the 175th anniversary Mass of the archdiocese by Benedictine Father Harry Hagan of Holy Angels Parish, both in Indianapolis, will add their voices to the choir expected to be made up of hundreds of Catholics from across the archdiocese. The text of the opening hymn, “Come and See the Many Wonders,” was composed specifically for the 175th anniversary Mass of the archdiocese by Benedictine Father Harry Hagan of Holy Angels Parish, both in Indianapolis, will add their voices to the choir expected to be made up of hundreds of Catholics from across the archdiocese. The text of the opening hymn, “Come and See the Many Wonders,” was composed specifically for the 175th anniversary Mass of the archdiocese by Benedictine Father Harry Hagan of Holy Angels Parish, both in Indianapolis, will add their voices to the choir expected to be made up of hundreds of Catholics from across the archdiocese.

ANNIVERSARY continued from page 1

No general concessions will be sold at Lucas Oil Stadium before, during or after the Mass, but bottled water will be available for $3 per bottle. For those needing assistance, elevators will be available. People can use the southeast and northwest elevator banks to get down to the lower level of the stadium. Adequate parking will be available in lots and on the streets adjacent to the stadium.

The doors will open for the Mass at 1 p.m. More information about the Mass, including driving directions to Lucas Oil Stadium, can be found at www.CriterionOnline.com.

During the Mass, approximately 2,500 teenagers and young adults will participate in the Mass. The doors will open for the Mass at 1 p.m. More information about the Mass, including driving directions to Lucas Oil Stadium, can be found at www.CriterionOnline.com.

During the Mass, the St. Monica Spanish Choir from Holy Angels Parish, both in Indianapolis, will add their voices to the choir expected to be made up of hundreds of Catholics from across the archdiocese. The text of the opening hymn, “Come and See the Many Wonders,” was composed specifically for the 175th anniversary Mass of the archdiocese by Benedictine Father Harry Hagan of Holy Angels Parish, both in Indianapolis, will add their voices to the choir expected to be made up of hundreds of Catholics from across the archdiocese.

Five minutes north of Madison on Mother’s Day Give a Religious Gift That Lasts

CATHOLICS continued from page 11

Joshua Rosag and Cameron Spalding (catechumens); David Ballard, Michael Bonham, Barbara Breeden, Nancy Fay, Stephani Ferrufino, Marcia Harkless, Eric Heeter, Christina Nelson, Ronald Patterson, Richard Scalf III, John Shepard, Sheila Wassen, Sarah Wittkend and Beau Zigler (candidates)

Prince of Peace, Madison

Penny Gordon, Berta Turner and Mary Lou Wieneck (catechumens); Karen Bolton, Robert Bolton, David Furnish, Tammy Josephsen, Andy Lytle, Mary Ellen Minnick, Erin Rosenbaum and Nancy Stack (candidates)

St. Patrick, Salem

David Middelton (catechumen)

American Martyrs, Scitbog

Riley Jo Bayes (candidate)

St. Mary, North Vernon

Jon Bentz, Sheila Callahan, Chey Ezoo, Robin Hatton, Jeffrey Schroeder II, Katherine Schroeder and Jamie Zeser (catechumens); Roy Dickerson, Dennis M. Rado, Jeffrey Schroeder and John Simpson (candidates)

Tell City Deafary

St. Isadore, Bristow

David Hinton and Danya Hinton (catechumens)

St. Paul, Tell City

Brandie Amon, Shaun Jones and Evan Shearn (catechumens); Tara Feinberger, Karen Peter and Aila Sanders (candidates)

Terre Haute Deafary

Anunciation, Brazil

Wanda Eaton and Jennifer Snoddy (candidates)

Sacred Heart, Clinton

Janice Crane (catechumen); Kathy Blake, Ralph Hoggatt and Sally Luft (candidates)

St. Paul the Apostle, Greenwood

Dan Benasul, A udith Brennan, Brenda Brennan, Christopher Reed, Elise Reedey and Susan Taylor (catechumens); Brandie Brennan and Justin Wilson (candidates)

St. Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods

Brandon Mahady and Norine Martin (candidates)

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute

Chad Higgins, Cynthia Shepard and Chelsea Young (catechumens)

St. Benedict, Terre Haute

Timothy Cullen and Malory Naise (catechumens); Carol Raatz (candidate)

St. Joseph University, Terre Haute

Karen Camerer, Ashley David, Debra Gantz, Mallory Hordyke, Sidney M oore and Tony Smolida (candidates)

St. Patrick, Terre Haute

Steve Douglas, Myrthel Frye, Cheryl Kaperak, Candace Kelley and Susan Valtman (catechumens); Jenna Davis, Dahriss Shackle, Jeff Shield, Jeff Spencer, Michael Wittman and Tracie Wittman (candidates)

Governor Daniels notes 175th anniversary of Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Gov. Mitch Daniels of Indiana has issued a proclamation recognizing May 6, 2009, as the 175th anniversary of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. His executive order invites all citizens to “duly note this occasion.”

