Immigration reform is next on bishops’ wish list for Congress

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Over the years, hundreds of thousands of postcards have come from U.S. Catholics in organized efforts to influence members of Congress on issues ranging from partial-birth abortion to human cloning to health care reform.

A new postcard campaign in 2010 will urge Congress to take up as its next priority comprehensive immigration reform that would reunite families, regularize the status of an estimated 12 million people in this country illegally and restore due process protections for immigrants.

“We want to increase Catholic grass-roots support for immigration reform, but we also want to show members of Congress a strong Catholic voice and strong Catholic numbers in support of immigration reform,” said Antonio Cube, national manager of the U.S. bishops’ Justice for Immigrants project, in a Nov. 16 conference call with reporters.

The postcard campaign will coincide in most places with the bishops’ National Migration Week on Jan. 3-9, although it might be held earlier or later in some dioceses, Cube said. It also is part of a multifaceted interfaith campaign called “Home for the Holidays,” designed to stress the family reunification aspect of immigration reform.

The Catholic Church is uniquely situated to comment on the immigration issue because of its “long history of welcoming and serving immigrants for generations,” and because it is “present in both the sending countries as well as the receiving countries,” Cube said.

Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Migration, predicted in a Nov. 17 interview with Catholic News Service that the prospects for Congress to pass immigration reform are next on bishops’ wish list for Congress.

Catholics confront death penalty issue as another death-row execution nears

(Reader’s note: As the State of Indiana prepares to carry out the Dec. 11 execution of a death-row inmate, three Catholics from Indiana share their stories of how death penalty cases have touched their lives.

Mary Winnecke is a mother whose daughter was killed by Matthew Eric Wrinkles, who is scheduled to be executed on Dec. 11. Will McAuliffe is a young Catholic who has started an organization that hopes to end the death penalty in the state. And former Indiana Gov. Joseph Kernan has faced the decision of determining whether a person should live or die. Here are their stories.)

Mary Winnecke takes time after Mass to pray at Holy Redeemer Church in Evansville, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, on Aug. 19. Winnecke’s daughter, Natalie Fulkerson, was killed by Matthew Eric Wrinkles in 1994. Wrinkles is on death row, but Winnecke opposes the death penalty. Winnecke says that her faith has allowed her to forgive Wrinkles. Read her story of faith and forgiveness on page 9.

Will McAuliffe tries to stay calm when he talks about the death penalty, knowing how the issue often becomes a source of heated conflict for people.
Will McAuliffe

The 24-year-old Catholic from Indianapolis keeps that matter-of-fact approach when he cites the statistic that, through the years, 139 individuals in the United States who were sentenced to the death penalty were later exonerated. Still, the emotion begins to flow through McAuliffe’s words when he describes one of the key moments that led him to form the Indiana Coalition Acting to Suspend Executions, a non-profit organization that hopes to help end the use of the death penalty in the state.

The moment took place in early May of 2007, just days before McAuliffe was to graduate from the University of Notre Dame. He drove to the Indiana State Prison in Michigan City, Ind., to be part of a vigil for David Woods, a 42-year-old man who was scheduled to be executed.

By John Shaughnessy

Will McAuliffe
what I have seen makes reform far more know a major shift when I see one, and now.

2007, making the goal more attainable last attempt to pass an immigration bill in

immigrant flows have all changed since the economy, border security issues and

Janet Napolitano, whose agencies Homeland Security Secretary

trated repeatedly that immigration reform would be the next big issue on the adminis-

Ag ation's domestic agenda.

A t a Nov. 13 press conference, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, whose agencies handle most immigration-related law and policies, said the political climate, economy, border security issues and immigrant flows have all changed since the last attempt to pass an immigration bill in 2007, making the goal more attainable now.

“Tve been dealing hands-on with immigration issues since 1993,” said the former Arizona governor. “So trust me. I know major shifts when I see one, and what this time around is more

Bishop Weser said he was confident that his fellow bishops are ready and willing to work to help pass a comprehensive reform bill.

“T’ll know the stories, they see the people, the human faces,” he said. One of the biggest problems with previous attempts to pass immigration reform, said Bishop Weser, was that the “loud, strident voices” opposed to reform caused many members of Congress to hesitate to support legislation.

“We were outperformed 10-to-1 in terms of media,” the bishop said. He said the bishops’ coming postcard campaign, as well as plans to use community-action networks such as Facebook and Twitter to remind members of Congress of the level of support for reform, will help offset those opponents.

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"That will mean there’s a directly that—equal to about 15 percent of Poles’s population.

“We will fail to reform our broken immigration system, 422,000 people will be detained this year by Immigration (and Customs Enforcement), spraying havoc on communities and families across the country,” said Rev. Vazquez in the conference call. “This is the equivalent of 1,000 Postville raids.”

The Rev. Dean Reed, pastor of First United Methodist Church in Stephenville, Texas, said healing broken communities is a religious imperative.

“1,000 immigration raids have created problems and opened the door to divisive rhetoric,” he said. “We need to reform the system so these problems can be humbly and fairly solved, and our sense of community restored.”

“T also have a religious obligation to "welcome the stranger, for we were strangers in the land of Egypt” said Vic Rosenthal, executive director of Jewish Community Action in St. Paul, Minn.

“This commandment from the Torah has our history with immigration throughout the world leads us to stand in solidarity with immigrants of today struggling to secure legal status,” he said.

"It’s an obligation we must honor as a "People of God,"" she said.

"People," she added, "are the heart of our community and the church’s mission.

Kraft said. "I’m not stepping back on this issue even though many legislators have.

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Cathedral hosts 10th annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

By Sean Gallagher

For the 10th consecutive year, representatives of faith traditions from around the world gathered at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis to offer prayers of thanks a few days before the civic holiday of Thanksgiving.

The several hundred people who attended this year’s Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on Nov. 24 heard Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Christian prayers chanted and spoken in Hebrew, Aramaic, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Tibetan and English.

The Indianapolis Children’s Choir and the cathedral’s Laudes Cantores choir provided music before and during the service.

Those who represented the faith traditions, including Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, live in and around Indianapolis, and showed how people from around the world have come to live here in community.

“We gather to offer a grateful prayer for peace, peace in our world,” Archbishop Buechlein said. “Thank you for helping us to do that.”

Gloria Sharon, a cantor at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis, represented the Jewish faith at the service. He has participated in the interfaith gathering since its inception.

“I like this place,” Sharon said. “I liked it from the first minute that I got here. I find it a very beautiful place. It has a profile of a big city, but it also has the calmness of smaller towns. It’s not crazy. It’s calm.”

A side from simply liking his surroundings, Sharon said it is important for people who have come to Indianapolis from around the world to gather together at events like the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service.

“Gathered together, we can express our giving thanks to God, in whatever our faith tradition or religious background,” he said. “With hope, my prayer, this evening is that all of us can commit ourselves to move beyond mere coexistence to become a true community, a community of Thanksgiving and of giving thanks.”

