Celebrating a wonderful life

By John Shaughnessy

Students at St. Roch School in Indianapolis rejoice with Father James Wilmoth following a school-wide tribute on April 8 that celebrated their pastor. The school celebration recognized Father Wilmoth’s selection as one of the 10 priests from across the United States who recently received the Distinguished Pastor Award from the National Catholic Educational Association.

Father James Wilmoth honored for his ministry and commitment to Catholic schools

By John Shaughnessy

His smile bursts into a laugh, and there’s a definite bounce in his step as Father James Wilmoth passes the swings on the playground at St. Roch School in Indianapolis, crosses the parking lot and heads toward the church—all the time sharing the story about “Jesus and the little boy with the lunchbox.”

The story comes from one of those “out-of-the-mouth-of-babies” moments, a moment that occurred during Father Wilmoth’s Holy Week tradition of having one child from each grade share their favorite Bible story during the school Mass. Ready for her turn, the little girl walked to the front of the church, sat next to Father Wilmoth, and began weaving the wonderful tale of Jesus and the little boy with the lunchbox.

“She talked about how the little boy just had a few fish in his lunchbox,” Father Wilmoth says, his eyes glowing with joy. “And she went on and on, and everybody is following her every word. She told us how Jesus fed everybody lunch from the fish that were in the boy’s lunchbox. It was her way of telling the story of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes.”

The joy continues to beam on the pastor’s face as he enters the church to prepare for another school Mass with the children. After all, in his 45 years in the priesthood, the 70-year-old Father Wilmoth doesn’t hesitate when he’s asked about his favorite part of being a priest. “It’s celebrating Mass with the kids,” he answers. “They sing. I engage them in the homily. It’s a wonderful opportunity to bring the faith to them.”

Pope meets abuse victims, expresses shame and sorrow for their suffering

VALLETTA, Malta (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI met with eight victims of priestly sex abuse in Malta, and promised them the Church would do “all in its power” to bring offenders to justice and protect children.

The pope was “deeply moved by their stories, and expressed his shame and sorrow over what victims and their families have suffered,” a Vatican statement said after the private encounter on April 18. “He prayed with them and assured them that the Church is doing, and will continue to do, all in its power to investigate allegations, to bring to justice those responsible for abuse, and to implement effective measures designed to safeguard young people in the future,” the statement said.

“In the spirit of his recent letter to the Catholics of Ireland, he prayed that all the victims of abuse would experience healing and reconciliation, enabling them to move forward with renewed hope,” it said.

The meeting at the apostolic nunciature in Rabat came after a group of victims had asked to meet with the pope to tell him of their ordeal and ask for an apology. The encounter was not part of the pope’s official itinerary, and was only announced publicly by the Vatican after it had happened.

Participants said the victims cried as they told their stories, and that the pope had tears in his eyes as he listened. “We now have peace in our hearts, even because the pope found time to meet us. We now look forward to the end of the court case, and closure of this chapter,” one unidentified victim told the Times of Malta.

The Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, told journalists that the private meeting in the chapel of the nunciature lasted about 20 minutes. He said the pope, Archbishop Mario Grech of Malta, Bishop Mario Grech of Gozo and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was honoring the 265th pope on April 19, 2005, elected the two-day visit to Malta. The crew and staff from Air Malta on his return flight to Rome on April 18 after a two-day visit to Malta. The crew was honoring the pope for the fifth anniversary of his election. German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was elected the 265th pope on April 19, 2005, taking the name Benedict XVI.
Archbishop Borders, retired archbishop and Indiana native, dies

BALTIMORE (CNS)—Archbishop William D. Borders, who retired in 1989 as the 5th archbishop of Baltimore, died on April 19 at Mercy Ridge Retirement Community in the Baltimore suburb of Timonium.

A native of Washington, Ind., he was 96 and had been battling colon cancer for the fourth year of his retired life.

Borders served as a freshman in a local church by his baptism by bishops and priests, and by all who were blessed to call him Archbishop, Father, brother, teacher and friend.

His funeral Mass was scheduled for 1 p.m. on April 23 at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore, with entombment in the cathedral crypt to follow.

Borders was a man of deep faith, great humility and great love for God, the Church and this archdiocese,” said Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien, the current archbishop of Baltimore. “As a result, he was universally loved by the people of his local Church, by his baptism by bishops and priests, and by all who were blessed to call him Archbishop, Father, brother, teacher and friend.

Upon his arrival, Archbishop Borders was faced with several serious challenges. The archdiocese was suffering a budget deficit and a religious order funding scandal.

Borders was a founding bishop of the Diocese of Orlando, Fla., in 1968. He continued to reside in Baltimore throughout his retirement, maintaining an active priestly ministry well into the last year of his life.

“Archbishop Borders was a man of deep faith, great humility and great love for God, the Church and this archdiocese,” said Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien, the current archbishop of Baltimore. “As a result, he was universally loved by the people of his local Church, by his baptism by bishops and priests, and by all who were blessed to call him Archbishop, Father, brother, teacher and friend.

Baltimore City was dealing with striking police and budget deficit and a religious order funding scandal.

Upon his arrival, Archbishop Borders was faced with several serious challenges. The archdiocese was suffering a budget deficit and a religious order funding scandal. Baltimore City was dealing with striking police and sanitation workers, and there was a court-ordered school board training plan that bordered on anarchy.

While dealing with those volatile issues, the new archbishop suffered a near-fatal heart attack while on retreat just months after his arrival. He had suffered his first Christmas in Baltimore recuperating under an oxygen tent.

“It caused me to be realistic as far as what I had to do and what I didn’t have to do,” Archbishop Borders said. “You have to recognize limitations. If you don’t, it’s going to get you in any walk of life.”

In appointing leaders, Archbishop Borders followed a groundbreaking path. He reached out to women and African-Americans in a special way—to name them to key posts.

The archbishop’s concern for racial equality stretched back to the earliest days of his priesthood. When he became pastor of Holy Family Parish in Port Allen, La., in 1957, he struggled with how to desegregate his parish.

“There was a section roped off for black people,” Archbishop Borders remembered in a 1989 interview for a magazine at his parish. “I was worried about how he going to get rid of the ropes without causing a riot, the archbishop “prayed some.”

“Then I bought a can of coal oil, took off the ropes and quietly burned them,” he said. Within six months, African-American parishioners gradually integrated throughout the Church.

Throughout his priesthood, Archbishop Borders was concerned with issues of social justice. He met with union leaders and civil rights activists such as Chavez. Among his many pastoral letters and statements written while in Baltimore included letters on the desegregation of Baltimore City public schools, women in the Church, housing for the poor, and lay involvement in the Church, nuclear deterrence and human sexuality.

A strong supporter of Catholic Charities, Archbishop Borders oversaw significant expansion in the outreach agency’s work with the poor. Our Daily Bread, a downtown soup kitchen that grew to become Catholic Charities’ most well-known ministry, started during his tenure.

“Our Daily Bread was right next door to his house,” remembered Harold Seurat, the executive director of Catholic Charities, whom Archbishop Borders hired. “I think he always felt very proud of the fact that the people were served right next to his house. He would walk back to his house in the morning or at the end of the work day and would always talk to people there.”

The third of seven children, Archbishop Borders was born at his parents’ home in Indiana during a flood that lifted the family’s house from its foundation.

He began his studies for the priesthood in 1932 in Indiana, but transferred to New Orleans’ Notre Dame Seminary in 1936. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1936 and served as an associate pastor in Baton Rouge.

In 1943, two years after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, Archbishop Borders enlisted in the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps and served with the 91st Infantry in Normandy in France, Belgium, Italy and Italy. He was awarded an honorable discharge in 1946, with the rank of major, and a Bronze Star for Valor for carrying a wounded soldier to safety while under fire.

