Easter peace is ours to receive from Christ, page 5.

The risen Christ is depicted in this detail from the "Resurrection" by Italian Renaissance master Piero della Francesca. Easter, the feast of the Resurrection, is April 4 in the Latin rite this year.
Christ’s passion is model for Christian pilgrimage, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Celebrating Palm Sunday Mass for 50,000 people at the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI said the passion of Christ is a model for every Christian’s spiritual pilgrimage through life.

Following Christ is not easy, the pope said on March 28. “It’s an uphill path that often goes against contemporary trends. “People can choose the easy way and avoid every hardship. They can descend toward the bottom, the vulgar. They can sink in the swamp of lies and dishonesty. Jesus walks ahead of us, and goes toward the heights,” he said.

The papal liturgy, celebrated in St. Peter’s Square on a beautiful spring day, began with a procession led by an international group of young people, who carried palm and olive branches in commemoration of Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem a few days before his passion and death.

The pope, who turns 83 in April, rode in a white jeep to the altar, holding a garland of braided palm fronds. It was the first of nine Holy Week events for the pontiff and it came as he and other Church of ficials faced questions and criticisms from some quarters for their handling of the priestly sex abuse crisis.

The liturgy included a prayer that Pope Benedict, “chosen by God” to guide the Church, “may find his strength in the suffering of Christ and his consolation in the light of Christ.” Another prayed “for young people and those who work to educate them and protect them.”

The Mass marked the 25th anniversary of World Youth Day, and the pope directed his homily toward young people. Being a Christian, he said, means modeling one’s life on Christ and following him toward what is true and pure.

It is a path that “leads to a rich life lived according to truth, and toward the courage that is not intimidated by the chatter of dominant opinions,” he said. The Christian pilgrimage inevitably leads one to be more open to people who are suffering or abandoned, and to be loyal and supportive of others when they face difficult situations, he said.

Following Christ is not something that can be accomplished alone in a spirit of pride or arrogance, the pope said. It requires a humble sense of belonging to the Church and believing with the Church, he said.

Ultimately, the Christian path leads to the cross, he said. As shown many times, he said, great results require great sacrifice, and “only a person who loses himself, finds himself.”

Christ’s pilgrimage led to Jerusalem, a real place where Christians today can follow in his footsteps, the pope said. The fact that people can still visit these places is important, he said.

“Faith in Jesus Christ is not a legendary invention. It is founded on a story that actually happened. This is a history that we can, so to speak, contemplate and touch,” he said.

At the same time, the pope said, for modern Christians Jerusalem is a spiritual reality that can be anywhere, because God is everywhere. Through Christ, the transcendent God became closer to human beings, he said.

“The God who is infinite is at the same time the God who is near. He cannot be closed off in any building, and he wants above all to live among us and to be with us completely,” he said.

The people who packed the square came from all over the world, and the liturgy featured prayers of the faithful in several languages, including one in Hindi asking for wise decisions by “those who govern the nations.”

At the end of the Mass, at a noon blessing, the pope issued a plea for peace in modern Jerusalem, saying he was “deeply saddened at the recent disputes and tensions” there. The tensions have been focused on the announcement by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Israel would not stop building in the West Bank territory it has unilaterally annexed to East Jerusalem.

The pope said Jerusalem was “the spiritual patrimony of Christians, Jews and Muslims, and the prophecy and promise of that universal reconciliation that God desires for the whole human family.” He said peace must be achieved through responsible human decisions, involving dialogue, the respect of the rights of all parties and mutual forgiveness.

“Let us pray, therefore, that those responsible for the future of Jerusalem will courageously embark on the way of peace and follow it with perseverance,” he said.

The pope also noted that April 2 marked World Autism Awareness Day, and he said he was offering a special prayer for the initiative.

Speaking in English, he said Holy Week is the Church’s most intense time of prayer and reflection. Palm Sunday, or Passion Sunday, recalls Jesus’ “welcome into Jerusalem by the children, he said. “Let us make their joy our own, by welcoming Christ into our lives, our hearts and our families,” he said.
Pope John Paul II was a model of untiring love for God and for all men and w omen, Pope Benedict XVI said as he celebrated a memorial Mass for his predecessor.

“The entire life of the Venerable John Paul II unfolded under the sign of this love, this ability to give himself generously without reserve, without measure and without calculation,” Pope Benedict said on March 29 during his homily at the Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica.

The Mass was celebrated in advance of the fifth anniversary of Pope John Paul’s death on April 2 because the date fell on Good Friday this year.

Using the Mass readings for March 29, Pope Benedict said Pope John Paul had many of the same traits as the “suffering servants” described in the reading from the Book of Isaiah.

“The servant acts with indestructible firmness, with an energy that does not lessen until he has realized the task he was assigned,” the pope said. “He presents himself with the strength of his convictions, and it will be the Holy Spirit that God places in him who gives him the ability to act with meekness and strength, assuring his success in the end.”

“That which the inspired prophet says can be applied to our beloved John Paul II: the Lord called him to his service and, entrusting him with increasingly greater responsibility, accompanied him with his grace and his constant assistance.”

“During his long pontificate, he did all he could to proclaim justice with firmness, with an energy that does not lessen until he has realized the task he was assigned,” the pope said.

Pope Benedict said his predecessor knew he was being led by God “and this knowledge, this certainty accompanied his unconditional, fervent love,” the pope said.

“He let himself be used up for Christ, for the Church and for the whole world; his was a suffering lived for love and with love until the very end,” Pope Benedict said.

Pope Benedict also read a paragraph of his homily in Polish, urging the Polish people to transform their pride in Pope John Paul into a commitment to minister “with persevering meekness and firmness.”

The prayers of the faithful also included a petition in Polish for Pope John Paul, “who served the Church to the extreme limits of his strength.”

During the Mass, Pope Benedict did not mention Pope John Paul’s sainthood cause. In December, he formally decreed that Pope John Paul had heroically lived the Christian virtues and thus was given the title “Venerable.”

Before Pope John Paul can be beatified, the pope also must sign a decree recognizing a miracle attributed to the late pope’s intercession. The reported healing of a French nun suffering from Parkinson’s disease is still being investigated by a team of physicians and theologians.

Recalling a time of grace around Pope John Paul II’s death in 2005

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Church is preparing to mark the fifth anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II, an event that stirred intense emotion, especially among young people in his own message for World Youth Day.

At the Vatican, a Mass celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI offered an occasion to look back and remember a pontificate that has not, and could not, be forgotten.