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The pope called for prayer and concrete assistance in the battle against AIDS.

Pope Benedict XVI pledged the Church’s continued fight against AIDS through prayer and assistance to millions of people suffering from the disease.

“The pope, speaking two days before World AIDS Day on Dec. 1, said his thoughts and prayers were with “every person stricken by this disease, especially children, the very poor and those who are rejected.”

“T he Church continues to do its best to combat AIDS through its institutions and the personnel dedicated to this problem,” the pope said at his noon blessing.

“I urge everyone to make their own contribution through prayer and concrete attention so that those affected by the HIV virus may feel the presence of the Lord, who gives comfort and hope,” he said. He expressed his hope that by “multiplying and coordinating efforts,” the disease can one day be stopped.

The pope, on a trip to Africa last March, prompted international reaction when he said he thought the international community was doing too little to confront the AIDS pandemic.

Church officials have pointed out that Catholic health institutions care for an estimated 25 percent of AIDS patients around the world.

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Church officials have pointed out that Catholic health institutions care for an estimated 25 percent of AIDS patients around the world.

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3. If you live anywhere in the Archdiocese (or the world) listen at www.CatholicRadioIndy.org on your computer.

Photos by Sean Gallagher

Gurjit Singh, associate spiritual leader of the Sikh Temple in Indianapolis, plays the tabla, a pair of Indian drums, while he and other Sikh residents of Indianapolis chant in Punjabi a Sikh hymn during the 10th annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on Nov. 24 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis.

Dr. Robert Welsh, the president of the Council on Christian Unity of the Indianapolis-based Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), holds up an image of a bumper sticker which uses religious symbols to spell the word “coexist” to invite those in attendance to consider that the various world faith traditions are called to more than coexistence, but also to build community.
The Criterion  Friday, December 4, 2009

Edited by: Mike Krokoz, Editor

OPINION

Anti-Catholic prejudice

Have you experienced anti-Catholicism? There have been periods of time here in Indiana when it was prevalent, especially during the early 1920s when the Ku Klux Klan ruled the state. In the nation as a whole, anti-Catholicism came with the pilgrims and others who settled the East Coast. Catholics were forbidden to practice their religion, and were not allowed to vote.

But all that was well before Catholicism became the largest religion in the country. Catholics are in the mainstream of society today. There are more Catholics in Congress than those who profess any other religion, and six of the nine justices on the U.S. Supreme Court are Catholics.

Despite that, anti-Catholicism seems to reappear from time to time, especially when the media and in academia.

It is probably because the Church is becoming more and more counter-cultural as our secular culture becomes progressively more amoral. The Church continues to oppose abortion, same-sex marriage, sexual activity outside of marriage, and many other things that our entertainment and news media promote in society.

New York Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan saw what he was convinced was anti-Catholicism in The New York Times. He sent a letter to The Times that he asked to be published on its op-ed page. The editors at The Times refused to do so— their prerogative, of course, but hardly the way you would think they would treat the new Archbishop of New York.

Therefore, on Oct. 29, Archbishop Dolan published the column on his archdiocesan blog. Since it was the end of the baseball season, he wrote, “Sadly, a merica has another national pastime, this one not pleasant at all: anti-Catholicism.”

Before detailing four examples of anti-Catholicism in The Times’ pages, the archbishop quoted scholars from the past who recognized this prejudice in our society.

Historian Arthur Schlesinger called it “the deepest bias in the history of the American people.” Peter Viereck labeled it “the anti-Semitism of the liberals.” Philip Jenkins published a book in 2004 called The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice. We sometimes see this when someone has done something wrong. If that person is a Catholic, that fact is usually pointed out in newspaper stories as if that explains the whole thing. Perhaps it is not surprising that some of the worst anti-Catholicism is spurred by former Catholics who, for one reason or another, now seem bitter toward the Church. One of them, singled out by Archbishop Dolan, is Times columnist Maureen Dowd. She was writing about the “anti-Catholic vision of women religious, which the archbishop acknowledged “is well worth discussing. But not, however, the way she did it.”

Archbishop Dolan wrote, “In a diocese that rightly never would have passed muster with the editors had it to criticized an Islamic, Jewish or African-American religious issue, she digs deep into the nativist handbook to use every anti-Catholic caricature possible, from the Inquisition to the Holocaust, condoms, obsession with sex, pedophile priests and oppression of women, all the while slandering Pope Benedict XVI for his shoes, his forced conception into the German army, his outreach to former Catholics and his recent welcome to Anglicans.”

It is not only former Catholics who use intemperate language against members of the Church’s hierarchy; sometimes it is Catholics themselves. In the Nov. 6 issue of The Criterion, we reported on the statements made by Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D-R.I.) against the U.S. bishops who refused to support the health-reform bill in the U.S. Congress unless they prohibited money from paying for abortions. An amendment to that effect was passed in the U.S. House of Representatives, but before that happened Kennedy made what Archbishop Dolan called “incredibly inaccurate and uncalled for remarks concerning the U.S. bishops.”

We would be the last to suggest that everything the Church has done in the past or everything it does today is above criticism. The Church is composed of fallible humans who occasionally make mistakes. That was clearly evident by the way the clergy sex-abuse scandal was handled. But we do object when dark motives are routinely assigned to the Church.

As Archbishop Dolan said, “All we ask is that [criticism] be fair, rational and accurate, what we would expect for anybody.”

Food insecurity can’t wait until after the holidays

“Black Friday” is past. Now begins the period called “the holidays.” Still known to many of us as Advent—a time for reflection. Amid the hype about the one boy that every store is out of, the buzz over the newest gadget for adults and the romanticizing of snow on television commercials, comes this fact:

There are a lot of hungry people, not just in the United States but also throughout the world.

But let’s not think about this now. Let’s wait until “after the holidays.”

On second thought, this is something that needs immediate attention.

Here is hunger by the numbers as reported this month by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Forty-nine million Americans lack dependable access to adequate food. 17 million children live in households in which food ran out at times, and 1.1 million children were sometimes outright hungry. These are people lacking resources to buy foods through the month or having to eat less to make ends meet.

Government calls it “food insecurity.” Pope Benedict XVI calls it a “crue and concrete sign of poverty.”

Opulence and waste are unacceptable when hunger continues to increase, the pope said last month at a summit in Rome of leaders on food security.

“Norms, legislation, development plans and investments are not enough,” he said. “What is needed is a change in the lifestyles of individuals and communities, in habits of consumption, and in perceptions of what is genuinely needed.”

“Everyone wants to do it,” said Deacon Brian Escobedo of Catholic Charities in Albuquerque, N.M. “It’s not a matter of whether, but how you are going to do it.”

Pope Benedict at the U.N. World Summit on Food Security, at which Pope Benedict made his remarks, a U.N. official asked people around the world to join him on a 24-hour hunger strike.