Seeing men die in battle shaped Archbishop Borders’ humble, collaborative approach to leadership, according to Father Richard T. Lawrence.

“He had all the fear drained out of him in the first few years of his priesthood,” said Father Lawrence, pastor of Baltimore’s St. Vincent de Paul Parish, adding that the archbishop exhibited pure courage on the battlefield and that was how he ministered as well.

After the war, Archbishop Borders was assigned as the associate pastor at Our Lady of Prompt Succor in Westwego, La. He earned a master’s degree in education at the University of Notre Dame in 1947.

Upon completing his studies, he resumed parish ministry and was sent next to Our Lady of Lourdes in New Orleans. He served as assistant chaplain and then chaplain of Louisiana State University.

He was also the pastor of Holy Family Church in Port Allen, La., and the rector of St. Joseph Cathedral in Baton Rouge, La.

Early in his retirement, Archbishop Borders was a much-sought-after speaker, as he wrote a book about spiritual living in a secular society, published by Catholic Foundation Press.

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“When we talk about the past and the future, Mtanes recalled his past, and he mused that at least the church in the rest of the country, “From what I hear in the streets, I am pessimistic. People are always talking about peace, but there is no peace. The situation is today I am afraid there will be a disaster in all of the Middle East. Now everybody has missiles and the borders are irrelevant.

“Who knows where we are headed. Only God knows,” he added. “And I trust in him.”

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By Mary Ann Wyand

Colts player and wife encourage teenagers to make right choices in life

Christianity—not football—defines who he is as a person, Indianapolis Colts center Jeff Saturday told teenage peer mentors for the archdiocesan charity education program on April 15 at the Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis.

Saturday and his wife, Karen, were the keynote speakers for the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education’s A Promise to Keep: God’s Gift of Human Sexuality annual volunteer recognition luncheon honoring the high school students who present the Church’s abstinence education curriculum to middle school students at Catholic grade schools and parish religious education classes.

Their presentation on “Loving Out Marriage as Christian Men and Women of Faith” focused on the importance of the life choices one makes and for what you stand for. We just want to tell you, from our hearts, how grateful we are for you (as charity peer mentors). We pray to God that our children act like you act. This is where we want our children to be sitting in the next five to 10 years. This is truly what we want our daughter and twin sons to be a part of, and to understand how important what you’re doing is. We’re behind you 100 percent.

What we’re doing is saying to you that we’re so proud of each and every one of you for being here, and for what you stand for. We just want to tell you, from our hearts, how grateful we are for you (as charity peer mentors). We pray to God that our children act like you act. This is where we want our children to be sitting in the next five to 10 years. This is truly what we want our daughter and twin sons to be a part of, and to understand how important what you’re doing is. We’re behind you 100 percent.

Jeff and Karen Saturday have been friends since high school dated for seven years and were married in 1999. They urged the teenagers to search for and wait for a loving and faithful spouse. As a teenager, she said, “I didn’t have any role models. I didn’t live a Christian life. I didn’t have Christian parents. I didn’t have Christian friends. … When Jeff and I decided to change our lives and live for Christ, our friends changed.”

She urged the high school students to set moral boundaries and stick to them. “Know where you’re headed in life,” she said. “There is grace under Christ. Hold on to your faith and your boundaries. … Your role models need to be teachers, principals, and people like us who have been there and can tell you it’s worth it to wait. … Your spouse should share your morals and goals in life.”

Think about your future when you make important decisions, she said. “You have to set goals of what you want to look like in 10 years and work to meet that goal. You can’t let other things distract you. You have to be firm and strong in your stance.” Everybody here knows that when you start drinking, you make bad decisions. … You need to have people around you that encourage you to live right.

The Bible talks about how brief our lives really are in the scheme of things,” he said, “but if we think eternally, how Christ wants us to think, sharing our witness and our faith with other people, how important our lives can be. … The Bible talks about how we can only serve one God, one master.”

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein also thanked the teenage peer mentors for their volunteer service to younger students.

“I want to thank you personally for your [Christian] witness,” Archbishop Buechlein said. “I want to tell you that I’m proud of you, and your commitment to the virtues of purity and chastity. That’s a marvelous gift to our local Church. I want to encourage you to support each other as peers, and surround yourself with like-minded people. We’re thankful for what you’ve done for our local Church. You’re very important. I pray for all of you.”

Chastity peer mentors from several schools also addressed the teenagers.

“I think it’s too easy for younger kids to be bombarded with media influences that tell them that having sex before marriage is the norm, and drinking or doing drugs is a part of ‘living up your high school experience,’” Roncalli High School senior Lauren Ezell of Indianapolis explained. “As mentors, we are literally a physical, in the now, example of how you can abstain from these things and stay true to your values, and still have many friends and be well-liked and have a great high school experience.”

Bishop Chatard High School senior Cassie Bormann of Indianapolis said the A Promise to Keep program “teaches great wisdom and morals,” and she has “enjoyed telling others why it is important to remain chaste in actions, clothing and thoughts. … It is important to stay true to your values and yourself. …”

This educational program has helped me and others to be strong in making decisions and deciding what is important in life. 

Cathedral High School Senior Kristin Probst said the A Promise to Keep program “is so important and needed nowadays because of all the [bad] peer pressure we see on television, in magazines and from those around us. … It is important to remember to love and respect ourselves, others and this amazing gift (of sexuality) that God has given us.”

Indianapolis Colts center Jeff Saturday and his wife, Karen, of Carmel, Ind., praise the teenage peer mentors for the archdiocesan A Promise to Keep: God’s Gift of Human Sexuality charity education program for their service role models during an annual awards luncheon on April 15 at the Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis.

Indianapolis

Indianapolis

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Support the National Day of Prayer in 2010 and beyond

The Rev. Billy Graham was the driving force behind the initiative and planted the seed.

And presidents Harry Truman, Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush and other commanders in chief supported it. But thanks to a Wisconsin federal judge’s recent ruling, the future of the National Day of Prayer in America is uncertain beyond this year.

From its roots traced back to 1952 when Rev. Graham fed a rally in Washington calling for a special day for Americans to pray and meditate so that the United States would experience a “great spiritual awakening,” the National Day of Prayer has been a staple of American society since President Truman signed a National Prayer Day proclamation in 1952.

President Reagan later made it a permanent event, and President Bush annually hosted a high-profile event to mark the day at the White House.

Despite the overwhelming support the event has had over the years, we know it would only be a matter of time before a group of secularists challenged this time-tested celebration that the majority of Americans—across all walks of life—support.

Enter the Wisconsin-based Freedom from Religion Foundation, a group of atheists and agnostics, which filed a lawsuit against government officials in 2008.

The lawsuit claimed that the National Day of Prayer proclamation, a religious perspective of the state because it said that, in observing the day, officials in 2008.

The wisdom gained from a group of atheists and agnostics, which filed a lawsuit against government officials in 2008.

Together with my sister, Maureen, we’ve even a few blocks away, he drives Mom to church, the doctor, the hairdresser and everywhere else. They get the caregiver award.

Besides the children, Mom has two paid caregivers, one in the morning and one in the evening.

The morning visitor is generously paid for by the state under Medicaid. It is a program intended to keep people out of nursing homes, which would cost the state much more.

The White House said President Barack Obama would make the National Day of Prayer proclamation in 2010 in his first State of the Union address.

The U.S. Department of Justice said it was reviewing the judge’s ruling before deciding on a next step. It has 60 days to appeal.

The decision is not expected to affect the state under Medicaid. It is a program intended to keep people out of nursing homes, which would cost the state much more.

The National Day of Prayer has been a permanent event, and President Bush annually hosted a high-profile event to mark the day at the White House.

The National Day of Prayer is held each May, is unconstitutional.

Whether God and Creator.

For more than 200 years, the majority of Americans have embraced these principles and what they stand for. To put it simply, they help form the fabric of who we are as a nation.