Pope John Paul shaped the policies and charted the directions for the Church in the 21st century, and his German successor has very much stuck to the same course.

The next big event commemorating Pope John Paul is marking the fifth anniversary of his death. What happened in the hours and days to follow will shock the world.

Pope Benedict celebrated a memorial Mass for Pope John Paul on March 29 because the April 2 anniversary of his death falls on Good Friday. The liturgy was in St. Peter’s Basilica, not the much larger square outside, and there was no Vatican effort to turn this into a mega-event for the mass media.

That doesn’t mean the huge crowds and the global interest of five years ago have been forgotten, however. Pope John Paul’s final days are recalled by many as a time of special grace.

The late pope made his final public appearance on March 30, 2005, when he was recovering from a tracheostomy to relieve breathing problems. He blessed pilgrims in St. Peter’s Square and tried in vain to speak to them. After a few minutes, aides wheeled him from view and drew the curtains of his apartment window for the last time.

Those who witnessed the scene sensed it was a farewell, and an incredibly poignant one. The Vatican later described it as “the last public ‘station’ of his painful Via Crucis.”

The next day, the pope suffered septic shock and heart failure. He was treated immediately with antibiotics and respiratory equipment, but his condition deteriorated.

Vatican officials later said it was the pope himself who decided to be treated at the Vatican instead of being taken to the hospital again.

An Italian cardinal who visited the dying pope described the scene in the papal bedroom: Assisted by several doctors and his personal staff, the pontiff lay serenely in a bed in the middle of his room, comforted by couches, occasionally opening his eyes in greeting to the handful of visitors allowed inside.

Outside, in St. Peter’s Square, the first groups of faithful—many of them young people—assisted to pray and sing songs beneath the pope’s window. Some 48 hours later, the vigil had grown to include some 100,000 people.

On the afternoon of April 2, according to his aides, the pope murmured in Polish, “Let me go to the house of the Father.” They were his last words. Six hours later, at 9:37 p.m., Pope John Paul died.

The announcement was made to the vast crowd in St. Peter’s Square shortly before 10 p.m. at the close of a candlelit prayer service. Many in the crowd wept. Then, after a long wave of applause, the square was enveloped in silent prayer. The bells of St. Peter’s Basilica tolled a death knell.

In Pope John Paul’s native Poland, the bells tolled and air-raid sirens were sounded. On Polish TV, commentators were in tears as they announced the pope’s death.

What happened in the hours and days to follow will shock the world. For one thing, people did not leave St. Peter’s Square after the death announcement—they stayed and prayed well into the early morning. And by the next day, it was clear that many, many people wanted to pay their respects to Pope John Paul in person.

Eventually, more than 2 million mourners came to view the pope’s body as it was laid out in St. Peter’s Basilica. They came from every continent. Some waited in line as long as 12 hours, and many took photos on their cell phones when they approached the papal bier. That broke with tradition, but it seemed fitting.

The unprecedented global media coverage hit a peak at Pope John Paul’s funeral, presided over by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the dean of the College of Cardinals and soon to be the next pope.

In retrospect, the transition seemed to have already begun, though the conclave was still 10 days away.

In his homily at the funeral Mass, Cardinal Ratzinger drew long applause when he imagined Pope John Paul standing at the “window of the Father’s house” and blessing the crowd below. Even after five years, many Catholics keep that image in their hearts.
Jesus finishes his mission

The four evangelists quote Jesus as saying various things while hanging on the cross. The things he said have come down to us as his “seven last words.”

Traditionally, those “words” are:

• “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34), said about those who nailed him to the cross.
• “Today you will be with me in Paradise” (Lk 23:43), said to one of the criminals dying with him after the man said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!” (Lk 23:42).
• “Woman, behold your son” (Jn 19:26), said to his mother, referring to John, and “Behold your mother” (Jn 19:27) to John.
• “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mt 27:46, Mk 15:34), the first words of Psalm 22.
• “I thirst” (Jn 19:28).
• “It is finished” (Jn 19:30).
• “Into your hands I commend my spirit” (Lk 23:46).

Of all that he said, perhaps the sixth of the seven “words” is the most significant:

“It is finished.”

But what is finished? Was Jesus saying only that his life has ended or is there more to it?

There had to be more to it since Jesus knew that he was going to rise from the dead. He told his Apostles that—repeatedly, even if they didn’t understand it—when he rose.

The Church teaches us that Jesus was actually telling us that his mission on Earth, the reason he came from heaven, was completed. He had accomplished his goal—the goal his Father had sent him to Earth, the reason he came from heaven, had hidden after he raised Lazarus from the dead.

But Jesus didn’t escape after his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. John’s Gospel tells us that Jesus explained why: “What should I say? If I say this hour I came to this hour” (Jn 12:27).

This—his death by crucifixion—was Jesus’ purpose and mission. It was the reason that God became human.

St. Augustine explained the need for the Incarnation. God, he said, “had no power of himself to die for us: he had to take from us our mortal flesh. This was the way in which, though immortal, he was able to die.”

On Good Friday, we commemorate the accomplishment of that mission. Hanging on the cross, in the terrible position that our modern crucifixions don’t display, he was able to say, “It is finished.”

—John F. Fink

Letters to the Editor

Letter writer is wrong to speak about how others are observing Lenten season

I am amazed when some individuals feel they can speak for everyone on any given subject.

Such as the case when I read Al Scheller’s letter to the editor in the March 26 issue of The Criterion with the headline “Let us give Lent back to God.”

Scheller seems to think that he can speak for all of us on how we are observing this season of Lent.

He states that none of us really have the true spirit of Lent and, by extension, immersion does. With unfailing insight, he observes that we aren’t praying, fasting or giving alms. He does this with unfailing conviction. Well, I must respectfully disagree.

We at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany are having a very holy and spiritual Lent thanks to a number of events which have occurred. Our liturgies are filling and well attended. Our pastor, Father Eric Augustin, preaches in a most reverent way, and his homilies are thought-provoking and inspirational.

We have just finished a Lenten retreat which was well attended, and gave new insight into our baptismal responsibilities. We just concluded a “12 hours of Grace” in which priests were available for 12 straight hours to hear individual confessions.

Every Wednesday, we had a “soup and soul” supper where a modest soup supper was followed by a Lenten message given by a priest.

All of these events were well attended, and provided the parish with a well-rounded approach to having a holy and fulfilling Lent.