“We are suggesting that everyone in the world who wants to show solidarity with the 1 billion hungry people on this planet go on strike,” said Jacques Diouf, director general of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. This is an idea not limited to the conference, but perfect for Advent—or the holiday shopping season, as it is known by some people.

If consumerism uses “Black Friday” as its benchmark, those committed to solidarity with the poor could pick a day and call it their own. It would be a day to not shop or buy anything, concluding with a simple bowl of soup for the evening meal and a chance for family discussion about the meaning of the season.

Catholic Charities USA is aiming to cut poverty in the United States by half by 2020. Federal officials say 40 million Americans live in poverty and 15 million adults are unemployed.

Facing Catholic Charities is not the what, but the how.

There are signs that global poverty is gaining attention through education and advocacy. The Catholics Confront Global Poverty initiative, a joint effort of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services, has in seven months reached one-quarter of its goal to mobilize 1 million Catholics.

Participants in the initiative are involved in social networking presentations and prayers. They connect with elected officials on measures to fight global poverty.

This responds to what the pope said at the food summit, that not enough is being done to lift people out of poverty because some people exhibit “resigned regret, if not downright indifference” to the plight of the other.

May one day of fasting and reflection doesn’t seem like much, but it consider a response to the poverty initiative.

(Stephen Kent is the retired editor of diocesan newspapers in Omaha and Seattle. E-mail him at considerenk@concast.net.)

Food Insecure

Seventeen million U.S. households, or nearly 15 percent of all households, were food insecure in 2008, meaning they were uncertain of having or unable to acquire enough food for all household members at some point.

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<td>PREVALENCE OF FOOD INSECURITY AMONG</td>
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Source: United States Department of Agriculture  ©2009 CNS

Based on data collected in a supplement to the Current Population Survey conducted December 2008.
Priests called to put out into the deep and trust in Christ

E n diciembre, el padre Paul Etienne recibiría la plenitud del llamado de Cristo en la Diócesis de Cheyenne, Wyoming. Continuó pues con mis reflexiones sobre el sacerdocio.

Mediante la ordenación, el sacerdote se convierte en intercesor del amor y portador de la visión de la misericordia de Dios, que constituyen el maravilloso don que Jesucristo conquistó por su amor para dar fe de Dios; usted será el portador de esa visión en la Diócesis de Cheyenne.

En una carta a los sacerdotes con ocasión del jueves Santo, el obispo Juan Pablo II escribió: “Si venís a la iglesia como María, habéis emitido la luz de la fe; la luz de la fe: si venís como José, habéis transmitido la verdad de la Trinidad: si venís como Pedro, habéis hecho la promesa de amor.”

El “sí” del padre Etienne a su ordenación fue un acto de fe y un llamado a la misericordia de Dios. Su “sí” es un llamado a confiar y a creer.

Era un llamado a confiar. El Señor invita a los sacerdotes a remar mar adentro, confiando en su palabra. El padre Etienne escribió: “Si venís como Pedro, os vais a inspirar en el mandamiento nuevo: que él os dice: ‘Como yo os he amado, así os amaréis vosotros los unos a los otros’ (Jn 13:34).”

El llamado al sacerdocio, al recibir el manto del Señor, es un llamado a la misericordia de Dios. El sacerdote se convierte en intercesor del amor y portador de la visión de la misericordia de Dios, que constituyen el maravilloso don que Jesucristo conquistó por su amor para dar fe de Dios; usted será el portador de esa visión en la Diócesis de Cheyenne.

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December 6
St. Rita Church, 1730 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis, African Catholic Ministry, African Mass, 3 p.m. Information: 317-269-1276 or African catholic ministry@yahoo.com.

December 7
St. Monica Parish, Emmaus Retreat House, 4700 N. 89th St., Indianapolis. “Evensong: Scripture/Taizé Music/Silence,” non-guided, silent reflection day, 4-5 p.m. Information: sanderson@archindy.org.

December 8
Seton High School, 235 S. 5th St., Richmond, Catholic Woman United of Richmond, “A Advent Afternoon of Reflection,” Franciscan Sister Noreen Brock, presenter, 1:30-3 p.m., lunch served.

December 9
St. Paul School, 978 N. Deerborn Road, New Albany, Sausage, pancake, egg, biscuits and gravy breakfast, pictures with Santa, 8 a.m.-noon, free, will offering.

December 9
4 W KWV’s, Divine Mercy and Glorious Cross Center, Rixville, located on 925 South, 8 a.m. east of 422 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 Brunwinkel, celebrant information: 317-689-3551.

December 9

December 9
Harry C. ’50, 505 S. Deerborn St., Indianapolis, “Advent: Waiting with Joyful Hope,” non-guided, silent reflection day, 9-11 a.m., 15 per person, reservations due Dec. 7, information: 317-621-7825 or advent@archindy.org.

Retreats and Programs
December 4-6
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Weekend retreat, “Grief: From Darkness to Light,” Mary Keene, presenter, information: 317-545-7681 or spatosetti@archindy.org.

December 10

December 11

December 12
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg, “Coffee Talk: Open Home-Open Heart,” Jeanne Kurt, presenter, 9:30-10:30 a.m., will offering. Information: 812-933-6437 or atfank@archindy.org.

December 12
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg, “Evensong: Scripture/Taizé Music/Silence,” 4-5 p.m. Information: 812-933-6437 or center@archindy.org.

December 12
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg, “Men’s Night at the Burgh.” Franciscan Father Carl Haver, presenter, 7:30-8:30 p.m., will offering. Information: 812-933-6437 or center@archindy.org.

December 14
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg, “Coffee Talk: Open Home-Open Heart,” Jeanne Kurt, presenter, 9:30-10:30 a.m., will offering. Information: 812-933-6437 or center@archindy.org.

December 16
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg, “Coffee Talk: Open Home-Open Heart,” Jeanne Kurt, presenter, 9:30-10:30 a.m., will offering. Information: 812-933-6437 or center@archindy.org.

December 18-20

December 31-January 1
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Come Away and Rest awhile,” non-guided, silent reflection day, 8 a.m.-6 p.m., $25 per person includes breakfast and lunch. Information: 812-933-6437 or atfank@archindy.org.

January 15-17
Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. “Reflection on the Book of Exodus,” Benedictine Father Eugene Hessell, presenter.

Information: 800-581-6905 or M Zoseller@stmeinrad.org.

Pastoral associate graduates from FBI Citizens Academy
Juan Manuel Guzman, a pastoral associate at St. Mary Parish in Indianapolis, graduated on Oct. 22 from a Federal Bureau of Investigation Citizens Academy held recently in Indianapolis. During the course, Guzman learned about the federal government, the responsibilities of the FBI and related agencies, and ways in which he can work in conjunction with these agencies for the good of the Indianapolis community.

The virtual academy is limited to 20 participants recommended by FBI staff members. “It is my hope to bring this valuable experience into my work in the archdiocese,” Guzman said. “It is here where my heart is, and I believe a collegial and close relationship with those men and women in the FBI who are working to keep us safe is crucial.”