Thankfully, the ruling does not affect the annual National Prayer Breakfast—hosted by a private organization in Washington on the last Thursday of February, or the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, which will take place in September.

What it does do, though, is open our eyes again to how a misguided viewpoint can potentially dismantle what has been a time-honored tradition.

Now is the time for people of faith to stand up and let the Justice Department know that, despite the work of those behind the “religion of secularism,” as Archbishop Listecki aptly puts it, we support continuing the National Day of Prayer.

This year, in 2011, 2012 and beyono.

—Mike Krokos

**Parish Diary/Fr. Peter Daly**

My mom at age 90

My mother turns 90 this month. If you talk to her, she says that she is the same today as she was when she was 50. However, she has noticed that all of her eight children have certainly gotten older. I drove up to see her in Baltimore at Easter.

She was tired from going to the 5th Ave Vigil the night before.

I asked her, “How are you, Mom?” She said that she had broken the frames of her glasses and her hearing aids weren’t working.

“Well,” she said sarcastically, “I can’t hear and I can’t see. But apart from that I’m alright.”

It was nothing serious. A spot of Super Glue® fixed the glasses. It turned out the hearing aid batteries were in back and forth.

Mom still lives in her own apartment, but it can hardly be said she “lives on her own.”

When you are 90, you have staff. Her permanent staff consists of her eight children. She says the reason for having eight children is so that you never have to go into a nursing home.

She lives on the 11th floor of a high-rise. My brother, Kevin, lives on the floor below. He takes care of her medicines and bills.

Together with my sister, Maureen, we’ve even a few blocks away, he drives Mom to church, the doctor, the hairdresser and everywhere else. They get the caregiver award.

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The White House said President Barack Obama would make the 2010 proclamation as planned.

We certainly disagree with Judge Cibb’s decision, and think Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki of Milwaukee had it right when he said last week that the ruling was a “misused opportunity to acknowledge our nation’s identity, which was founded on our dependence on God.”

We only need to look to the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution, to add historical context to the situation, to see how important our Founding Fathers viewed our God and Creator.

“What have you done for your marriage today?”

That is the question posed by Archbishop Wilton Gregory on downtown Atlanta billboards. In fact, the question is a key message of the U.S. Bishops’ National Pastoral Initiative for Marriage.

TV and billboard ads are broadcasting as public service announcements from the Catholic Church, and a Web site offers tips on managing finances, careers, skills. Marriages, just like cars, need affection, respect and love.

Archbishop Gregory was recently featured advocating for “healthy, loving, giving, life-long marriages,” and offering support for couples undergoing rocky times.

It is encouraging to see the Church stand up publicly for strong marriages. We as lay people also have important roles in promoting lifelong sacramental marriages.

Archbishop Gregory is one of the many bishops and priests who are married and have strong marriages, who now have children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

In my marriage, we have eight children and eight grandchildren. We are truly blessed.

As your pastor, I encourage you to do your part in strengthening our marriage culture.

My wife and I have been married for 40 years, and we have eight children and eight grandchildren. We are truly blessed.

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Gracies de sacraments give us hope in dark times

La gracia de los sacramentos nos brinda esperanza en las épocas difíciles

Corno todo el mundo, no busco la enfermedad ni el sufrimiento de mi propio ser, sino de aquellos que me rodean. Sin embargo, ocurre y es bien sabido en la parábola de la piedra, que algunos estarían en el lodo, otros estarían en el fuego. Aquí, en este mundo, no nos protege del sufrimiento. Cuando al historia, encontramos diferentes pasajes de salud. Cuando analizamos mis problemas, recuerdo a mi madre. ¿Qué le preocupa a un padre cuando su hijo está en el hospital? ¿Cómo lidiar con el dolor, el malestar, la preocupación de que un nieto no pueda ser liberado de su patología? ¿Cómo lidiar con nuestras pequeñas acciones que pueden ser observadas por nuestros padres? En todos estos momentos, es importante recordar los sacramentos, porque son allí donde nos podemos encontrar con Dios y encontrar consuelo en nuestras penas.

En retrospectiva, puedo decir que el uso de los sacramentos es una bendición. El sacerdote no es el único que puede participar en el sacerdocio. Todos somos capaces de recibir los sacramentos en todas las circunstancias de nuestra vida. Por eso, cuando me encuentro en una situación difícil, como el momento en que alguien me necesita, recuerdo que los sacramentos son allí donde encontramos el consuelo que necesitamos.

Tanto que estoy apasionadamente en problemas y adversidades, en el resplandor de la Resurrección, Jesús ha ganado la soberanía victoriosa sobre el pecado y la muerte. Su victoria es real, y es por cada uno de nosotros.

Necesitamos reclamar lo que nos pertenece de Su victoria. Naturalmente, nuestro reto es conservar nuestra meta fundamental—la unión con Jesús en la Casa del Padre—en nuestras mentes y en nuestros corazones.

Cuando transita las horas de insomnio y desvelo en las noches soñolientas, una pieza de la vida de cada uno de nosotros es la consciencia de que Jesús está en nuestra vida. Es un confort de consuelo para aquellos que están buscando en sus vidas un sentido de tranquilidad y paz.

La concesión de nuestra unión con Jesús brinda una paz que puede ser tan tranquila como una visión de la gloria de nuestra parroquia. La enfermedad y el sufrimiento no deben robarnos nuestra paz interior. Tener conciencia de que Jesús está a nuestro lado puede ser una fuente de gozo y consuelo.

Sí, sentimos los pinchazos de las astillas que tienen nuestras crujas de todos los días. Y, si, algunas veces tenemos dolor, pero que nos llevamos lo que nos gusta. Nos ayudan en el crecimiento, en la vida y en el amor.

Rezo porque aquellos que están abrumados con preocupaciones, enfermedades o sufrimientos que puedan levantar sus manos y pedir a Dios que los libere de su dolor.

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

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

Traducido por: Daniela Guzman, Language Training Center, Indianapolis

La intención del Arzobispo Buechlein para vocaciones en abril
Sacerdotes: Que ellos reciban como sacramentos con jubilo y ya den anino a otros hombres para que contesten la llamada de Dios al sacerdocio!

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO DANIEL M. BUechlein, O.S.B.
April 23
St. Pius X School, 7200 East 59th Drive, Indianapolis. Annual art show, 7-9 p.m. Information: 317-418-5133 or mwright@spxparish.org
April 23-May 29
Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 17th Century Hill Drive, Saint Meinrad. Art exhibit, Benedictine Brother Martin Evangel. Information: 800-682-0988 or www.saintmeinrad.edu
April 24
St. Malachy Parish, 1733 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. “Coffee Talk—My Children Don’t Go to Church,” Jeanie Hunter, presenter, 9:30 a.m. noon. Information: 812-933-6473 or center@oldenburgcfc.org
April 28
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. “A Thomas Merton Seminar–Bridges to Contemplative Living: Writing Yourself into the Book of Life,” session one of four, Benedictine Sister Julie Sewell, presenter, 6:30 p.m., $65.95 per person includes book and supper. Information: 317-788-7581 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org
April 29
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Away and Rest Awhile!”, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., $25 per person. Information: 317-545-7681 or spazotti@archindy.org
April 30-May 2
Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, Saint Meinrad. “Aging Gracefully–A Retreat for 60s and Over!” Benedictine Father Noel Mueller, presenter. Information: 317-541-6905 or MZfeiler@stlawrence.org
May 3
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Celebrate the Feast Day of Our Lady of Fatima,” day of reflection, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., $75 per person includes breakfast and lunch. Information: 317-545-7681 or spazotti@archindy.org
May 13
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Benedictine Run to Monte Cassino,” 6:15 a.m. -4 p.m., $25 per person includes breakfast and lunch. Information: 317-545-7681 or spazotti@archindy.org
May 18
May 19
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. “A Thomas Merton Seminar–Bridges to Contemplative Living: Writing Yourself into the Book of Life,” session two of four, Benedictine Sister Julie Sewell, presenter, Mass, 5:15 p.m., supper, 6 p.m., session 6:30-9 p.m. $65.95 per person includes book and supper. Information: 317-788-7581 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org
May 29
University Place Conference Center, Auditorium, 850 W. Michigan St., Indianapolis. Randall L. Tobias Center for Leadership Excellence, “Keeping Religion in its Place in Public Life—Two Views from a Politician and a Preacher,” 7-8 p.m. Information: 317-278-2800 or info@archindy.org
May 1
St. Vincent Hospital, Shaunee Rooms, A, B and C, 200 N. Capitol Ave. “Safe Sitter” class, 9 a.m., $45 per person. Information: 317-338-4437.
May 8
St. Francis Hospital, Cancer Center, 8111 S. Emerson Ave., Indianapolis. Skin cancer screenings, 9 a.m. noon, free, reservation required. Information: 317-782-4422.
May 2