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Parents need to monitor children’s media use, speaker says

By Mary Ann Wyand

It’s a simple and effective solution, but it’s not always easy to do.

Catholic radio show host and author Teresa Tomeo, a veteran broadcast journalist in Detroit, wants parents to take control of media exposure in the home in order to have a stronger, healthier and more faith-filled family.

During her keynote speech for the Catholic Radio 89.1 FM fundraising dinner on April 16 in Indianapolis, Tomeo urged parents to closely monitor their children’s television, radio and Internet use on a daily basis.

A nationally winning mainstream journalist for two decades, Tomeo said she became disillusioned by the trends in the secular media toward sensationalism, violence and a liberal bias.

“Parents need to recognize that they are the direct cause of their children’s media exposure in the home in order to have a stronger, healthier and more faith-filled family with a higher self-esteem,” said Tomeo.

Two years ago, she left the secular media to work in the religious press, and since that time has written Noise—How Our Media-Saturated Culture Dominates Lives and Dismantles Families and News Flash, a testimonial about her return to the Catholic faith.

Tomeo hosts “Catholic Connections” each weekday at 9 a.m. on Catholic Radio 89.1 FM in central Indiana and on more than 100 other Catholic radio stations.

She told an attentive audience that accepting the challenge of the new evangelization— a major theme and mission of Pope John Paul II’s pontificate— requires ongoing education about the Catholic faith.

“We have a huge cultural battle on our hands right now,” Tomeo said. “Our challenges are even greater than ever because of the culture... We have to get the word out about the Catholic Church.”

Many Catholics were poorly catechized, she said, and don’t even know the basics of Catholicism.

“In this day and age, and we are all going to respond to what we know about our faith” when we get to the purgatory gates,” Tomeo said. “Even those of us who are trying to live our lives as good faithful Catholics will come up against struggles and temptations in the world, and the media is a huge temptation for many of us because it’s everywhere. We can’t ignore the connection between the media and what’s happening in our lives.

People of faith should always be hopeful and never let the devil or anyone else steal their joy, she said. “We don’t need to get back to building the kingdom of God.”

Educate yourself about Church teachings, Tomeo said, and then educate other people about the Catholic faith.

Tomeo also recommended that Catholics consider three questions:

• How are my media habits impacting my relationship with my family?

• How can I do various media influences?

• What can I do without interference is for kids,” Tomeo said. “Kids are still going to listen to their parents over the media if they have a relationship with listening to them. They let the media raise their kids.”

Tomeo cited some alarming statistics that parents need to be aware of:

- Media raise their kids.

- Teenagers who view the media every week as most adults spend at their full-time jobs.

- It’s a scary stuff—sex content in the media, violent content in the media, the Internet and cell phones, and the push to make kids get older.

- Researchers say the media does have an impact, she said, especially on children in terms of violent behavior.

The solution is simple and effective, but hard for many parents, she said. Monitor the media habits of your children, and be their parent and not their friend.

(Catholic Radio 89.1 FM programming can also be heard online at www.catholicradioindy.org. For more information, call 317-870-8400.)

Knights’ leader urges U.S. Catholics to keep faith in public square

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Just as the nation’s first Catholic bishop did in the early days of the United States, today’s American Catholics need to maintain their religious identity in a culture that is sometimes hostile to faith, said Carl Anderson, head of the Knights of Columbus, at the April 18 annual dinner of the John Carroll Society.

The society of lay men and women in the Archdiocese of Washington is named for Bishop John Carroll, who in 1789 became the first Catholic bishop of the United States, leading the new Diocese of Baltimore, at that time, included all 13 original states.

The John Carroll Society, founded in 1951, serves the archbishop of Washington in its charitable and community projects.