Book on religious communities

Pastoral associate graduates from FBI Citizens Academy
Parishes announce Masses, for feast days of St. Juan Diego, Our Lady of Guadalupe

Masses and celebrations for the feast days of St. Juan Diego on Dec. 9 and Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12 are scheduled at various parishes in the archdiocese during December.

Our Lady of Guadalupe scheduled at various parishes in the archdiocese

• Dec. 12—St. Gabriel Church, 600 W. 34th St., in Indianapolis, Mass in Spanish followed by reception and dinner, 7:30 p.m.
• Dec. 12—St. Mary Church, 950 Prospect St., in Indianapolis, Mass in Spanish followed by dinner, 7:30 p.m.
• Dec. 11—Prince of Peace Church, 413 E. Second St., in New Albany, Mass followed by celebration, 11 a.m.
• Dec. 12—St. Michael Church, 101 St. Michael Drive, in Charlestown, Mass, 7 p.m.
• Dec. 11—St. Joseph Church, 312 E. High St., in Corydon, Prayer and songs, 7 p.m.
• Dec. 12—St. Mary Church, 413 E. Eighth St., in New Albany, Mass, 7 p.m.
• Dec. 12—St. Michael Church, 101 St. Michael Drive, in Charlestown, Mass, 7 p.m.

New Albany Deanery
• Dec. 11—St. Joseph Church, 312 E. High St., in Corydon, Prayer and songs, 7 p.m.
• Dec. 12—St. Mary Church, 413 E. Eighth St., in New Albany, Mass, 7 p.m.

Indianapolis
• Dec. 11—St. Ambrose Church, 325 S. Chestnut St., in Indianapolis, Mass in Spanish followed by celebration, 7:30 p.m.; rosary, 8:30 p.m.; folkloric dance, 9 p.m.; procession, 10 p.m.; Mass, 11 p.m.
• Dec. 12—St. Patrick Church, 930 Prospect St., in Indianapolis, rosary, 10:30 a.m.; representation of the apparitions, 10:45 a.m.; Las Mañanitas, morning songs, 11:15 a.m.; Ms in Gal, Ms, midnight; Mass, 7 p.m.
• Dec. 11—St. Philip Neri Church, 550 N. Rural St., in Indianapolis, Mass, 7 p.m.; procession, 8 p.m.; neighborhood folkloric dance, 9 p.m.; Mass, 10 p.m.
• Dec. 11—St. Monica Church, 312 W. Michigan Road, in Indianapolis, Mass, 7 p.m.

Indianapolis East Deanery
• Dec. 11—Holy Spirit Church, 7743 E. 10th St., in Indianapolis, Mass, 7 p.m.; reception, midnight.
• Dec. 11—St. Mary Church, 317 N. New Jersey St., in Indianapolis, Mass, 7 p.m.

Bloomington Deanery
• Dec. 4—St. Paul Catholic Center, 1413 E. 17th St., in Bloomington, Mass followed by fiesta, midnight.

Cass County Deanery
• Dec. 13—St. Andrew Church, 235 S. 5th St., in Shelbyville. Re-enactment, 11 p.m.; Mass followed by celebration, midnight.

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Advent should be a time when Christians keep the life of the little blessings they receive each day, blessings that are signs of God’s love, Pope Benedict XVI suggested.

“Advent is a time of seeking signs of God’s love wherever we find them, both small and large,” the pope said in his Angelus address Nov. 29.

Advent begins on Nov. 29 and lasts six weeks until Christmas Day. The principal themes of Advent are the coming of Jesus and the anticipation of his second coming.

“Advent is a time of getting ready,” the pope said. “What is required of us is that we make ourselves available to Christ, as the disciples did.”

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DEATH ROW
continued from page 1
executed by lethal injection near midnight. During a burglary nearly 23 years earlier, Woods had repeatedly stabbed to death 77-year-old Juan Placencia, a greatly loved father and grandfather.

On that cool, clear night of the vigil, McAuliffe listened to someone sing, “Ave Maria” as he watched others in the crowd hold candles that flickered in the darkness. He thought of Placencia.

“God forbid you find yourself in that situation where your father or grandfather is killed,” he says.

He also thought about Woods. And as he saw a hearse pass by and head into the prison, knowing it had to be for Woods.

“You see the hearse pull up. You know somebody just died behind that prison wall,” he says. “That’s just so strange and disappointing.”

Questions of life, death and forgiveness
More than two years later, the sadness that McAuliffe felt for the killing of Placencia and the execution of Woods seeps into his daily life. He is still haunted by the darkness. He thought of Placencia.

“A tiring experience, to think of him,” he says. “This was a man who would have been a great father. He would have been a great husband. He was a great athlete. He was a Presbyterian chaplain in the Army. He served as a field chaplain in Vietnam. His family was the most important thing in the world to him. Being the only son, I had a special relationship with him. So did my two sisters.”

Witnessing the killing of his father rocked McAuliffe’s life to its foundation. Yet in the nearly 32 years since his father’s death, McAuliffe has continued to work to help end the use of the death penalty in Indiana. He is now a member of the advisory board of McAuliffe’s organization, InCASE. So is his father’s brother, Tim Streett. He is a 75-year-old youth, Streett saw his father murdered in a burglary as he and his dad shoveled snow at their Indianapolis home.

“Your father or grandfather is killed,” he says.

Streett believes the one person who would best understand his transformation would be his late father, Alan.

“Everything I’m doing is consistent with the legacy he was a part of—to pursue justice and righteousness,” Streett says. “I think he would be very happy and comfortable with what I’m doing.”

Streett is a member of the advisory board of McAuliffe’s organization, InCASE. So is former Indiana Gov. Joseph Kernan. During his time as governor from 2003 to 2005, he commuted the death sentences of two death-row inmates to life in prison without parole.

“M y involvement with Will is a part of where I stand on [the issue],” Kernan says. “I’ve been acquainted with him since he was at Notre Dame. I have great admiration for him to fight for something he believes in so strongly. He not only believes in it, but he’s willing to do something about it.”

The Catholic influence
With a small, sparse office in Indianapolis, McAuliffe travels across the state, talking to the media and making presentations at churches and civic group meetings.

“We’re trying to give people the information they need to plug into their moral framework,” McAuliffe says. “The death penalty doesn’t jive with who we are as people and what we do as a society. I’m doing this because it’s a unique intersection of the things I care about most: democracy, government and my faith—my Catholic faith and my faith in humanity.”

He cites the influence of the late Pope John Paul II, who stated in 1999, “...The dignity of human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil. Modern society has the means of protecting itself, without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform. I renew the appeal I made most recently at Christmas for a consensus to end the death penalty, which is both cruel and unnecessary.”

—Pope John Paul II in 1999
A question of life and death
Evansville mother shows mercy to honor her daughter and God

By John Shaughnessy

As a mother, Mary Winnecke prefers to remember the beauty and joy of her daughter’s life instead of the horror and heartbreak of her murder. It’s one of the main reasons that the 65-year-old Indiana woman isn’t anticipating the moment when her daughter’s killer is scheduled to be executed on Dec. 11 at the Indiana State Prison in Michigan City, Ind.