Events Calendar

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April 24
Lane Williams Park, 940 S. Locust Lane, Brownburg. St. Malachy Parish. “Walk with Haiti,” 6:30 p.m., session 6:30-9 p.m., $65.95 per person includes book and supper. Information: 317-788-7581 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org
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Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 100 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. “Aging Gracefully–A Retreat for 60s and Over!” Benedictine Father Noel Mueller, presenter. Information: 317-541-6905 or MZfeiler@stlawrence.org
May 11
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. “Women Talk–Women of Wisdom,” session four of five, “Women’s Drug Issues,” Denise Rush, B.P., Ph. A., Pham, presenter, 6-9 p.m., $25 per person includes dinner. Information: 317-788-7581 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org
May 12
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. “A Thomas Merton Seminar–Bridges to Contemplative Living: Writing Yourself into the Book of Life,” session three of four, Benedictine Sister Julie Sewell, presenter, Mass, 5:15 p.m., supper, 6 p.m., session 6:30-9 p.m. $65.95 per person includes book and supper. Information: 317-788-7581 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org
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Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “A Benedictine Run to Monte Cassino,” quiet, silent, non-guided reflection day, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. $25 per person includes breakfast and lunch. Information: 317-545-7681 or spazotti@archindy.org
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Sisters of St. Benedict to sponsor summer camps in southern Indiana

The Sisters of St. Benedict of Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese will sponsor two sessions of Camp Marian for girls this summer.

Girls currently in grades 5 and 6 can attend on June 7-9. Girls enrolled in grades 7 and 8 can attend on June 10-12.

The overnight camps, which will include outdoor games, crafts and liturgies, will take place by Lake Marian on the campus of the monastery.

Registration for the camps is $40, including a $10 deposit. The camps are limited to 44 campers.

For more information or to register, call 812-367-1411, ext. 2383, send an e-mail to vocations@thedome.org or log on to www.thedome.org.
EWTN host offers help to parents at Catholic Radio Dinner

By Seán Gallagher

People involved in Catholic radio know from experience how it can be an effective tool of evangelization. Marcus Grodi has seen this during his 13 years as the host of “The Journey Home” program broadcast on the Eternal Word Television Network and EWTN’s radio service and, more recently, as host of “Deep in Scripture,” which is broadcast on EWTN radio.

Grodi also knows that evangelization needs to happen from person to person, especially in families. He knows this as the father of three sons, but also from overseeing The Coming Home Network, an apostolate that gives spiritual support to Protestant Christians considering coming into full communion of the Church.

Grodi was a Presbyterian minister before becoming Catholic in 1992. He was the main speaker at the sixth annual Catholic Radio Dinner, a fundraising event for WSPM, Catholic Radio Indy 89.1 FM, held on April 8 in Indianapolis, which was attended by nearly 100 people.

In his presentation, Grodi shared seven ways for parents to make sure their children remain Catholic.

1. From east of Terre Haute to Indianapolis and south of Lafayette to Martinsville along I-70 is preferred.

2. In Indy or within about 10 miles of the city you can still receive Miracle Radio, even inside your home, even in weak signal areas. Call 317-580-7500 for details.

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

The future is bright for Catholic Radio Indy if donations continue to grow, said Robert Teipen, the station’s chairman of the board.

“I believe that Catholic radio is a beacon of light in our world,” Teipen said. “We’re continuing to get responses from people. The ones that surprise me the most, … I’m always amazed at how many non-Catholics there are listening to us and, in some cases, they donate.”

“So I’m very optimistic about the future of Catholic radio, and I think it’s very important,” she said. “I’m a person who doesn’t have time to sit down and read and study the way that I would like to. I think that listening when you can, when you’re in the car or to podcasts, is very helpful to me. I can learn a lot, a lot of things that you wouldn’t just find on your own.”

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Valletta, Malta—On a 27-hour flight that began with men and women with sex abuse victims, encouraged Maltese Catholics to keep the faith and walk in the footsteps of St. Paul.

In the midst of a worldwide storm, when the Church has handled clerical sex abuse, the pope met privately with local sex abuse victims on April 18, assuring the Church was doing everything in its power to prevent future abuse of young people.

The victims said they were pleased with the encounter, and one said he felt "freed of a great weight" and was reconnected with his faith.

One victim said there were sex abuse cases that didn't dampen the local population's outspoken enthusiasm nor did it obscure the pope's words. That message has now been lived out by the Maltese to fully live out their Christian identity and values.

Vans filled with youths waving giant Vatican flags coursed through the streets, humble stone homes had banners and pictures of the pope hung from their balconies, and tens of thousands of faithful and the curious lined city streets and squares to cheer and get a glimpse of the pope.

Celebrating the 1950th anniversary of St. Paul's arrival in Malta, the pope was able to hold the Apostolic visit to an example of innovation in Maltese Catholics, young people and even journalists.

In remarks to the Vatican press corps about the papal mission on the Mediterranean, the pope said St. Paul shows how life's tragedies can become an opportunity to do good.

Just as St. Paul's shipwreck on the island became the seed that planted Christianity in Malta, so too "life's shipwrecks can be part of God's plan for us, and they may also be useful for new beginnings in our lives," he said.

In his homily during Mass in the grotto site during the three months he and his companions were shipwrecked on the island.

The pope said, "God rejects no one. And the Church rejects no one."

God, he said, "loves those who accept it, and loves them so much that he challenges people to purify themselves of all sins and faults, he said.

"When he challenges us because something in our lives is displeasing to him, he is not rejecting us, because he is asking us to change and become more perfect," he said.

One challenge facing Malta is the influx of illegal immigrants who end up on its shores on their way to other European countries. The country has been criticized by human rights advocates for its forced detention policies and the sometimes abysmal conditions of its detention centers.

The pope told young people that it is their duty as Christians to care for the vulnerable, and "be attentive to the needs of immigrants and asylum seekers."

But in a number of talks, the pope said the problem could not be solved by Malta alone. In his farewell speech at the Luqa airport, the pope told President George Abela and other government leaders to strive to continue to welcome the world's "strangers" as the ancient Maltese welcomed St. Paul. With the help of other European states and international organizations, Abela said, Malta will act to "aid those who arrive here and ensure that their rights be respected."

"The pope praised the way Malta has been able to build a nation founded on Christian values, and praised the country's defense of the unborn and of the traditional family based on marriage between a man and a woman."

Abortion and divorce are illegal in Malta, and the pope asked President Abela in his welcoming address that the nation "continue to stand up for the indissolubility of marriage" and the "true nature of family."

As part of his spiritual journey commemorating St. Paul, Pope Benedict prayed in Rabat at the grotto where tradition holds the Apostle lived for the three months he was stranded in Malta. The pope greeted some 250 Maltese missionaries in St. Paul's Church and called on his audience to "be your faith ever more fully at home, work and in society."