“In defending the practice of faith in the public square, all of us have something in common with John Carroll,” Anderson told the nearly 400 guests at the dinner.

Anderson, who as supreme knight serves as the world’s largest Catholic family fraternal benefit society, said he and other Catholics in the state of Connecticut recently had to face an issue that John Carroll was familiar with. Legislators in the Connecticut State Senate were considering a bill that would have stripped bishops and pastors of their authority over many parish and diocesan decisions and put boards of “lay trustees” in charge.

Anderson said.

He said that Bishop Carroll and other early Catholic bishops had to deal with such efforts to take away their authority, but such legislation hadn’t been promoted since the Know Nothing Party in New York passed a similar bill 150 years ago.

“Just as Catholics and Catholic bishops, priests and laymen all stood up and stood together, a fine the outcry, the legislators tabled the bill” in Connecticut, he said.

Anderson said Bishop Carroll also had to deal with John Jay, the first chief justice of the United States, who before becoming chief justice had “argued vociferously for a law in New York that would have excluded Catholics from public office...” and in 1777, Jay was chief author of New York’s Constitution, which banned Catholic immigrants unless they renounced the pope.

“Today, same thing is happening, as patriot and priest, John Carroll was the public face of a distrusted religious minority, and he left us a shining example of living the faith and defending religious liberty,” Anderson said.

Catholic radio and audio show host Teresa Tomeo of Detroit autographs a book after her keynote speech at the Catholic Radio 89.1 FM dinner on April 16 in Indianapolis. Tomeo collaborated on two books for Catholic teenagers, and also wrote books about the media influences on culture and the media’s affect on our own life.
Pope creates five saints, says they hold lessons for economic crisis

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI canonized five new saints and said they hold lessons for economic crisis.

By orienting their lives to Christ, the five men and women showed that “it is possible to lay the foundations for construction of a society open to justice and solidarity, overcoming that economic and cultural imbalance that continues to exist in a great part of our planet,” the pope said.

In his homily, the pope said the saint’s lives stories hold valuable lessons for modern Christians. Each of the newly canonized had a special devotion to the Eucharist, and each transformed that spiritual power into social action, he said.

The five new saints are:
- St. Aloysio Trindade, a priest from the northern Italian area of Brescia, who preached strongly in defense of workers’ rights during the period around the late 1800s. He organized an association to help factory workers, established a spinning mill to give young girls of the area gainful employment, and eventually founded a religious order of sisters who worked alongside women in the factories.
- St. Bernardo Tolomeo, who, inspired by his love for prayer and for manual labor, founded a unique Benedictine monastic movement in Italy in the 15th century. Born in Siena, he was forced by an onset of blindness to give up a public career, and he decided to found a small hermitic community. He later founded the monastery of Santa Maria di Monte Oliveto Maggiore, and died in 1348 of the plague while helping victims of the disease. His burial place, in a diocesan church in Siena, he was forced by an onset of blindness to give up a public career, and he decided to found a small hermitic community. He later founded the monastery of Santa Maria di Monte Oliveto Maggiore, and died in 1348 of the plague while helping victims of the disease. His burial place, in a diocesan church in Siena, he was forced by an onset of blindness to give up a public career, and he decided to found a small hermitic community. 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Evangelization in Asia needs to respect its varied cultures

By Father Robert L. Kinast

When Pope Paul VI issued his apostolic exhortation on evangelization in the modern world in 1975 ("Evangelii Nuntiandi"), it resonated with local Church leaders and missionaries worldwide. For most of the 20th century, they were putting increased emphasis on proclaiming the Gospel in harmony with local cultures, a process often referred to as inculturation.

Perhaps nowhere in the world is this form of evangelization more challenging than in Asia, a vast territory stretching from India to Indonesia, from China to East Timor. Within that area, countries vary enormously in their economic, political, cultural, social and religious conditions.

The major religions in Asia—Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism and Islam—are among the oldest and largest in the world. They are often inseparable from the social and cultural way of life in a particular country. This makes it difficult for a "foreign" religion to gain acceptance, especially if it is identified with certain cultural values, such as materialism and individualism which are viewed negatively.

How then does the Catholic Church carry out its evangelizing mission under these circumstances?

First, contemporary evangelization respects and appreciates the local culture. Rather than first looking for deficiencies and errors from a Christian point of view, evangelizers seek areas of agreement and respect for the 'precious jewels' of the local culture.