And what’s wrong with gathering at our local Knights of Columbus Hall and enjoying a fish dinner?

Joe Proctor
New Albany

God is very much a part of parish’s Lenten observance, reader says

I believe that God has and is the focus in parish Lenten observances. For example, St. Bartholomew’s Parish in Columbus, we have had prayer and Communion services Monday through Friday at 7 a.m. Attendants have included parishioners of all ages down to 2 years old.

Scripture study classes continue studying God’s Word, and will include study of the Passion and death of Jesus this Lent.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults class is one of our largest, and included parishioners of all ages down to 2 years old.

The March 26 editorial by Daniel Conway in The Criterion stated, “Sadness and disappointment are prevailing among many Americans this week,” referring to the passage of health care reform legislation.

Sure, you didn’t get everything you wanted, but 32 million Americans will get health insurance and, according to the New England Journal of Medicine, the deaths of 14,000 to 18,000 Americans each year can be linked to not having health insurance.

The 32 million Americans who will be insured and the thousands of other Americans who would have died because they were uninsured won’t get health insurance.

I think God is definitely in our Lent.

Sandi Neidigk
Columbus

When it comes to health care reform, can we rejoice for the lives that will be saved?

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Better medical system does not have to come at the expense of our principles

It is with great pain that I write my first letter to this Catholic newspaper.

My Church has chosen to give a very welcome response to the health care reform bill that makes all Canadians pay for abortions.

We send thousands of people to Washington yearly to protest abortions, and now we offer lip service when the government says they will pay for some abortions with our tax dollars.

I know, we want a fairer and better medical system in this country, but it doesn’t have to come at the expense of our beliefs and principles.

May God have mercy on us and improve our leaders to represent us with the fervor that this situation demands. I am scandalized at the lack of leadership in our state and throughout our country.

Catholics speak up! Let our leaders know where you stand!

St. Francis Hospital
Leonard Murray
Indianapolis

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St. Francis Hospital
Leonard Murray
Indianapolis
Easter peace is ours to receive from Christ

La paz pascual, la recibimos de Cristo

Durante la Misa de Pascua enalzamos el sacrificio del niño Jesús, recordando que nos fue bendecido por Cristo mismo. En oración y acción debiéramos preocuparnos por aquellos que padecen nudos de dolor. En estos momentos es cuando nos encontramos los verdaderos médicos de la vida y tenemos nuestras propias misiones. En oración y acción nos preocupamos por miles y miles de muertos que no conocemos y que han sido desterrados de sus hogares en sus propios países. Catholic Relief Services (Servicios Católicos de Socorro) se ocupa de esta misión en nuestro nombre. Deben abrir nuestros corazones en la oración para solidarizarnos con las víctimas del terror. No debemos descuidar nuestra atención y preocupación por los miles de niños que son víctimas en el mundo. Jesús dijo: “estaba […] en la cárcel, y viste a mí” (Mt 25:36).

Nuestros corazones cristianos acompañan a las víctimas de la guerra, a aquellos que sufren susfridades o desastres naturales, como los haitianos. Nuestras agencias de caridad católicas están siempre de guardia. También volcamos nuestra atención por aquellos que son víctimas en nuestros hogares. En un ámbito más familiar, ¿acaso nos acercamos a los enfermos, a los ancianos, a aquellos que están solos y a aquellos que, tal vez, sufren de desesperación? ¿Estamos allí durante los momentos difíciles? ¿Estamos con aquellos que sufren por el peso del pecado? Jesús no desistió a nadie.

El Domingo de Resurrección reencontramos la fe que fue hecha al bautizarnos. Declaramos nuestra fe en la redención que Cristo conquistó por nosotros. En verdad seríamos malagradecidos si permanecíamos como simples reactivos a la fe, como la forma en que la convertimos en nuestra forma de vida, nuestra manera de entender nuestra esperanza. Cantamos con entusiasmo “la cárcel y la victoria”.”

Gloria al Padre y al Hijo y al Espíritu Santo.

Sacerdotes:

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en abril

Sacerdotes: ¿Qué les motivó a tomar su decisión de ser sacerdotes? ¿Qué les animó a unir su vida a la de Cristo? ¿Qué les animó a servir a los demás? ¿Qué les animó a seguir a Jesús en su viaje hacia la resurrección?

La Liturgia del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en abril

La Pascua es especial para aquellos que soportan una carga de sufrimiento más pesada, ya que tienen la promesa que Jesús nos mostró que la vida no culmina con la muerte. Conquistó por nosotros el acceso a la vida eterna. Nos solidarizamos con Cristo en la oración, tanto individual como en conjunto. Vivimos como cristianos realistas a fin de marcar la diferencia entre nosotros.

La Pascua es la fiesta de la esperanza. Nuestros crucifijos son distintivos de esperanza, ¡Gracias a Dios por el obsequio de nuestra fe pascual! ¡Gracias a Dios por la divina de la victoria pascual de su Hijo! ¡Que Dios lo bendiga a usted y a los suyos con una profunda paz pascual! ¡

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

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

Traducido por: Daniela Guarrape, Language Training Center, Indianapolis.
Retreats and Programs

April 9-11
Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, Saint Meinrad. “Royal Sacrifice–Queen Esther’s Revealing Role,” Benedict Inn Father Noll Muller, presenter. Information: 800-581-6905 or mzcoeller@saintmeinrad.edu

April 12
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Men’s Night at the ‘Burg,” Father Carl Hartung, presenter. Eucharistic adoration and confession. 2:30-4 p.m. Reconciliation begins at 12:30 p.m. Information: 765-962-3902.

April 13
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Food and Faith Series–Salads and light dinner. Information: 317-545-7681 or parroquis@archindy.org

April 22
Benedict Inn Retreat Center and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Sixth annual “Love on the Job,” retreat for administrative staff, Benedictine Fathers Noel Muller and Jeremy King, presenters. Information: 317-860-1000 or benedictineministries@indiana.edu

April 22-25
Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, Saint Meinrad. “Love on the Job,” retreat for administrative staff, Benedictine Fathers Noel Muller and Jeremy King, presenters. Information: 317-860-1000 or benedictineministries@indiana.edu

Divine Mercy services are scheduled in archdiocese

Divine Mercy Sunday services are scheduled on April 11 in parishes across the archdiocese. All services are open to the public.

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

Catholics are encouraged to go to confession and receive the Eucharist on Divine Mercy Sunday in order to obtain a plenary indulgence completed upon the feast.