Instead, the member of Holy Redeemer Parish in Evansville, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, has been working since this past summer to lead a letter-writing campaign asking Gov. Mitch Daniels to commute the death sentence for her daughter’s killer to life in prison.

“She was a vibrant person,” Winnecke recalls about her daughter and best friend, Natalie Fulkerson. “She had a love of life and a joy inside her. We were very close. I still miss her.”

That feeling endures 15 years after Matthew Eric Wrinkles broke into the home of Natalie and Tony Fulkerson and their two children. Also in the home during the early morning hours of July 21, 1994, were Wrinkles’ estranged wife, Debbie, and their two children. Debbie had come to her brother’s house as a refuge from a bitter divorce. Eric Wrinkles shot and killed Debbie, Natalie and Tony.

The killings devasted Mary Winnecke, but her love for her daughter and her Catholic faith have led her to forgive Wrinkles.

“I did it because of my daughter,” Winnecke said. “She died pushing a niece, Tracy, out of the way of the gun so she wouldn’t be killed. She stepped in front of the gun and told Tracy to run, and she pushed her out the door. There’s no way I could teach her children or anyone else to hate or kill when she saved somebody’s life. When you do the death penalty, you are killing someone.”

Winnecke admits that her efforts to forgive Wrinkles didn’t come quickly or easily.

“Gur Lord told us to pray for our enemy and love one another,” she said. “The first time I prayed for Eric, I was not in a forgiving mood. I hated him. I didn’t wish him any good. I didn’t want him in heaven with my daughter. But God told us to pray for our enemies, and that was my prayer. God took that little prayer and he went with it. When you give to God, you can’t out-give God. God gives back one hundred-fold. God gave me peace.”

While Winnecke has gained peace from God, she hopes Wrinkles will ask forgiveness from God before his execution.

“I was hoping there would be a clemency hearing so I could talk at it,” she said. “I hoped to go before the governor. But Eric doesn’t want a hearing. I pray that Eric does get on his knees and ask forgiveness. And I want others to continue to write the governor. Because we need to stop the death penalty, just like we need to stop abortion.”

As governor, Kernan faced choice of whether two men should live or die

By John Shaughnessy

If you had the power to determine whether a person should live or die, what would you do?

Joseph Kernan faced that question during his time as governor of Indiana from 2003 to 2005—when he had to decide the fate of two men on death row.

“It was the first decision for me whether someone would live or die,” Kernan recently recalled. “It was a serious business. It was very different being in the game than sitting in the stands.”

In 2004, Kernan had to consider the second step.

“In the commutation I granted, I expressed that it was important for the leadership of the three branches of government to come together and review the death penalty and its application—and while that review was taking place to have a moratorium on executions,” Kernan said.

In 2005, Kernan also granted clemency to Michael Daniels, an Indianapolis man sentenced to the death penalty for killing an Amary chaplain, Alan Streett, in 1978. The killing happened during a robbery as the chaplain shoveled snow at his house with his then-15-year-old son, Tim. Kernan and Tim Streett are now members of the advisory board of the Indiana Coalition Acting to Suspend Executions. Also known as InCASE, the non-profit organization seeks a moratorium on executions and the ultimate end of the death penalty.

“It’s my hope that that’s where it will lead,” Kernan said. “But I believe a process of looking at all the issues surrounding the death penalty is a necessary first step before you can get to the second step. As a society, need to think about where we stand on this issue. There are people who obviously feel strongly about it on both sides.”

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Joseph Kernan

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What the Church teaches about the death penalty

The Catechism of the Catholic Church presents the Church’s teaching on the death penalty in the section on moral doctrine in its explanation of the sixth commandment, “You shall not kill” (Ex 20:13, Dt 5:17).

It appears under the heading “Legitimate defense.”

#2267 A assuming that the guilty party’s identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor.

[Image 394x801 to 775x1086]

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Vitae

“The Criterion  Friday, December 4, 2009 Page 9
Advent penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

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

**Batesville Deanery**
- Dec. 6, 7 p.m. at St. Maurice, Napoleon
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Paul, New Alsace
- Dec. 9, 8:30 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County
- Dec. 10, 7 p.m. at St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg
- Dec. 13, 1 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhousen
- Dec. 17, 7 p.m. for Our Lady of Providence, Brownstown,
- Dec. 15, 6 p.m. at American Martyrs, Scottsburg
- Dec. 10, 7 p.m. at St. Bartholomew, Columbus
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Charlestown
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs
- Dec. 6, 4 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Greencastle
- Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at St. John of Arc
- Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navilleton
- Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, Brownsburg
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist, Enochsburg
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Connersville
- Dec. 10, 7 p.m. at St. Bridget of Ireland, Liberty
- Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at St. Anne, New Castle
- Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at Holy Guardian Angels, Cedar Grove
- Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Richmond
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville
- Dec. 14, 7 p.m. for Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Bernadette
- Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood
- Dec. 16, 7 p.m. for Holy Trinity, Edinburgh, and St. Rose of Lima, Lanesville
- Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Greencastle
- Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at American Martyrs, Scottsburg
- Dec. 10, 7 p.m. at St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad
- Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph University, Terre Haute
- Dec. 15, 1:30 p.m. at St. Ann, Terre Haute
- Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, Brownsburg
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs
- Dec. 10, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany
- Dec. 14, 2 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Shelby County
- Dec. 14, 6:30 p.m. at St. Maurice, Napoleon
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville
- Dec. 15, 6 p.m. at American Martyrs, Scottsburg
- Dec. 10, 7 p.m. at St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad
- Dec. 13, 1 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhousen
- Dec. 10, 7 p.m. at St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Charlestown
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs
- Dec. 20, 4 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany
- Dec. 20, 3 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany (Espaço)

**Indianapolis East Deanery**
- Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Laneville
- Dec. 7, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, Sellersburg
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Charlestown
- Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
- Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navillion
- Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany
- Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul, Sellersburg
- Dec. 19, 9:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs
- Dec. 20, 4 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany
- Dec. 20, 3 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany (Espaço)

**Connersville Deanery**
- Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Connersville
- Dec. 10, 7 p.m. at St. Bridge of Ireland, Liberty
- Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Anne, New Castle
- Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martville

**Indianapolis South Deanery**
- Dec. 6, 7 p.m. at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
- Dec. 14, 7 p.m. for Good Shepherd and St. Roch at St. Roch
- Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Jude
- Dec. 17, 7 p.m. at St. Ann
- Dec. 21, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood
- Dec. 22, 7 p.m. at St. Mark the Evangelist

**Indianapolis West Deanery**
- Dec. 10, 7 p.m. at St. Malachi, Brownsburg
- Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
- Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Monica
- Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph

**New Albany Deanery**
- Dec. 6, 4 p.m. at St. Mary, Laneville
- Dec. 7, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, Sellersburg
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs
- Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Charlestown
- Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
- Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navillion
- Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany
- Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul, Sellersburg
- Dec. 19, 9:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyds Knobs
- Dec. 20, 4 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany
- Dec. 20, 3 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany (Espaço)

**Seymour Deanery**
- Dec. 6, 2 p.m. for Holy Trinity, Edinburgh, and St. Rose of Lima, St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
- Dec. 6, 6 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace, Madison
- Dec. 7, 8 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace, Madison
- Dec. 8, 6 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace, Madison
- Dec. 10, 7 p.m. at St. Bartholomew, Columbus
- Dec. 15, 6 p.m. at Our Lady of Sorrows, Scottsburg
- Dec. 16, 7 p.m. for Our Lady of Providence, Brownstown,

**Terre Haute Deanery**
- Dec. 15, 1:30 p.m. at St. Ann, Terre Haute
- Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph University, Terre Haute
- Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Brazil
- Dec. 16, 7 p.m. at St. Paul, Greencastle
- Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. at Holy Rosary, Seelyville

Advent resources are available on archdiocesan Web site

During the season of Advent, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will have a special Web page at www.archindy.org/advent. The page contains various Advent resources, including links to the daily readings, reflections from Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, penance service schedules, images of past Criterion Christmas Supplement covers, and links of interest to other Advent Web sites.

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John the Baptist was a dangerous revolutionary whose call to inner conversion proved too much for him to bear within the web of his own complicated political and familial relationships.

Even though Herod feared a backlash from the populace who revered John as a prophet, he had John beheaded (Mt 14:5-12).

Later, Herod was troubled by the reports he had heard about Jesus—so if Jesus were the one who ranks ahead of him but whom he did not recognize until the Spirit descended on him (Jn 1:29-34).

On the following day, John pointed to Jesus in front of his own disciples as the "Lamb of God" (Jn 1:35-36), which prompted them to search out Jesus.

Later, as John was baptizing at Aenon near Salim north of the Dead Sea, John's disciples were perplexed that the people seemed to be shifting their attention to Jesus as a baptizer and away from John. But John responded: "He must increase; I must decrease" (Jn 3:30).

Luker's account shares with the other Gospels John's statement that he sees himself as the forerunner of one who will later baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (Lk 3:16-17; Mk 1:7-8; Jn 1:30-33). John identified his own baptism as one that helped to purify a person from the ill effects of sins that had been confessed. But fire is a stronger purifying agent. The baptism of Jesus would not only intensify the purification, but would also infuse the divine Spirit within those repenting about new life. This promised purification and regeneration by water and the Spirit had been prophesied by Zechariah in the sixth century B.C. Now John the Baptist and Jesus were announcing how God was near to those ready to reform their lives.

The fire and the Spirit indicated the dynamic character of God's intervention in the lives of the repentant and suggested that baptism transformed their lives on a cosmic scale. John the Baptist, the Elijah-like figure who was a forerunner of the Messiah (Mt 11:14), was a highly popular preacher of reform who gathered about him disciples who maintained their loyalty to him decades after his death and promoted his message of repentance in Jewish communities far beyond their homeland (Ac 13:1-7).

Christians reverence John the Baptist as a saint and the greatest of the prophets whose graced life led him to keep his sights set upon preparing the way for the Lord—a model for us all on our Advent journey.

Christ’s baptism by John the Baptist at the Jordan River is depicted in a stained-glass window at St. Theresa's of Lisieux Church in Montauk, N.Y. John the Baptist, who is known as one looking for the coming of the Messiah, is a model for Catholics during Advent.

Benedicetine Father Dale Lauderdale is a Scripture scholar at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn.

**Discussion Point**

Focus on Christ, not on yourself, when helping others

**This Week’s Question**

John the Baptist has said, "He [Christ] must increase; I must decrease" (Jn 3:30). What are some things you can do in your own life to "decrease"—to draw attention away from the things you are recognized for as a parent or spouse, an employee, a minister, etc.—so that Christ increases?

"I think that if we keep the thought in our mind that 'It's not about me' whenever we're doing our ministry, it will prevent me from just doing the same old thing, which I think is one of the reasons why Matthew's writings are so compelling. He writes about people who are making a real difference in the world. And I think that's what we need to do as well. We need to be making a difference in the world."

(Teresa Larsson, Jackson, N.J.)

"Lend Us Your Voice"

An upcoming edition asks: Is there anything in the Bible that you find hard to believe or accept at face-value?

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Faith, Hope and Charity/David Siler

Jesus was the ultimate community organizer

It seems that over the past couple of years since the discovery of embezzlement, voter registration fraud and partisanship by a small group within ACORN (obviously extremely serious violations), all other groups who do community organizing are lumped in with these indiscretions.

Perhaps some community organizing is simply bringing together a group around a common cause in order to accomplish more as a group than can be accomplished by an individual. The cause for which an organization can be set up is good for all of us. As Jesus directs us, we need to look to the fruits or results of any activity to discern its goodness or evil.

Selfishness was perhaps the most effective and successful community organizer.

It was his ability to bring together a band of misfits more than 2,000 years ago around the cause of spreading the good news of God's love, care and desire for fellowship with humankind that we have our Catholic faith today.

Jesus knew that he could not accomplish this goal without the help of others to share the task of helping to organize a community. No individual, not even Jesus himself, could have had the impact he had.

Of course, we all know how the story goes: one of Jesus' original 12 community organizers betrayed him and everything that Jesus taught.

Judas, out of his own greed, handed over Jesus to the temple authorities for a few gold coins. One bad egg could have brought down the entire operation.

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Jesus knew that he could not accomplish this goal without the help of others to share the task of helping to organize a community. No individual, not even Jesus himself, could have had the impact he had.

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The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Dec. 6, 2009

- Baruch 5:1-9
- Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11

The Book of Baruch, the source of this Advent weekend’s first biblical reading, is relatively brief, only five chapters long. It also is among the books called the Apocrypha by Protestant scholars and the Deuterocanonical by Catholic scholars. As such, it does not appear in the King James version of the Bible and some other translations that rely upon the thinking that led to the selection of books for inclusion in the King James edition. It also is not found in Jewish translations of the Scriptures is that at one time it was considered authentic by Jewish scholars. Actually, scholars now believe that Baruch was written in Hebrew, but that only the Greek translations survive.

For Catholics, however, most important is the fact that Christians from early times venerated Baruch as part of the Bible, and the Church officially has recognized it as such.

Regardless, when Baruch was written, its message was one of encouragement those who were suffering, as well as one of hope for the future. When this message would come, it would all be made right. The ways for people would be made smooth. Now, as John the Baptist declared with such determination, the Redeemer had come at last.