The world needs credible Christian witness, especially given the many threats facing human life, traditional marriage and the "moral truths which remain the foundation of authentic freedom and genuine progress," he said.

Thousands of children packed into St. George's Square in Valletta on April 17 to sing the pope a belated "Happy Birthday" in English, German, Italian and Maltese. The pope smiled, waved and blessed the children when he appeared on the balcony of the presidential palace. The pope took up residence on April 16. (See related story on page 10.)

The Maltese didn't forget the fifth anniversary of his pontificate either, which fell on April 19. On the flight back from Malta to Rome on April 18, the crew of the Air Malta flight gave the pope a traditional Maltese cake made of ground almonds, which was shared with the papal entourage and the Vatican press corps. The cake had yellow and white frosting—the Vatican colors—and Pope Benedict's coat of arms.

He then spoke of how St. Paul turned the tragedy of being shipwrecked on Malta into a positive opportunity when he decided to heal the sick and preach the power of the Word of God. Out of tragedies—pain, suffering and "life's shipwrecks can be part of God's plan for us and they may also be useful for new beginnings in our lives," he said.

FATHER LOMBARDI

The pope then stood by the altar and met with each victim one by one to hear his story and to speak with each privately. Father Lombardi said the victims were in their 30s and 40s, Father Lombardi said.

"I admire the pope for his courage in meeting us. He is as embarrassed by the failings of others," said Grech.

Greech, one of the victims who had asked for the papal meeting, has said he and others were abused by boys, priests at the St. Joseph Orphanage in Santa Venera.

The meeting came after the pope returned from a public Mass to the nunciature, where he has been staying during his four-day visit to Malta, Father Lombardi said. He told journalists before the trip that an eventual meeting with abuse victims would not be announced in advance, and would take place out of the media spotlight to guarantee "the real chance of listening and private conversation."

During his public events in Malta, the pope did not refer explicitly to the problem of the sexual abuse of minors by priests. He did make two subtle references to the problem when he spoke to journalists aboard the papal flight from Rome to Malta.

Speaking about the vitality of the Catholic faith in Malta, he said even when the body of the Church "is wounded by our sins, God loves this Church, and its Gospel is the true force that purifies and heals."

Eight male victims of abuse began the encounter kneeling in silence praying for St. Paul.

POPE Benedict XVI talks with young people on a catamaran as he makes his way to a larger gathering of youths at the waterfront in Valletta, Malta, on April 18.
At five-year mark, pope’s teaching mission hits some obstacles

(Editors note: April 19 marked the five-year anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI’s election.)

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—At the five-year mark, two key objectives of Pope Benedict XVI’s pontificate have come into clear focus—creating space for religion in the public sphere, and space for God in private lives.

In hundreds of speeches and homilies, in three encyclicals, on 13 foreign trips, during synods of bishops and even though new Web sites, the German pontiff has confronted what he calls a "modern crisis of faith," saying the root cause is moral and social ills is a reluctance to acknowledge the truth that comes from God.

To counter this crisis, he has proposed Christianity as a religion of love, not rules. Its core mission, he has said repeatedly, is to help people accept God’s love and share it, recognizing that true love involves a willingness to make sacrifices.

His emphasis on God as Creator has tapped into ecological awareness, for which he has been dubbed the “green pope.” He has presented the faith as a path not only to salvation, but also to social justice and true happiness.

Elected on April 19, 2005, Pope Benedict has surprised those who expected a doctrinaire disciplinarian. As universal pastor, he has led Catholics back to the basics of their faith, criticizing them on Christianity’s foundational practices, writings and beliefs, ranging from the Confessions of St. Augustine to the sign of the cross.

But Pope Benedict’s quiet teaching mission has been frequently overshadowed by problems and crises that have grabbed headlines, provoked criticism of the Church and left the German pontiff with an uphill battle to get a hearing.

The fifth anniversary of his election is a time to stand in the media spotlight, underline the spiritual themes of his pontificate and prepare the world for the second volume of his work, Jesus of Nazareth.

But in recent weeks, fallout from the priestly sex abuse crisis has muddied the celebratory atmosphere at the Vatican and plunged the papal aides into the daily defensive.

In a letter to Irish Catholics in March, the pope personally apologized to victims of priestly sexual abuse and announced new steps to heal the wounds of the scandal, including a Vatican investigation and a year of penitential reparation.

Vatican officials viewed the letter as an unprecedented act of transparency by a pope who, even as a cardinal, pushed for harsher penalties against abusers. For critics, however, the papal letter was merely more words. Soon the Vatican was denying accusations that the pope himself, as a German archbishop, failed to adequately monitor a priest abuser.

Other controversies have forced the pope’s wider message during his first five years. Visiting his native Bavaria in 2006, he upstaged many Islamic leaders when he quoted a medieval Byzantine emperor, who said the prophet Mohammed had brought "the only evil and inhuman, such as his command" to spread the faith by the sword.

The pope later said he was "merely" citing and not endorsing the criticism of Islam, but he conceded that the speech was open to misinterpretation. Then he began a bridge-building effort with Muslim scholars that eventually led to a major new chapter in Vatican-Muslim dialogue.

During a late 2006 visit to Turkey, the pope prayed at Istanbul’s Blue Mosque next to a Muslim cleric, a gesture of respect that resonated positively throughout the Islamic world. At the same time, he continued to insist that all religions must reject violence carried out in their name.

Literacy has been a major focus of Pope Benedict. It is one of the areas where he wants to better balance the thrust launched by the Second Vatican Council with the Church’s tradition—a process he calls “innovation in continuity.”

In 2007, the pope’s removal of restrictions on use of the traditional Latin Mass, the Latin-language liturgy that predates the Second Vatican Council, was in part, a concession to traditionalists and part of a push toward an agreement with the breakaway Society of St. Pius X.

But when he lifted the excommunications of four of its bishops in early 2009, that reconciliation project nearly derailed. One of the four, Bishop Richard Williamson, had three days earlier provoked outrage with assertions that the Holocaust was exaggerated and that no Jews died in Nazi gas chambers.

The pope moved to repair damage with Jewish groups, and in a remarkable letter about the episode he thanked “our Jewish friends” who helped restore a sense of trust. In the same letter, however, he expressed sadness that some Catholics seemed willing to believe he was changing direction on Catholic-Jewish relations and were ready to “attack me with open hostility.”

Although he never planned to imitate his globetrotting predecessor, Pope Benedict has traveled to six continents on 13 foreign trips during his first five years. The 14th came in mid-April when he visited Malta, the first of five trips planned for 2010.

One of his most successful journeys was to the United States in 2008, where he visited the World Trade Center site, New York City, and addressed the United Nations. In speeches and homilies, he set forth a moral challenge to the wider U.S. culture on issues ranging from economic justice to abortion, but without coming across as doctrinaire or bullying—and the reception was unusually positive.

The pope also expressed his personal shock at the priestly sex abuse scandal that had shaken the Church in the United States, met and prayed then with a group of abuse victims. It was a gesture that he would repeat three months later on a trip to Australia for World Youth Day.

The pope’s most demanding trip was to his Holy Land pilgrimage in 2009, which has sold more than 2 million copies, emphasized that Jesus was God, not merely a moralist or a political revolutionary or a social reformer. In calling for a personal relationship with Jesus, he touched on a point the pope has made elsewhere: “One can never know Christ only theoretically.”

The pope has presided over three synods of bishops—on the Eucharist in 2005, on Scripture in 2008 and on Africa in 2009—and has convened one on the Middle East for October. He streamlined the format of these encounters to allow for more exchange of opinion, and has sometimes joined in the discussions. There is much interest in his post-synodal document on Scripture, expected this spring, because the pope has insisted that familiarity with the Bible is essential to living the Christian life.