Divine Mercy Sunday prayer services on April 11 reported to The Criterion are as follows:

April 11
• St. Mary Church, 415 E. 8th St., New Albany—4 p.m. Divine Mercy chaplet and Divine Mercy prayer service.

• St. Aloysius Gonzaga Church, 202 Troost St., Madisonville—10 a.m. Eucharistic adoration.

April 11 registration deadline. †

3 p.m. CDT on May 1. There is no cost for the workshop, but lunch on site is $10 per person. The workshop will offer training to those who serve the Latino community. Participants will learn how to better understand Latins, their customs and culture. Presentations will examine cultural biases and myths, ways to promote healthy relationships and build trust, and discuss how to discover the best practices for serving this community.

The training will be interactive, including group exercises and team-building activities to help the audience “do the Latino” and apply the knowledge obtained from the presentations.

Robinson, the president of M.G. Robinson Inc. and an adjunct faculty member at the University of Evansville, spoke to the University of Evansville and master’s degree in public administration at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

The training is developed for ministers, pastors, faculty, administrators, students, archdiocesan and parish staff members, and others who serve the Latino community.

For more information or to register, call 812-337-8791 or send an email to ramsey@saintmeinrad.edu before the April 20 registration deadline.
Health care bill on minds of many people at pro-life banquet

The Great Lakes Gabriel Project’s “Partners for Life” fundraising banquet on March 23 drew the Northside Knights of Columbus Hall in Indianapolis was a joyous event in which saved lives were celebrated and dedicated volunteers were honored. That joy overflowed from the more than 300 attendees who came from across the archdiocese and the state, even though earlier in the day President Barack Obama signed into law a health care reform bill that the U.S. bishops believe may provide federal funding for abortions.

Many of those on hand were Gabriel Project volunteers, known as angels, from the 28 parishes in the archdiocese which offer the ministry. Through the Gabriel Project, they give material, emotional and spiritual assistance to women in crisis pregnancies.

David Bereit, co-founder of 40 Days For Life, was the keynote speaker at the banquet.

He mentioned that, as he was waiting in a Detroit airport earlier in the day for a connecting flight from an Indian- apolito, he saw on a television the start of the White House ceremony in which the health-care bill, which Bereit described as “the greatest attack on minors of Roe vs. Wade” decision, was signed.

“As I was watching all of the hype and all of the build up, I realized that there was about to happen before my eyes,” Bereit said. “I realized that a death sentence was about to be signed.

“Because, regretfully, even though we in America have many, many problems with our health care system, climate change, energy policy, etc., abortion has hijacked this process and utilized the debate in our country over the last year to implement abortion law.

Bereit has observed the effect of abortion across the country during the six years since 40 Days for Life was founded in College Station, Texas.

Since that first 40-day-long prayer campaign in front of an abortion facility in 2004, 345 pro-life campaigns have taken place in 307 cities in all 50 states and seven other countries.

More than 315,000 people have participated in the campaigns which were assisted by more than 10,000 religious congregations. And as of March 23, Bereit said that more than 2,500 lives of unborn babies have been saved while campaigns were held.

Bereit said the debate on the floor of the House of Representatives of the evening of March 21 leading up to the historic health care vote reminded him of a visit that his family made to the chamber about a year ago.

At the time, 10-year-old daughter, Claire, saw the words “In God we trust” inscribed on the wall behind where the Speaker of the House sits and asked, “Daddy, when in America did it become ‘In politics we trust’?”

“I thought, how wise for a 10-year-old child to see and understand how far we have fallen, how far we have come from that founding principle of our nation, given to us by God Almighty.”

“Even you and I, ‘For me, it was a really a profound approach. All of a sudden, those words chiseled into that wall and the realization of what Claire had said in stark contrast to [it],” realized how, for too long, that the pro-life movement have many times put our trust in the wrong places.

For too long, Bereit said, pro-life supporters have put too much focus on getting the right people in the White House, Congress and the Supreme Court.

While not wholly dismissing the relevance of American politics and judicial spheres, Bereit reminded his listeners that abortions ultimately happen at the local level near the homes and workplaces of pro-life supporters.

Abortions happen [near] where we live, where we work, and in the communities where we worship,” he said. “And if we want to intercede and save lives where they are at the greatest risk, it has to be done in our communities, at the local level.

To work effectively at the local level, Bereit invited the banquet audience to put their trust more consciously and completely in God.

“Right now, as a nation, as a people, we need to turn back to God as we have never turned to him before in our lifetimes because our nation is in desperate need,” he said. “When we’re in times of crisis, fortunately, God in his word has given us a prescription to remedy that crisis.

“… I didn’t come across the country to bring a message of despair tonight. I came, instead, to bring a message of hope.”

Eileen Hartman, executive director of an arm of the Great Lakes Gabriel Project that extends to all five dioceses in Indiana and others in Mahoning and Ohio, was filled with hope after meeting in person many of the project’s volunteers that she had only had contact with by e-mail in the past.

“To have them actually come out and meet each other and [for me] to be able to meet them in person just took it to another level,” said Hartman, a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus.

“I think that extra level is going to be something for our project because I think we’re at a point where we’re ready to become a pregnancy resource center or do something a little bit more than we’ve been doing. And it’s going to take the support of the community. And I think tonight showed that we’ve got that support.”

Hartman was a bit dismayed by the fact that the health care reform bill was signed on the same day as the Gabriel Project’s banquet. But it didn’t dampen her spirits or shake her faith.

“It’s awful to have to remember this date, which was wonderful for us, with that association,” Hartman said. “But I think David put it very well. These are the times when we need to dig in even deeper and stronger. We still need to be firm in our faith. We’re not working for victory. We’re working from victory. That makes all the difference.”

(For more information about the Gabriel Project in the archdiocese, log on to www.goangels.org. For more information about 40 Days for Life, log on to www.40daysforlife.com.)

Archbishop Dolan urges Catholics to make Mass the center of their Sunday

NEW YORK (CNS)—Archbishop Timothy J. Dolan of New York urged Catholics to make Mass the center of their Sunday because the observance of the Lord’s day is essential for the Church, “the vibrancy of our faith” and the “clarity of our Catholic identity.”

The archbishop used his first pastoral letter since being named to head the New York Archdiocese a year ago to call Catholics to keep the Lord’s day holy and remind them that it is in receiving the Eucharist on Sunday that they sustain their faith.