Reflection

When Baruch was written, times were hard for the Jews. When Philippians and the Gospel of Luke were written, times were hard for Christians. On this Second Sunday of Advent, the Church speaks to us. Times are hard. Even materially speaking, things are far from good, with the economic recession and war confronting us. Spiritually speaking, sin still cripples us and dooms us to eternal death. However, all will be right, and joy and peace will prevail, if we welcome Jesus into our lives. He will come to us, but we must invite Him into our lives with sincerity by reforming ourselves, renouncing sin and giving ourselves totally to God. The call of John the Baptist is spoken to us.

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 the Criterion, P.O. Box 1717, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.

The Sunday Readings

The Sunday Readings

Monday, Dec. 7
Ambrose, bishop and doctor of the Church
Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 85:9ab, 10-14
Luke 5:17-26

Tuesday, Dec. 8
The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Genesis 3:9-15, 20
Psalm 98:1-4
Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12
Luke 1:26-38

Wednesday, Dec. 9
Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin
Isaiah 40:25-31, 32-35
Psalm 103:1-4, 8, 10
Matthew 11:28-30

Thursday, Dec. 10
Isaiah 41:13-20
Psalm 145:1, 9-13ab
Matthew 11:15-17

Our Journey to God

Our Shepherd

You came as our shepherd When you answered God’s call. You came with the Truth, And you loved me all. You pondered the mystery Of God’s love for us. Then, like the Good Shepherd, You taught us to love. You helped us to believe In God’s plan for us. That we are His children, Called to Truth and Love.

By Sandy Bierly

(Sandy Bierly is a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. She wrote this poem as a “Year for Priests” tribute to all priests as well as Bishop-designate Paul D. Etienne, a son of St. Paul Parish in Tell City, who will be ordained as the bishop of the Diocese of Cheyenne, Wyo., on Dec. 9. In this file photo, Father Etienne con-celebrates a Mass on March 19 at the restored St. Joseph Church in Jennings County.)

Daily Readings

Friday, Dec. 11
Damasus I, pope
Isaiah 48:17-19
Psalm 1:1-4, 6
Matthew 11:16-19

Saturday, Dec. 12

Sunday, Dec. 13
Third Sunday of Advent Zechariah 14:1-5; or reflection 12:2-6a (Response) Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:10-18

Question Corner

Fr. John Dietzen

‘Transubstantiation’ is one among many ways to describe the Eucharist

We appreciate your column, which set the record straight regarding the presence of all the characteristics of bread and wine in the Eucharist, in response to someone who claimed that we cannot get gams by drinking from the Communion cup because it is the blood of Christ. A long time ago, I know a man who told his wife that her sight had become too poor to read her prayer cards because she had lost her faith—and the believed Him! There is another dimension to your answer which I believe merits some consideration.

We have been blessed with some priests and teachers of religion who emphasize the Real Presence, but don’t seem to know how to fit in language about the bread and wine. I even know priests who will not allow hymns to be sung during Mass if the host is referred to as bread. You wrote that you were surprised by the misconceptions held about this— the presence of the “accidents” of bread and wine in the Eucharist—by many Catholics who learned their faith from the catherinean years ago.

This kind of misunderstanding is still going on. Is there anything that can help to minimize such problems? (Indiana)

People who talk this way seem to lack knowledge of the Church’s centuries-old tradition of speaking about the Eucharist. If you participate in the Mass, how can they miss the way that terminology appears in our liturgical rites, official documents, and the writings of great saints and theologians?

Most of the eucharistic prayers speak of the mystery of our Lord’s body and blood of Christ (#1333). If they participate in the Mass, how can they not know how to pray? (Illinois)

Miracles, wondrous events that are beyond all natural explanation, are always possible, and we can pray for them. They happen all the time, even within our God’s world, and his continual re-creation.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France and some other shrines offer countless instances of remarkable events that contradict all medical and scientific explanations of what is “ought” to happen. For example, a person’s withered arms or legs become healthy and whole or a person’s cancerous tumors that should inevitably be fatal disappear instantly. These are without question God’s doing. To everyone, prayer for the sick is a sign of Christian faith and hope.

It remains, however, that miracles or instances of what theologians call “the workings of the world are not God’s usual ways.” As the Genesis creation story tells us, God looked at what he had made and declared it very good. He was wonderfully satisfied. As far as we can tell, it is the same Wisdom that gave existence to this infinitely complex universe that allows it to live and breathe and act according to the “laws” he placed there in the first place.
Your tax-deductible gift supports the day-to-day care of thousands of elderly women and men religious.

Please Share in the Care Ninety-five percent of donations to the National Religious Retirement Fund Aid elderly religious.

December 13, 2009 • Retirement Fund for Religious
KANSAS CITY, Mo. (CNS)—They clogged downtown streets, jotted down notes to restaurants, took up hotel rooftops, ate up parking space and generally immersed downtown Kansas City.

But the nearly 21,000 teenagers and their 3,000 adult chaperones also gave the city a three-day gift of faith.

They came to bring themselves closer to Christ. By the time they left the 2009 National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 19-21, they showed Kansas City—and the world watching live on the Internet—what happens when Jesus Christ pours out of the hearts of thousands of young believers.

The theme of the conference was “Christ Reigns.” It was co-hosted by the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, “You just think about what a great foundation this Church has for the future in thee young people.”

Just how well-behaved can thousands of teenagers be? Consider opening night when nearly 20,000 of the, not knowing there was another entrance on the other side of the 20,000-seat Sprint Center. Floodlight early at one entrance and waited for two hours for the doors to open and to undergo security checks of backpacks and purses.

The jaunt up could have been interminable, but the youth started the conference a bit early outside the arena. They began networking, each partying and making new friends from other teens from other parts of the country.

“It’s a lot different than Altar-Town, Kan.,” said Seth Blackburn, who came with a group from Mother of God Parish in Ortega, Kan. in the southeast corner of the state. “It’s in-preternatural to the, it’s mind-blowing.”

A group from the Archdiocese of Chicago began dancing with a group of uterine-wielding, head-wearing teens from the Archdiocese of Nashville.

“Mardi Gras!” said Ryan Erhardt. “We are young, Spiritued New Orleans Catholic, and we want to accept and spread God’s message.”

Bob McCarty, executive director of the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry, said that three weeks before the conference began registration had already exceeded the capacity of the main hall, the Sprint Center, where all the general sessions were scheduled.

That left organized scrumpling to prepare a “satellite” site for the overflow in the grand ballroom of the H. O. Bartle Conference Center, with its own clusters of conversations.

Both sites were linked with Big Screen, high-definition, 12-screen television.

It worked so well that the showers of catechists at each site, principal Steve Agrigian at Sprint and Jesuit Matt Busan at Bartle, were able to sing duet together across downtown Kansas City.

“We may be in two places, but we are one body in Christ,” Busan told students in both place by the TV linkup.

Groups of teens were rotated from both sites to that no group was in the Bartle ballroom for more than one general session.

For many of the teens, being up in Kansas City was a physical ordeal. They came from all corners of the continental United States, past Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. One delegation even came from a titular bade School in Japan.

The group topping the list was the number of the Land of the Rising Sun via the Internet.