The “Year of St. Paul” in 2008-09 familiarized Catholics with the man considered the model of Christian conversion and the archetypal evangelizer. It sought to rekindle a missionary awareness throughout the Church.

In calling the “Year for Priests,” which ends in June, the pope said the Church must acknowledge that some priests have done great harm to others, but must also thank God for the gifts that the majority of priests have given to the Church and the world.

The pope’s letter to the Church in China in 2008 was a landmark attempt to reconcile the divided Catholic community there, and launch a platform for dialogue with civil authorities. It attempted to disentangle the knot of ecclesial and political problems in China by presenting a clear vision of the Church and its mission, and a strong case for the respect of religious freedom.
U.S. foundation members deliver birthday cake to Holy Father

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI received a cake on his 83rd birthday from the U.S.-based Papal Foundation, which also presented him with a list of the projects they have funded in his name this year.

The 120-member group—including Cardinals Justin Rigali of Philadelphia and Theodore E. McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington—sang “Happy Birthday” to the pope as they presented him with the fresh strawberry and kiwi custard cake. Written on top was the message, “Happy Birthday, Holy Father!”

There were no candles to blow out so the pope responded to the song by giving the group his blessing.

In his formal speech to foundation members, the pope spoke about the joy of the Easter season, which is built on knowing that “evil never has the last word, that love is stronger than death, and that our future and the future of all humanity lies in the hands of a faithful and provident God.”

The Papal Foundation was established in 1985 with the blessing of Pope John Paul II. It is a private, nonprofit foundation established to give financial support to the Roman Catholic Church and its institutions.
The next time you’re skimming through a parish bulletin take a moment to read the front cover. In the names listed under “Parish Staff” you will catch a glimpse of the ministerial transformation that has quietly been reshaping the face of the Church.

It used to be that parishes were led by a pastor and one or more associate pastors, with nuns in the school and a few lay people hired as organists or janitors. Now most parish offices house a team of ministers—priests, deacons, directors of religious education, youth ministers, business managers, coordinators of liturgy and directors of outreach.

A 2005 study found that more than 30,000 lay ecclesial ministers were employed in U.S. parishes, more than the number of diocesan priests. With approximately 19,000 parishes nationwide, that puts the ratio of lay ecclesial ministers to parishes at about 1.5 to 1. These paid professionals have become a standard feature of contemporary Church life. Their leadership inspires us to coordinate many more thousands of the lay faithful who volunteer or serve more occasionally in direct ministries on behalf of the Church.

Most Catholics assume that the rise of lay ecclesial ministry came as a response to the priest shortage. Certainly, the staffing of our parishes today is profoundly shaped by this reality, but the first professional forms of lay ministry emerged in the 1960s, well before the clergy shortage began to be felt widely.

Instead of a stopgap response to fewer priests, lay ecclesial ministry grew out of a renewed spirit of participation brought on by the Second Vatican Council. These new ministries were responding to a different kind of need.

Following the council, liturgical reforms needed implementation and explanation. Religious education expanded beyond the parochial school to a variety of parish programs. Newly emerging questions about civil rights, war and poverty were recognized as concerns that parishes needed to address. Adult Catholic education expanded for sharing faith, study and direct service.

In the midst of all these changes, people offered their help. Pastors began to hire their best volunteers. The success of this model led to the creation of many roles on the parish staff, roles that many pastors actively promoted.

Indeed, one of the great untold stories of the rise of lay ecclesial ministry is the crucial part played by parish priests in encouraging, supporting and opening up space for this new form of ministry.

Reflecting on this history, the bishops of the United States concluded in their document, “Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord,” that the rise of lay ecclesial ministry has been the work of the Holy Spirit. These ministers represent a vivid example of what Pope Benedict XVI recently called the lay’s growing recognition of our shared responsibility for the life and mission of the Church.

All of this change has come quietly. The steady progression and official emergence of lay ecclesial ministry might cause us to overlook the profound historical significance of the present moment in ministry.

In fact, a case could be made that the emergence of lay ecclesial ministry over the last 50 years stands out as one of the top three or four ministerial shifts of the past 2,000 years.

The transformation can arguably be compared to the changes in the Church brought on by the rise of communal forms of monasticism in the fifth century, the birth of mendicant orders in the 13th century or the explosion of women’s religious communities in the 19th century. It is this kind of ministerial transformation that we have been living through. Part of the trouble in making this comparison is that most of us do not appreciate how radical those earlier ministerial transformations were. We tend to assume that the birth of new forms and new families of religious life were all simply slight variations on the monastic model.

But when we look at the different kinds of ministries carried out by these religious orders—the Dominicans, Jesuits, Sisters of Mercy and countless others—we realize how original each major wave of religious life was. Who could imagine, prior to St. Francis or St. Dominic, mobile friars who were free from the monasteries, and who lived in the cities and begged for a living? Not even the ever-adaptable St. Ignatius of Loyola could have anticipated the plethora of new ministries his companions would invent.

Each new religious order brought a richness of ministry, a new way of being a minister, an original form of serving the reign of God. And each wave made a lasting contribution to the Church.

Our present experience of lay ecclesial ministry brings a similar richness. We have among us, not the founders of a new religious order, but pioneers of God’s grace in the present—a new wave that is carrying our Church forward, calling us all to join in, and to take our part in serving the present and future reign of God.

(Edward Hahnenberg is the author of Ministries: A Relational Approach, published by Crossroad, and Awakening Vocation: A Theology of Christian Call, forthcoming from Liturgical Press. He teaches theology at Jesuit-run Xavier University in Cincinnati.)

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**Discussion Point**

**This Week’s Question**

Who are some lay ecclesial ministers in your parish, and what do they do?

“We have the usual business manager, facilities manager, office administrator and maintenance. But one of those in the office is the liturgical and religious education coordinator. She directs the education of the children and has a lot of responsibility for special liturgies, such as those in Holy Week. Also, our youth minister is involved in leading a very active Life Teen program.” (Marla Rauch, Ypsilanti, Mich.)

“When you talk about the Catholic Church, the thing converts notice is the warmth and welcoming spirit... The head of the Sunday school, youth ministers [and] religious education directors have and wear the mantle of the Church... Their actions reflect back on the Church.” (Barbara Willis, Baltimore, Md.)

“Our parish just hired a youth ministry director... He’s important in serving the needs of the younger age groups in our really large and young parish. Another important staff member is the principal of the parish school where I teach. She sees that the school is very intertwined with the Church. They serve each other and rely on each other.” (Eileen Green, Lafayette, La.)

“We have an administrator, music ministers and youth ministers. There’s a whole layer of people. I don’t even know how many. In one way, that makes the Church more secular, which I don’t always like because decisions don’t always seem so spiritual. But they’re vital to the parish because of their special skills and the fact that the pastor just can’t do everything.” (Tina Creegan, Cedarburg, Wis.)

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**Lend Us Your Voice**

An upcoming edition asks: Have you ever venerated a relic? What was the experience like?

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Some of the other psalms in the Psalter

(Excepted in a series of columns)

For the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Some of the other psalms in the Psalter

One of the other psalms in the Psalter, Psalm 78, Parkway and Psalm 105. It is an excellent time to revisit the Psalms, and to remember that God is the one who is in control of all things. No matter how hard things may seem, we can trust in God's love and guidance for us.

Unconditional love means love in every season

In spring, we tend to think about new things, the quickening of natural rhythms, renewed energy and hope.

Of course, Easter is about all this. God has many lessons to teach us with the natural seasons of the year to help us understand God's plan for our life journey, and the Church follows this pattern in her calendar. Thus, we have the glory of summer in Ordinary Time, the reflective Advent of autumn and the Lenten season in winter. But it is spring that we often love the most. It provides empirical evidence of God's promise to Easter because it illustrates eternal life.

We see mums and baby goslings nesting for their anticipated chicks. We are excited by a spotted fawn peaking around their cautious morns at the edge of the woods. Grass, trees and shrubs are greening, flowers are blooming, and the days lengthen with more and more sunshine.