“As somebody 50 or older can remember when faithful attendance at Sunday Mass was the norm for all Catholics,” Archbishop Dolan said. “To miss Sunday Eucharist, unless you were sick, was unheard of. To be a ‘practicing Catholic’ meant you were at Mass every Sunday. Over 75 percent of Catholics went to Mass every Sunday. Today, only one-third of us go weekly, perhaps even less in some areas of the archdiocese,” he said.

“If you want your faith to wither up and die, quit going to Mass once a week,” Dolan added.

Dolan said he ended his letter a week ago without food, the soul will expire without nourishment. That substance comes at the Sunday Eucharist,” he added.

When asked if he would release his pastoral letter on St. Patrick’s Day, March 17, he said it was a good occasion “to look at how we are living the Catholic faith that has been handed on to us by successive generations—for some, the faith can be traced all the way back to St. Patrick himself.”

Archbishop Dolan noted that as head of the New York Archdiocese one of his joys is the close contact he has with the Jewish people, “our elder brothers in the faith”—to use the phrase of Pope John Paul II.

“Catholics and Jews work, live and pray together in this city as they are able to do in very few other places around the world. The welcome the Jewish people have given me here in New York has been a true blessing,” he said.

He said Catholics and Jews can learn much from each other, adding that one lesson the Jewish faith can teach Catholics is about “the importance of the Sabbath.”

“Observance of the Sabbath is now, and has been since time immemorial, a constitutive part of being a Jew. Even if Jews today, like Catholics, no longer observe the Sabbath, it remains a distinctive mark of identity,” Archbishop Dolan said.

He quoted Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, former New York, whom the archbishop called “one of the great rabbi scholars of the 20th century.” The rabbi said: “There are few ideas in [the] world that make a stronger impression on the human spirit as the idea of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a time for rest. It is a time to rest from the toil of this world and get in touch with our Maker. It is a time to look forward to the baseball game and a barbecue. But that was after we got home from Sunday Mass!”

“Do we Catholics think that Sunday is the ‘climax of living’?” he asked. “Do we look forward to Sunday as a day dedicated to the Lord which gives meaning and purpose to our whole week?”

“Or have we become accustomed to a week end mentality,” he continued, “wherein we sleep late, catch up on chores around the house, run errands, drive to the kids to sports, do a little recreation and then it’s Sunday Mass in between everything else, if at all?”

He noted that Pope John Paul II in his apostolic letter “Dies Domini” (“The Lord’s Day”) said that “when Sunday loses its fundamental meaning and becomes merely part of a ‘weekend,’ it can happen that people stay locked within a horizon so limited that they cannot see no longer the see the heavens.”

Archbishop Dolan acknowledged that some people have jobs they must work on Sunday, and that many families are obliged to participate in children’s sports and other activities, but he suggested that Catholics avoid “unnecessary work” and, when they want to intercede and save lives where they work, “remain closer to God’s heart.”

“Do we look forward to Sunday as a day dedicated to the Lord which gives meaning and purpose to our whole week?”

Archbishop Timothy J. Dolan

The Criterion  Friday, April 2, 2010
Some are in-laws and their families, too. His family tree and, over the years, has gathered nearly others. Families—their aunts, uncles and cousins. And sometimes Schapker would listen as his parents talked about their 75,000 names Genealogist has compiled tailored it to their own needs. The program took the place of awareness program for youths in the United States, and education in the Logansport Deanery parishes. They used players were given real-life scenarios that showed how people could be a saint. Downie had participated in a similar faith in another church, and suggested it to the director of religious education in the Logansport Deanery parishes. They used Catholic Relief Services’ “The Face the Fast,” a hunger conversion program for youths in the United States, and tailored it to their own needs. The program took the place of the often-used CRS rice bowls. “I hope that the kids understand the next time they see someone walking or who is without a job that circumstance is not always the same we can control,” said Teresa Keay, formation coordinator at All Saints Parish. “When the country spoke about Haiti, they said even though one person can make a difference, together we can really make a big difference. And, together, we can always.” (For this story and more news from the Diocese of Lafayette, log on to the Web site of The Catholic Moment at www.thecatholicmoment.org) DIOCESI OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND True Presence felt in eucharistic adoration at Fort Wayne parish FORT WAYNE—“No where on Earth are you more welcomed, no where on Earth are you more loved, than by Jesus, living and truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament.” That was the sign of the Holy Spirit. “It’s about who we are.” says Ann-Marie Thomas, a South Bend nurse who returned home from the Haiti earthquake with her heart set on helping the children affected by the disaster. “Helping others begins with prayer,” Thomas said. “It helps me to heal.” She was one of many people who were touched by the suffering of the Haitian people and wanted to help. “The understanding of a person who is ailing, the idea of suffering, the idea of dying, the idea of the hope that the person has, it was very powerful,” Thomas said. “I was sent to the hospital to help minister to the suffering.” The hospital was located in the capital city of Port-au-Prince. The capital city was leveled, families were ripped apart, millions of people were left homeless and thousands were injured. Many people had limbs amputated without the benefit of anesthesia and, according to Thomas, infection is a major concern. Not knowing when the next doctor might be available to see them, one of her jobs while in Haiti was to teach patients to care for their wounds as they recover. Some patients have pins holding bones together, and those pins will need to remain in place for another two to three months. “You have to keep that clean,” explains Thomas. “I had peroxide wipes in little biggie bags that I was giving out. Just hope the next person will continue the care. They are totally at the mercy of whoever comes next.” Thomas spent five days serving in the village of Milot, about 75 miles north of Port-au-Prince. The hospital there is the only hospital within 50 miles. Sacred Coeur is the only hospital left standing there, and the 78-bed facility was flooded with more than 400 patients. Thomas spent much of her time dressing wounds and tending to the emotional as well as the physical needs of the people. (For these stories and more news from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, log on to the Web site of Today’s Catholic at www.todaycatholicnews.org) DIOCESI OF GARY Serving multiple parishes: “It’s about who we are” MERRILLVILLE—The ongoing shortage of priests in the Catholic Church in the United States has resulted in changes, with multiple-parish pastoring being one of the most common solutions. While priests go to two or more parishes poses challenges, it also sets the stage for personal and spiritual growth for clergy and laity alike. Kate Wiskus, author and senior advisor, shared that message with priests of the Diocese of Gary at a meeting on March 11 at SS. Peter and Paul Church in Merrillville. Calling herself a “person in the pew,” Wiskus related her experience of being built up, as well as the tremendous sign of the Holy Spirit. “They’ve only now just started getting into when the next doctor might be available to see them, one of her jobs while in Haiti was to teach patients to care for their wounds as they recover. Some patients have pins holding bones together, and those pins will need to remain in place for another two to three months. “You have to keep that clean,” explains Thomas. “I had peroxide wipes in little biggie bags that I was giving out. Just hope the next person will continue the care. They are totally at the mercy of whoever comes next.” Thomas spent five days serving in the village of Milot, about 75 miles north of Port-au-Prince. The hospital there is the only hospital left standing there, and the 78-bed facility was flooded with more than 400 patients. Thomas spent much of her time dressing wounds and tending to the emotional as well as the physical needs of the people. (For these stories and more news from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, log on to the Web site of Today’s Catholic at www.todaycatholicnews.org)
Pope brings African-American foundress one step closer to sainthood