This may include the study of another religion's sacred writings, incorporation of a culture's art forms into Catholic worship, Church organization and decision-making processes based on local custom or, surprisingly, awareness that Asia is the fastest growing Web market in the world. Billions of Asians use handheld devices to access all kinds of information, which could include Catholic teaching and values.

The risk of an inculturation approach is that the substance of Catholic faith can be compromised in the desire to accommodate the teachings and traditions of, for example, Buddhism or Hinduism. On the other hand, Nuntiandi says "Christian belief is itself a particular cultural expression which does not exhaust all the ways the faith might be expressed."

Second, the work of evangelization is best carried out in a manner that is Asian, with a style of communicating and acting that is consistent with the traditions and expectations of a particular culture.

On the other hand, Nuntiandi says "Christian belief is itself a particular cultural expression which does not exhaust all the ways the faith might be expressed."

The Church is also present by offering hospitality at public events. It is planning to participate at the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, making people aware of the regular meetings of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, offering concern and prayer for the victims of natural disasters like a tsunami or earthquake, denouncing terrorist attacks, as in A弥尔, India, last November, and giving aid to the victims.

Finally, there is a form of evangelization that occurs when the Church is persecuted. This may be the result of a general policy as in North Korea, where religion is effectively banned, or in China, where a state-authorized Church enjoys nominal approval and an underground Church is the subject of periodic state repression. It also occurs in drastic ways where there are attacks, such as the aggression of Hindu mobs against Catholics in India last fall or the arrest and imprisonment of Catholic clergy.

In such circumstances, Catholics witness to their faith by bearing the pain of persecution, not retaliating, and continuing to offer service to others.

One constant feature of evangelization in Asia is that the Catholic Church is a small minority in most countries, with the Philippines a notable exception. This means it does not have the resources or influence to impact the culture directly and effectively as it might in Europe or North America.

The minority status of the Catholic Church in Asia is not necessarily a liability. It is an opportunity to promote a form of evangelization that affirms local culture and serves the people of that culture in the inclusive and confident spirit of the Catholic tradition.

Discussion Point

What does it feel like to be a Catholic in a place, outside the U.S., where there are very few other Catholics? How does the Church survive in such areas?

"This winter, I spent six weeks in China, visiting six cities and meeting more than 100 people. Some of them were Christians, but none were Catholic. Most of them have no idea about our faith. They think Catholics worship Mary instead of Jesus. I felt that I had the responsibility to tell them about the Catholic faith, and they seemed interested to receive it." (Ann Gao, Superior, Colo.)

"When we were in Korea, we lived on military bases and went to military churches so we were among Catholics. We did work mostly with Koreans who were Buddhists, but we really didn't talk about religion or compare our faiths." (Jo Ryan, Brandon, Fla.)

"I was certainly in a minority in Pakistan. But I went to a cathedral in Lahore every Sunday, and I felt at home in the church. I met some Catholic missionaries whose job was not to proselytize, but to attend to the needs of the people. Most Catholics there were from the lower class or, in India, from the lower castes, and they saw conversion to the Catholic Church as a way out of the caste." (Timothy Sullivan, Rocky River, Ohio)

Catholics feel at home around the world

This Week’s Question

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Lend Us Your Voice

An upcoming edition asks: Are efforts needed in your community to bring Catholics and Jews together?

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.
Pro-life book is novel way to promote what’s right

Faithful Lines/

Patti Lamb

From the Editor Emeritus/

believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the

understand what “proceeds” means when

the Father and the Son is a person, the

Father and the Son love each other with an

is in my second paragraph, Elie Wiesel, is

pages noting this Jewish Proverb: “When

you save a life, you save the world.”

It's All Good/Patti Lamb

Parenthood: The greatest exercise in human love

My friend is what I'd call a "planner." She amazes me with her keen eye for
design and her ability to quickly generate plans A, B, and C for any
circumstance.

She can convert a makeshift umbrella out of a large sheet with
color in the dresser drawers. Even her sister, who is married,
with their children, can't adequately describe to even the
youngest of family members how special this love is.

I think being a parent is the greatest
glory of love. It is a love that is

closest we come to beginning to understand

universe shifts. The child becomes the

nucleus. You've known love on so many levels, I think, when you're gone
child, that takes it to a whole new plateau.

The love of parents is, in my mind, the

closest we come to understanding the
goodness of the love. It is a love that is

unconditional, offering quick forgiveness and

unwavering encouragement.