Now, not all human babies are born in the spring, but they might as well be. Because babies personify Easter's hope. They are the true antibodies to death and life with no personal sin, the time when every good thing is a possibility. As Jesus said, we must all become like little children.

It is not say that babies are perfect role models. Someone once said that if babies were quiet, the reason we would do away with them soon after birth. That's because they are often tiring, annoying and unreasonable. We don't mention helpless and needy. We should have babies during the spring of our lives because raising them takes a lot of energy, if not increase grace.

The relationship between parent and child reflects our relationship with God the Father. It offers real joy and fulfillment because it is based on unconditional love. It is one of the maternal need to nurture and the paternal need to protect are actually built in to our biology, but the rest of parenting comes from personal effort. We will to love.

Lately, we have been treated to an avalanche of reflection of our relationship with the priest. The father figure, the father figure of his children. They were alcoholic or abusive or absent. They were given no affection or respect or were relocated so often that they couldn't develop friendships. Their educations were spotty, and many were not part of their childhood experience.

Even when their pain was caused directly or intentionally by their parents, these writers loved them. As we know from horrendous news stories almost every day, children love their parents no matter what. They always hope for a better future. If I do this, they love me best. The best. Children always try to love us, apparently without qualifications.

If our children grow into adulthood, they seem to lose this natural ability to love without question. They begin to suspect ulterior motives or causes for the love. They find it hard to forgive and even harder to forget real or imagined slights. They are in a hankered-down mode rather than the generous sharing of love.

Beyond feeding, clothing, housing and educating our kids, the will to love them includes many things that don't cost money or even much time. Really listening to what they tell us or learning about their interests or merely sitting with them during their favorite TV shows all say, "I love you."

Spring brings longer days, feelings of optimism and, somehow, more incentive to look into our kids and others unconditionally. Yay, spring!

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

For the Journey/Effie Caldwell

Marks of great priests who deserve our thanks

A letter can be a powerful vehicle of communication. Some Catholic school children wrote to priests as part of a class project, and the state's clergy. 

Wrote one student:

"Dear Father Jack [not his real name], Thank you for being a priest. You make my life so happy."

Father Jack is a man of great and gentle humor. I can see why a grade school student, who might use the word "fun" as synonymous for "inspiring" or "powerful," would firmly refuse any promotion to a pedestal offered. This helps him as a great confessor, someone who has made a difference in our lives. Every Catholic has at least one. This would serve more than one purpose. First, it would help us see that the man to whom you write would surely get a huge boost out of your letter. And what good priest doesn't deserve that? The second purpose would be that it would allow us to reflect on what defines a great priest really is. What attributes of priesthood matter the most to us? That's an important issue to ponder in this age of declining numbers of priests.

For another letter to Father Jack for Russian Orthodox who also mentioned his own priest: "You are a great person. You are wonderful. What a great priest you are! You bless me because you wink at me... You help us feel better when we are sad. You are my friend!"... Father Jack is happy when you bless me because you wink at me... You help us feel better when we are sad. You are my friend!"

And yet another: "I like the way you can actually sit and have a conversation with people. And from an older student, a Russian Orthodox who also mentioned his own priest: "You guys are the reason that there is still hope and peace in this world. We all see a piece of God in our priests."

When my son received his first Eucharist, his father and I walked to the church with him. When we got to the priest, the one to whom I am going to write my letter, I became teary, and when I look at each other, he had tears in his eyes, too. "Empathy: the mark of a great priest." (Debra Tomassi is director of Kingdom in the World.)

Perspectives

Seeing and believing during the uncertainty of our lives

Sometimes the Resurrection comes in ways we don't recognize.

Mary, sobbing outside the Empty Tomb, thought the risen Christ was the gardener. The men walking to Emmaus had no idea there was a stranger who knew nothing of the recent events that had taken place in Jerusalem.

The Apostle Thomas wouldn't believe that his friends saw the resurrected Savior, even though Jesus is clearly there. Just like us. Things happen in life to cloud our vision.

A woman at my church was diagnosed with cancer. I didn't expect this," she sobbed.

A friend's business is failing in this current economy. "Now that the last kid left home, this was supposed to be our time," she wrote.

"We should be enjoying life, going on cruises and taking vacations. Instead, we're doing pennies to pay the bills."

And a teacher whose husband lost an eye in a freak accident fears what the future will bring. "I'm standing in the garden, crying. We've bailed up on unprecedented circumstances. Or we can't believe anything until we see it so we are anxious and upset."

At the time, I didn't get what I wanted. Today, I recognize the blessing. Had I got what I wanted, I wouldn't be writing this column. Years ago, I was frustrated with a particular work situation. Confused that someone would賦予 me a leadership role, I complained to the supervisor. I spoke to the owner. I enlisted support from co-workers. I whined to anybody who would listen, but, much to my dismay, nothing changed.

Today, I recognize the blessing. Had someone on management validated my pain, it would have unraveled quite differently. I wouldn't have found time to form the Bible study that has been running for several years. I wouldn't have prepared meals for the homeless or helped my husband start his business. I wouldn't be writing this column.

At the time, I didn't get what I wanted. The outcome wasn't what I expected, but the Lord was indeed there beside me every step of the way.

Through the experience, I learned to lean more on my faith in God than my own understanding when things don't go my way. I stopped whining and started believing. It doesn't matter if I'm dealing with a loss of a loved one, a terminal diagnosis, a job change or financial stress. I learned there is always more to the story, and that there is a reason behind it, even if I call it nature."

"Mary!" She fell to her feet in w orship. It was in the breaking of the bread that the risen Christ, still human, made a call for a change of heart. We must turn to Christ at every time we're ready, just give me a call. "I'll be there," he said. Not pushy, not full of platitudes or advice, just available.

Perspective: the mark of a great priest.

This priest is down to earth. He would never consider putting himself on a pedestal. Rather, he would refuse any pedestal offered. This helps him in the role of a great confessor, someone who understands human frailty.

I am ready to write a note of thanks. How about you? (Effie Caldwell writes for Catholic News Service.)
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 25, 2010

- Revelation 7:9, 14-17
- John 10:27-30


It gives a glimpse into the way of life of St. Paul as he moves across Asia Minor proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus. Evidently, he first went to synagogues, which is not surprising. He was Jewish—of Jewish descent and background—and was well educated in the Jewish culture and religion of the time.

Quite likely, he would have been more comfortable, but also more likely to be heard, in such surroundings as synagogues. It also is clear that he was not always met by universal acceptance, although it would not be accurate to say that he attracted no converts even among the Jews whom he met. He drew many of the Jews into the ranks of the Christians. He also attracted Gentiles.

But these details are only secondary to the story.

The point of this reading is that the word of God, pronounced by Jesus, continued to be spoken and received long after the Ascension.

Moreover, it was proclaimed by an Apostle, and also by Barnabas, who was a disciple of an Apostle.

Salvation went on, and still goes on. Through the Apostles, Jesus continued to speak to the people.

The Book of Revelation furnishes the next reading.

It is filled with symbolism, but its meaning is clear. Among those saved by Jesus are people from every nation. Their number is great. They are baptized, wearing the white robes of baptism. They carry the palm branches of martyrdom. They have kept their faith despite persecution. Their sins have been washed away by the Lord, precisely by the sacrificial blood shed by the Lord on Calvary.

The Good Shepherd leads them. He rescues them from the heat of the day and the dryness of earthly life.