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—

Father Benedict XVI advanced the sainthood cause of Mother Henriette Delille, a freed black woman of African descent in 19th-century New Orleans, declaring that she had lived a “heroic virtue.”

By signing the decree on March 27, the pope confirmed the recommendations of Vatican authorities who have studied the cause for several years.

She can be beatified once a miracle is attributed to her intercession. If her cause advances, she could become the first African-American woman to be declared a saint.

Pope Benedict also approved the decrees of three martyrs: a Romanian bishop, a German nun and a Slovenian lay member.

Among the other decrees that Father Benedict signed on March 27 was the recognition of the second miracle needed for the canonization of Spanish Sister Bonifacio Rodriguez de Castro, 1837-1905, founder of the Religious Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The miracle was change in her life, there was a transition completely to God. That’s really what counted—her life from that point on.

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During the formation session on penance, Father Augenstein said, “I talked with our parish liturgy committee, pastoral council and parish staff.” He said, “We came up with the idea to offer reconciliation for half a day and to call it ‘12 Hours of Grace.’ It gave people plenty of time to open themselves up to God. We created a welcoming atmosphere with low lighting and music, and we had hospitality ministers there at all times to greet people.”

The sacrament of reconciliation involves recognizing and accepting penitents “where they are in their personal faith journey,” Father Augenstein said, “and—more than anything else—to be the minister of God’s love and forgiveness.”

To prepare for “12 Hours of Grace,” Father Augenstein preached about the sacrament of reconciliation and the Church’s process for examination of conscience. “We wanted to help people understand what reconciliation is all about,” he said, “and to learn about the forgiveness and love that God offers in this rite.”

To help Catholics who might be uncomfortable about participating in confession, pairs of parishioners volunteered as hospitality ministers in one-hour shifts, he said, and gave each penitent a brochure explaining how to go to reconciliation and the Church’s process for examination of conscience.

The focus of this time was on providing a soothing time of prayer and reflection, he said, so penitents can approach Easter with sin-free hearts.

“The people who came said they appreciated the flexibility of the reconciliation times,” Father Augenstein said. “[Confessions] were steady steam of penitents thanks to much
gave Catholics in southern Indiana and as lasted all day on March 18 at Our Lady of

By Mary Ann Wyand

NEW ALBANY—It was advertised as “12 Hours of Grace.”

A Lenten reconciliation program that lasted all day on March 18 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in New Albany gave Catholics in southern Indiana and as a spiritual gift during this challenging time for so many people.”

He added, “If you work with God’s grace, this can come about. All of us are called to be instruments of God’s love.”

“Sometimes it is a matter of time to open ourselves up to God. We created a welcoming atmosphere with low lighting and music, and we had hospitality ministers there at all times to greet people.”

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A Lenten reconciliation program that lasted all day on March 18 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in New Albany gave Catholics in southern Indiana and as lasted all day on March 18 at Our Lady of
The Lord is risen! Yes, he is risen indeed!

That’s the truth we Christians profess on Easter.

Jesus—after dying the cruel death by crucifixion, being wrapped in a shroud and buried, and while his tomb was as being guarded by soldiers—one rose from the dead. He then appeared to Mary Magdalene and other women, to the Apostles, to disciples on the road, and to 500 people at one time.

It would seem preposterous to deny the Resurrection with all the evidence in favor of it.

Nevertheless, there are people who still don’t believe it actually happened. In fact, they think it is preposterous to believe that such a thing could possibly happen.

Why? Because it’s not possible for someone who is actually dead to come back to life.

People in the 21st century know that it can’t happen. Well, people living in the first century knew that, too. That’s why Jesus’ resurrection is so remarkable—indeed, miraculous.

But maybe Jesus didn’t actually die. Maybe he only appeared to be dead. That means that he woke in the tomb in a severely weakened condition, somehow was able to get out of the shroud that bound him, had the strength to push back the boulder in front of the tomb without the soldiers noticing it, and then made his appearances as a healthy man!

Well, what about that story the soldiers were instructed to tell—that Jesus’ disciples stole his body while the soldiers were noticing it, and then made his appearances?

The fact that the Apostles refused to believe the report of the women to whom Jesus first appeared contradicts the theory that the Apostles made it up.

Thomas wasn’t the only Apostle to doubt the Resurrection—all the Apostles did until Jesus appeared to them: “Their story seemed like nonsense and they did not believe them” (Lk 24:11).

If we were to believe that the Apostles made up the story, we would have to discount the accounts in the Gospels. We would have to believe that, after Jesus’ death, the Apostles got together and plotted how they could deceive everyone.

Somewhere they would have had to get Jesus’ body where it was buried and hide it. Then they could claim that he had been raised from the dead and appeared to them. Then they could fan out and preach about Jesus, even while knowing that doing so could mean that they would be killed as Jesus was.

From what we know about the Apostles—fishermen, a tax collector and other simple men—can we really believe that they could do what they did while knowing that it was all a lie?

When it came down to their martyrdom, wouldn’t at least one of them admit that they had made it up?

Quite the contrary. They preached Jesus as risen from the dead because they knew full well that it was true.

St. Paul, to whom the resurrected Jesus appeared, told the Corinthians, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain. … But Christ has been raised from the dead” (1 Cor 15:17, 20). He knew it was a fact, and so do we.

That’s why we can confidently proclaim, “Christ is risen! Yes, he is truly risen!”

(John F. Fink is the editor emeritus of The Criterion.)
‘Hallelujah Chorus’ embodies the joy of Easter

By Sr. Joan Roccaasano, C.S.J.