Those who lived closer to an ocean were more likely to book an airline flight. But other endured hour on bouts.

Andrew Finch and his peer from Fiji Lake, Mich., in the Diocese of Gaylord, rode 13 hours. But it was worth it, he said.

“This is ridiculous,” Finch said as he joined the party outside the Sprint Center on opening night. “This is 20 times more people in my high school.”

“It’s unbelievable,” said Hannah Miller, a member of St. Mary Parish in Albany, Ore., who cleft by plane.

“The speaker are just so attarizing, and you learn so much about faith and how to live it,” she said. “There are just so many Catholic teens here and we all believe the same thing.”

Sister Petri, who cleft from Alcension Parish in Dayton, Ohio, in the Cincinnati Archdiocese, called it “breaking attarizing, the whole atmosphere here. There are just so many people here sharing the same faith that you have.”

McCarty made a grand entrance into the Sprint Center. An accosted mountain cliff-side, he rappelled by rope from the ceiling. Once he landed safely on the floor, he told the thousands of young people that they also need to show “Step up and Step out.”

The conference, he said, just isn’t about having a three-day Catholic party. It was about being the church’s disciple when they returned home.

On Sunday, disciples show up for Mass even when they don’t feel like it,” McCarty said.

Disciples are also challenged to bring their very best gifted to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ,” he said.

“Disciples Step up in prayer when painful change and challenges occur,” McCarty said. “And when we encounter disguise for human life, disciples Step up in courage to proclaim God’s Gospel value.”

McCarty reminded the youth that one in six children in the United States live in poverty and hunger.

“For the first time in the history of the church, we have a pope who can’t close his eyes to that and give in to fear,” he said. “That’s because we don’t shut our eyes.”

Our Scripture are filled with stories of people who stopped out. Our saints are fodder of people who stopped out.”

Young people cheered during the closing Mass on Nov. 22 at the 2009 National Catholic Youth Conference in Kansas City, Mo. Nearly 21,000 teens from across the U.S., 3,000 adult chaperones and local volunteers attended the Nov. 19-22 event.
Hispanic couples convalidate civil marriages in Church ceremony

By Mary Ann Wyand

It was a historic—and romantic—liturgy.

Idelfonso Orlando Mondragon Garfias and Leticia Calderon Anzures were among seven Hispanic couples who were married during a nuptial Mass on Oct. 31 at St. Philip Neri Church in Indianapolis. The two-hour wedding liturgy marked the first time in the 100-year history of St. Philip Neri Parish that so many couples exchanged marriage vows during the same Mass. Their marriage vows in the Catholic Church convalidated earlier civil ceremonies in M exico, and enabled them to receive the Eucharist and other sacraments.

“We have a number of couples in our parish who are Hispanic, and who have either been married civilly or simply living together for a number of years,” explained Father Carlton Beever, the pastor of St. Philip Neri Parish. “We have begun receiving them into the Church and formalizing their marriages sacramentally. We had seven weddings in one ceremony as part of that process.”

The bride wore white dresses and carried flowers. More than 40 relatives—including children of the couples—and many of their friends participated in the Mass.

“One couple had been together for 20 years,” Father Beever said. “They had been married civilly, but never married in the Church. I don’t think it’s unique to our parish that some of the immigrants who are coming to the United States are trying to normalize their marriage vows. They want to be a good example for their children and participate more fully in the Church.”

In Mexico, couples are required to be married in a civil ceremony first then may participate in a Church wedding.

“In lots of cases, this is impossible because people can’t afford it,” Father Beever said. “So we have lots of situations, as do other parishes with Hispanic members, where they have couples who have never been married in the Church and can’t receive the sacraments.”

Roberto M arquez Barruelas, the pastoral associate for Hispanic ministry at St. Philip Neri Parish, recently started a FOCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study) marriage preparation program for Spanish-speaking couples.

Fifteen couples from several parishes responded to the announcement of the first marriage preparation program earlier this year. Eight of those couples will be married in the Church during nuptial Masses at other parishes.

“Sometimes the [Hispanic] people ask me if it is possible to have a good marriage because most of the people don’t have the sacrament, only the civil ceremony,” M arquez said. “They have a necessity and desire to be in full communion with the Church.”

There is no charge for the six-month marriage preparation program, retreat day and nuptial M ass, Father M arquez said, and he hopes more Hispanic couples will want to have their marriages normalized in Catholic ceremonies.

“Not all five couples are interested in doing this after the eight couples,” he said. “I received calls from St. M onica and St. Lawrence [parishes in Indianapolis] as well as St. Joseph [Parish] in Shelbyville. This opportunity is for all people, not only for [couples in] this parish.”

Ifneto Orlando Mondragon Garfias and M arquez Barruelas were married in a civil ceremony on M ay 31, 2005, in M exico City. They immigrated to the United States later that year and are the parents of two daughters, M ichelle, who is 3, and Vanessa, who is 10 months old.

Before their Church wedding, they prayed for a happy life together and thanked God for many blessings.

“We already had children,” he said. “We want to teach our children the Catholic faith. I think it’s important for us to be fully married so we can teach our children. That was in our minds.”

Cooperation between science, faith benefits humanity, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Galileo Galilei showed the world that scientists cannot discover the truth solely through empirical study, but that philosophy and faith are also necessary for revealing the true meaning of the universe, Pope Benedict XVI said. “The more people realize how complex the cosmos is, the more necessary it is to use a number of tools that are capable of satisfying people’s thirst for knowledge, he said. “The tools of philosophy and theology complement scientific endeavors and ‘no conflict’ exists between these fields, he said.

“The pope made his remarks in a written message sent to participants of an interdisciplinary congress titled, “From Galileo’s Telescope to Evolutionary Cosmology: Science, Philosophy and Theology in Dialogue.” The Nov. 30-Dec. 2 congress was organized by Rome’s Pontifical Lateran University.

“The pope’s message, which was published by the Vatican newspaper, L’Osservatore Romano, on Nov. 30, highlighted the ‘deeply religious soul’ of the Italian astronomer who redefined the scientific method.

“Galileo’s discovery represented a decisive step for the history of humanity,” wrote the pope. ‘It’s tough to run a household without them.

POTS AND PANS, DISHES AND SILVERWARE

Most of us take these everyday utensils for granted and use them as a matter of course. Yet low-income people must spend their minimal resources on other fundamental things in order to survive.

Our Distribution Center at 2091 E. Maryland Street is in need of these items to help people keep their households functioning. Can you spare some of these basic household essentials from your own kitchen cabinets and drawers? It’s tough to run a household without them.

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Idelfonso Orlando Mondragon Garfias and Leticia Calderon Anzures pose for a wedding photograph with their 3-year-old daughter, Michelle, after their 2005 civil marriage in Mexico was convalidated in the Church during an Oct. 31 nuptial Mass at St. Philip Neri Church in Indianapolis. They were among seven Hispanic couples who were married during the same liturgy.

Catholic News Service