Daily Readings

Monday, April 26
Acts 11:1-18
Psalms 42:2-3, 43:3-4
John 10:1-10

Tuesday, April 27
Acts 11:19-26
Psalms 87:1b-7
John 10:22-30

Wednesday, April 28
Peter Chancel, priest and martyr
Louis Mary de Montfort, priest
Acts 12:24-13:5a
Psalms 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
John 12:44-50

Thursday, April 29
Catherine of Siena, virgin and doctor of the Church
Acts 13:13-25
Psalms 89:2-3, 21-22, 25, 27
John 13:16-20

Question Corner/ Fr. John Dietzen

Catholic Church has not approved apparitions in Medjugorje as valid

Q

What is the Catholic Church’s present position on the appearances of Our Lady in Medjugorje? Some Catholics seem to give great devotion to the shrine, but priests that I’ve asked say the appearances are not approved by the Church. (Louisiana)

A

The Vatican itself has made no declarations about Medjugorje. Local bishops and Church officials have conducted a series of investigations since the early 1980’s when some children allegedly began seeing and speaking with the Blessed Virgin Mary at the site in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Official reports have not been favorable.

The latest word on the subject, to my knowledge, is from Bishop Ratko Peric of the diocese that includes Medjugorje. In June of 2009, Bishop Peric told a group of a parish whom he has about to confirm not to behavie as if the alleged Marian apparitions were real. He posted this homily and the title of his letters to the Franciscan pastor of the Medjugorje parish on his Web site. The bishop reported that during a visit to the Vatican early in 2009, top officials of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith confirmed that the Catholic Church has never recognized these apparitions as authentic.

“arz, as Catholics, died sons and daughters of the Church,” he said to the confirmation class, “we want to live according to the norms and the teachings of the Church, glorifying the Holy Trinity, venerating Blessed Mary...”

Thousands of Catholics visit the “shrine” in Medjugorje, and apparently many people find some spiritual consolation there. But after long investigation, the official position of the local Church is that there is no evidence that exists that the alleged events are authentic.

In March of this year, at the request of the bishops of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Vatican established an international commission to study the alleged apparitions. No report of the commission’s findings is available at this time.

Q

My question concerns those of us who were in a valid Catholic marriage and now divorced and remarried without an annulment.

Can we serve in our parish as a sacristan, extraordinary minister of holy Communion or religious education teacher? (Texas)

A

Your inquiry is a difficult question for which there is no easy, one-size-fits-all answer.

First of all, let’s be clear again that Catholics in your situation are not excommunicated.

You remain members of the Catholic faith even though, according to Catholic discipline, you have chosen to be separated from the Church’s sacramental life through the remarriage outside the Church.

Most pastors, I believe, try to be as inclusive as possible of those who are in involved situations but, as I said, try to live as faithfully as they can in their married and religious life.

(Catholic & All: You Want to Know About Catholicism is a 365-page e-textbook and educational collection of columns by Father John Dietzen, published by Crossroad Publishing Company in New York. Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at Box 3315, Peoria, IL 61612 or by e-mail to jordietzen@aol.com)
CHERRY BLOSSOM TIME

Cherry blossoms provide a colorful backdrop on April 8 for a statue depicting the Blessed Virgin Mary holding the Child Jesus, which is outside St. Monica Catholic Church in Indianapolis. Cherry blossoms provide a colorful backdrop on April 8 for a statue depicting the Blessed Virgin Mary holding the Child Jesus, which is outside St. Monica Catholic Church in Indianapolis. cherry blossoms provide a colorful backdrop on April 8.
Seven women religious communities sponsor ‘nun run’

By Sean Gallagher

Seven communities of women religious, who are either based in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis or whose members minister here, recently came together to form a committee to foster women’s vocations to religious life in central and southern Indiana.

The first event they organized was a “nun run” in which five women open to a possible religious vocation visited members of those communities who live in Beech Grove or Indianapolis during a 24-hour period on Feb. 26-27.

Those communities were the Oldenburg-based Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, the Daughters of Charity, the Little Sisters of the Poor, the Sisters of Charity, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove and of Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, and the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

Providence Sister Jenny Howard, the vocations director of her community, said there has been the perception in the past that religious communities are sometimes in competition for prospective new members.

“That’s not my experience as a vocations director,” she said. “We, as women’s religious communities, work very collaboratively because the goal is to invite women and help them find the religious order that most matches their spirit rather than feeling like we need to compete for members.”

To kick off this renewed collaboration, the committee chose to sponsor a nun run, which some of the vocations directors had been involved with previously in Chicago.

“I found them very effective,” said Daughter of Charity Theresa Sullivan, the vocations director for a Midwest provincial in her order. Members of her order minister at St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis.

Theresa Mills, a member of St. Boniface Parish in Lafayette, Ind., in the Daughters of Charity, participated in the nun run and also found it effective.

“It was very informative,” she said. “I always knew that there were different religious orders, though I wasn’t clear on what exactly made them different. So this gave me a brief view of [seven] different orders and what each one is about. I can’t say after only one day that I now know what I am called to do or called to be, but it was a first step.”

The nun run started on the evening of Feb. 26 with Mass celebrated by the archdiocesan vocations director, Father Eric Johnson, at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove.

That evening, the participants met with the Benedictine sisters of that community and of Monastery Immaculate Conception.

After spending the night at the monastery in Beech Grove, the participants visited and had breakfast on Feb. 27 with members of the Sisters of Providence in Indianapolis. They later had lunch with Franciscan sisters at Marian University in Indianapolis.

In the afternoon, they met with members of the Daughters of Charity and Sisters of Charity at their convent adjacent to St. Vincent Hospital then with members of the Little Sisters of the Poor at their Augustine Home for the Aged in Indianapolis.

“I thought that the women that participated really immersed themselves in the experiences,” Sister Teresa said. “And each of the communities welcomed the women, and were able to share a glimmer of their lives with them.”

“I’m glad I went,” Mills said. “It’s helpful to take a weekend out of your life from time to time and go on a retreat. And though there weren’t a lot of women who attended that weekend, it was good to see other women in my peer group who were also questioning the religious life.”

The agency has expanded its work to the earthquake zone in southern Haiti, assisting some of the 1.1 million people who were left homeless by the magnitude 7.3 tremor. Overall, the program works in seven camps containing an estimated 21,000 people.

The Jesuit priests were in Washington on April 13-16 in cooperation with Jesuit Refugee Service/USA to meet with congressional staff members, State Department officials, aid agencies and Haitian diaspora who have settled in the Washington region to plead their case for additional support of the earthquake recovery efforts.

Father Lazard said the country’s reconstruction will best be managed by Haitians as long as the process is transparent, decision-making is decentralized, decision-makers are held accountable and projects are sustainable. He said centralized decision making in Haiti’s past led to corruption and the siphoning off of aid by government officials.

“Before the earthquake, we had international cooperation, but people did not see the results,” he explained. “They are afraid the millions of dollars of [redevelopment] aid will go to the pockets of the experts and the government, and not to the people of Haiti.

“We want the civil society to participate,” Father Lazard said.

The Jesuits also are promoting the need for increased security for the country, especially for people remaining in hundreds of makeshift tent camps in the earthquake zone. Women are particularly vulnerable, said Father Francois, president of the Jesuit Interprovincial Committee for the Reconstruction of Haiti.

Under the National Committee for Reflection and Action started by Father Francois, the needs of women are stressed to men of all ages. Discussions at weekly meetings in the camps focus on pri vacy concerns, gender equality issues and gainful employment for women to move them along the road to financial independence.

The meetings also help displaced people to relaunch their own recovery and redevelopment plans.
As the chaplain of Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, Father James Wilmoth shares a moment of light with members of the school's girls basketball program. Besides sharing his faith and counsel with students, Father Wilmoth supports them by attending many of their activities from athletic contests to choir performances.

Every school day at 7:45 a.m., Father James Wilmoth welcomes the students of St. Roch School in Indianapolis. Standing in the school's parking lot, no matter what the weather conditions are, Father Wilmoth and principal Joseph Hansen greet the school's 255 students by name and with a smile.

Catholic schools are to so many people. And I'm a part of that.