Even though our children can be difficult

and frustrating, we still love them in a way

no one else could because they are ours.

They are extensions of our very selves.

In essence, we say to them, "Even when you do not love your parents, I will always love you. You are

people are called to be steadfast in the
daily task of love.

For a child to know love of this caliber is more important than any other
material meaning, which could be provided by the parent,
mostly because real love is not fleeting.

A son or daughter, age 5 or 50, never
outgrows the love of the parents. Parenting
is a great big lesson in love.

My dear friend, the greatest planner that

I know, cannot prepare herself for the

transformation of parenthood with any
dress for her clothes. It happens in the

heart.

Next week, bring my friend's first

office visit to her again. "Boy, there's

Day, dear friend. It may not be what you
planned for. It's not easy, and there's no
form of insurance you can purchase if it
turns out differently than you expect.

But this much is certain: It's all good.

(Patti Lamb, a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.)

Faith, Hope and Charity/

Show mercy of Jesus to least of his people

As followers of Jesus, we follow a man who was

murdered, judged guilty, imprisoned and put to death.

This Eastern Christian understanding of life and death

the hope of resurrection.

Unleashed

There are individuals and groups in some of our Catholic parishes that have

made prison ministry a part of their service to Christ.

An offender returning to a community

where he or she has a mentor is likely
to stay out of prison and find the

mercy of Jesus. Mentes helps

ex-offenders find a place to live and

work, and show him or her how to make

a positive impact in the world. More

mentors are needed to be the face of

Christ in the community.

Employers can play an important role by

intentionally hiring ex-offenders who
demonstrate a desire to earn an honest

wage. A felony conviction makes it
easier to show compassion. Befriending

a prisoner during or after jail is not an
option anymore, but clearly there is a
need for more of us to share our gifts of

life and attention. After all, we are believers in

the power of forgiveness and the hope of

resurrection.

Prisoners are among the few populations

that Jesus identified by name in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25, when he
told us how to treat him by treating

“the least of these.” I imagine that knowing in advance the fate that he was to meet, Jesus could

identify with the latter charge, and

hopelessness of those living behind bars.

This often forgotten population of

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Daily Readings

Monday, May 4
Acts 11:1-18
Psalm 42:2-3; 43:3-4
John 10:1-10

Tuesday, May 5
Acts 11:19-26
Psalm 87:1-7
John 10:22-30

Wednesday, May 6
Acts 12:24-13:5a
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
John 12:44-50

Thursday, May 7
Acts 13:13-25
Psalm 89:2-3, 21-22, 25, 27
John 13:16-20

Friday, May 8
Acts 13:26-33
Psalm 2:6-11
John 14:1-6

Saturday, May 9
Acts 13:44-52
Psalm 98:1-4
John 14:7-14

Sunday, May 10
Acts 9:26-31
Psalm 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31
1 John 3:18-24
John 15:1-8

Church does not require standard amount of tithing for parishioners

Q What is the Church’s rule about tithing? I know tithing was required in the Old Testament, but parish churches in our area seem to have different regulations and expectations.

A The Catholic Church today—in fact, the majority of Christians since the beginning—does not prescribe any set amount that should be given to Church-related causes.

Tithing is a tax, a tax. From an Old English word meaning “a tenth,” was common in several ancient cultures, including among the Jewish people. As recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy, a tenth of all produce, livestock and other income was to be offered to God for the care of the temple, support of priests and Levites, and for the needs of the poor (Dt 14 and Dt 26).

Tithing was held to be a serious obligation even into and after the time of Jesus. Pharisees of Jesus’ time boasted of their tithing, causing our Lord to tell them—for example, in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 18)—that, if they tithed, they should not neglect the more essential spiritual virtues of humility and mercy. But Jesus himself never commanded it.

My answer is that any person who practices some form of tithing on their own initiative. Bishops and pastors often suggest tithing to include not only offerings directly to the parish, but also gifts to the missions or other apostolic works as well as the costs of Catholic education, something similar to the practice in our parish.

The Church, however, does not insist that all communities leave the decision to each person’s generosity and good will.

Let us reflect on the history of tithing. It was a practice for a communal penance service. When writing is absolutely necessary because of a serious spiritual defect, for example, I always return the piece of paper directly and immediately to the penitent. There should be no hint of doubt that the confidentiality and seal of confession is preserved.

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