Of all the fine arts, music arguably possesses the greatest power to move people at their core.

The ancients believed that the music one listened to influenced behavior and formed moral character. The “Hallelujah Chorus” in Handel’s Messiah exemplifies these thoughts. It has retained its popularity since its first public performance in 1742, and is most often performed during the Advent/Christmas season.

After Handel finished composing the piece, he exclaimed with joy, “I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself!”

The text tells us what to believe. With a dramatic introduction, the full-throated chorus bursts forth with “hallelujah,” the spontaneous and joyful praise of God to the Lord.

The music itself is replete with vitality. The string section skips with joy while the brilliant, joyous horn melody reaches the heavens. The timpani alert the soul: “Here is musical expression of the power of God.

The text proper proclaims the reign of the omnipotent Lord God: “The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, who shall reign forever and ever, and Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev 19:6; 11:15; 19:16).

The words from Revelation sound to the four corners of the Earth. The music itself is replete with vitality. The string section skips with joy while the brilliant, joyous horn melody reaches the heavens. The timpani alert the soul: “Here is musical expression of the power of God."

Christian hope remains steadfast, is strong and takes courage in Christ’s resurrection, which has already been won for us.

Jn 14:27; Mt 28:20.

(St. Joseph Sister Joan Roccaasano is a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Brentwood, N.Y. She earned doctorates in musicology and liturgical studies, and writes on the liturgy, beauty and the arts, and Ignatian spirituality.)

Symbols in the Easter sacraments show forth the power of God

By Daniel S. Mulhall

Catholicism has always recognized the power of the sacraments. What is special about Catholic sacraments is that they are signs, instituted by Christ, to give grace, with grace being recognized as the presence of God, the power of God. The Church’s liturgy and sacraments are pathways to the sacred, as Joseph Martin explains in his book Doors to the Sacred. The Eastern Churches use icons, sacred images, as a means to come in touch with the sacred. The Church’s celebration of the Easter Vigil is filled with signs to remind us of the sacredness of this day, and of God’s nearness to us.

The Easter Vigil begins with the lighting of the new fire. The ability to produce fire was one of the things that allowed the weak human race to survive. It was a sign of great power. The creation of a new fire is a sign of the sacred. When that new fire is transferred to the large Easter candle, the Church proclaims Jesus Christ as the living embodiment of the fire, the supreme gift from God. Later in the ritual, this candle is thrust into the water at the baptismal font to empower it with the power of Christ. This water will then be used to baptize catechumens, the adults and children who have been preparing to enter the Church. Throughout history, humankind has tried to harness the power of the sacred for its own benefit. Magic incantations, witchcraft, and cultic sacrifice of animals and people were futile efforts to control God. What was never in doubt was that it was immensely powerful. One did not go boldly and fearlessly when seeking to tap into its power. Rather, the sacred was approached with wonder and awe, and a fear of what might happen if one got too close. Perhaps that is the reason why so many people participate in Mass on Easter when they don’t go to church on any other day. Perhaps they are drawn there by the power of God that is felt so strongly on this day. One thing is certain—Easter is not just another day.

On Easter, the power of God is there for us all to experience with wonder and awe—if we open ourselves to see and experience that power.

(Daniel Mulhall of Laurel, Md., is the former assistant secretary for catechesis and inculturation for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He speaks, writes and consults on issues concerning catechesis, parish life, pastoral planning and inculturation.)

Gustavo Leppe, Karen Cashin and other members of the Cathedral Chorale sing the “Hallelujah Chorus” from G. F. Handel’s Messiah at the conclusion of the Easter Vigil in 2006 at St. Agnes Cathedral in Rockville Centre, N.Y. This famous 18th-century Baroque chorus embodies the joy of Easter that should fill our hearts throughout the Easter season.

†
Did two psalms foretell Christ’s Passion?

(Eighth in a series of columns)

For this Good Friday column, let’s examine two of the most famous passages that the Church sees as possibly foretelling the Passion of our Lord Christ. Both psalms are classified as individual lamentations.

Psalm 69 portrays vividly the suffering of one who cries out to the Lord. The psalmist laments, “More numerous than the hairs of my head are those who have my heart in revulsion. You have delivered me from my enemies, but I have been banished by those who hate me.” (Ps 69:5). In his Last Supper discourse, Jesus told the Apostles that he would be killed “in order that the word written in their law might be fulfilled, ‘They hated me without cause.’” (Jn 15:25). The question is frequently debated: Was Jesus just praying Psalm 22 while he hung on the cross or did he really believe that God had really abandoned him? I believe that Jesus was praying the psalm because—in every other prayer the New Testament quotes Jesus as praying—he called God his Father. If he really felt abandoned on the cross, wouldn’t he have prayed, “Father, why have you abandoned me?” Instead, he used the words of the psalm.

While thinking of Psalm 22 as a desperate lament, we also should note that the last third of it is in an invocation to praise God: “You who fear the Lord, give praise! All descendants of Jacob, give him praise! You who have been delivered from the hand of the enemy, give him praise!” (Ps 22:22-25). It then becomes a universal chorus of praise: “All the ends of the earth will worship and turn to the Lord; all the families of nations will bow low before you.” (Ps 22:28).

The psalmist laments, “My grief is more numerous than the hairs of my head. They have cast lots for my garments and have divided up my clothing. They crushed my head into the dust; they hurled stones at me” (Ps 22:18). As a volunteer there, I can attest to that. I also think of St. Paul, one of the Church’s greatest saints, who persecuted Christians before his conversion to Christianity. As Catholic Christians, we always look to the founder of our faith, Jesus, for the ultimate example of love and compassion. How can we possibly foretell the Passion of Christ without any knowledge of the psalms?

The passion was expressed as compassion rather than passionate violence.

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The Sunday Readings

Daily Readings

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

Tuesday, April 6
Acts 2:36-44
Psalm 33:4-5, 18-20, 22
John 20:11-18

Wednesday, April 7
Acts 3:1-10
Psalm 105:1-4, 6-9

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

Friday, April 9
Acts 4:1-12
Psalm 118:1-2, 4, 22-27a
John 21:1-14

Saturday, April 10
Acts 4:13-21
Psalm 118:1, 14-15b, 16-21
Mark 16:9-15

Sunday, April 11
Divine Mercy Sunday
Acts 5:12-16
Psalm 8:2-4, 13, 22-24
Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19
John 20:19-31

Question Corner

Gospels record God’s plan for our salvation and his loving care for us

Q

We read in the New Testament that Jesus and the Apostles raised people from the dead. Why do we hear nothing about what happened to these people—like Lazarus—after they came back to life and if or when they finally died? (Maryland)

A

My mail continuously brings questions somewhat like yours, interesting questions perhaps, but ones that the Bible doesn’t answer:

• What kind of life did Jesus have when he was a child?
• What did Joseph die, and who was with him?
• What kind of work did Jesus do to provide for his mother—and maybe some cousins—after Joseph died?
• When did Mary live after Jesus’ death?
• When did Mary die?

Various private revelations supposedly give us much, sometimes contradictory, information about such matters, but we know almost nothing for sure. Certainly, the Bible doesn’t tell us much.

The only exception relates to Lazarus. In the Gospel of John, we read that the Pharisees plotted to kill him after he had been raised from the dead “because many of the Jews were turning away and believing in Jesus because of him.” (In 12:11.)

Overall, though, we know little about these kinds of details of the life of the Lord because of the purpose of the New Testament, especially the Gospels, is not to give a biography of Jesus and his family, but to unveil for us the Father’s plan for our salvation, the plan revealed in the words and actions of his incarnate Son.

Everything essential in that plan, and in knowing the Father’s loving care for our eternal good, is included in the Gospels. Whatever is not essential to that purpose was simply not of much importance and left out of the written accounts of Jesus’ life.

When Philip asked Jesus to see the Father, Jesus replied, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” (In 14:9.)

In other words, all we will ever need to know or can know about God is revealed somehow or other in how Jesus is portrayed in the Gospels.

Put simply, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were not interested in gratifying our curiosity. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles in their own way wanted to convey, through what Jesus did and said, how Jesus desires us to live as his close followers.

Other tidbits may be exciting and satisfy our inquisitiveness. Other than that, they are irrelevant.

We don’t know when or how Lazarus died, but we don’t need to know that.

As a eucharistic minister in our parish, I take Communion to a 94-year-old lady who likes to show me her religious articles.

She has a rosary with seven decades and another rosary that only has four decades.

She asked me to explain the reason for their difference, but I have no idea.

Can you help? (Illinois)

There is a seven-decade rosary called the “Franciscan Crown” or the “Seraphic Rosary.”

Originated by a young Franciscan novice in the 15th century, it was established eventually as an official prayer of all Franciscans.

The decades are based on the so-called “seven joys” of our Blessed Mother:

• The Annunciation
• The Visitation
• The Nativity
• The adoration by the Magi
• The finding of our Lord in the temple
• The Resurrection
• The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into heaven and her coronation as queen of heaven.

A four-decade Rosary for the Dead was initiated by a French priest in the 1800s.

This rosary, or chaplet, consists of the recitation of Psalm 130—“Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord”—(Ps130:1)—with various shorter prayers on the smaller beads.

A huge variety of such devotions have appeared in Christian spiritual tradition through the centuries.

While they were overall good and helpful for people’s prayer, most of them gradually died out.

It’s no surprise that you and your friend aren’t acquainted with all of them.

Q

A (A free brochure on ecumenism, including questions on intercommunion and other ways of sharing worship, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 315, Peoria, IL 61612. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address or by e-mail to jdietzen@aol.com.)
Employment

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St. Joseph University Parish, serving the campuses of Indiana State University and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, has a full-time position open for a Pastoral Associate for Campus Ministry (Campus Minister). The position requires 2-3 years experience in campus ministry with a Master’s degree and CCMA certification preferred. Proficiency in working in a team-oriented environment and creativity in marshalling the diverse resources of a parish community to aid in the campus ministry effort is expected. See a detailed job description at www.stjoeup.org. Salary and comprehensive benefits package commensurate with experience (12 month contract).

Send résumé, letter of application and contact information for three references to:
Rev. Richard Kaley, OFM Conv.
St. Joseph University Parish
Terre Haute, IN 47807
(pastor@stjoeup.org)

Application deadline: April 15 or until a suitable candidate is selected.

TATATICAN CITY (CNS)—A Vatican commission called for greater unity effort in China

The commission also urged Church leaders and state authorities to engage in “respectful dialogue” to overcome divisions. It expressed the hope that bishops and priests deprived of freedom would be allowed to resume their pastoral ministry as soon as possible.

The commission, established by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007, released a statement on March 25 following a three-day meeting at the Vatican.

A Vatican commission has worked to promote reconciliation between Catholic communities that have registered with the Chinese authorities—and therefore operate under certain government-imposed limits—and Catholic communities that have practiced the faithful minor clandestine fashion, professing full loyalty to the pope.

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VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Vatican and other Church officials have amplified their defense of Pope Benedict XVI after a series of reports in The New York Times and other media criticizing the pope for alleged “inaction” on sex abuse cases, Vatican authorities emphasized that it was the Church “that demonstrated its commitment to ‘healing, renewal and redemptive intervention’ in the wake of the crisis.”

The pope's strongly worded letter to Irish Catholics in March was part of a series of efforts to “root out the blight of abuse wherever it appears,” said Cardinal Francis George, archbishop of Chicago, in a meeting with abuse victims during his 2008 visit to the United States.

Meanwhile, leaders of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops voiced concern for victims of clergy sexual abuse while offering praise for Pope Benedict’s long-standing leadership in dealing with abuse cases.

In a Holy Week statement issued on March 30, members of the anti-abuse Committee of the USCCB said they are aware of the pope’s concern for abuse victims and “how he has strengthened the Church’s response to this tragedy.”

Committee members also acknowledged Pope Benedict’s support for efforts within the U.S. Catholic Church on behalf of victims as well as the steps taken to deal with perpetrators of abuse.

The committee said recent revelations of sexual abuse by clergy “saddens and angers the Church and causes us shame. If there is anyplace where children should be safe, it should be in their homes and in the Church,” the bishops said.

Father Bradung also recalled Pope Benedict’s private meeting with abuse victims during his 2008 visit to Washington and how the pontiff listened intently as he met with victims.

“Toward a Holy Week without sin”

By Peter Jessen

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, said the recent media focus on the sex abuse scandal shows that the Holy See is “a place of transparency and dialogue.”

“Steps are being taken to deal with perpetrators of abuse. The committee said recent revelations of sexual abuse by clergy “saddens and angers the Church and causes us shame. If there is anyplace where children should be safe, it should be in their homes and in the Church,” the bishops said.

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