Catholic hospital’s special program provides life-saving heart surgery for world’s children

By John Shaughnessy

Her smile and her story still linger in his thoughts as Dr. Simon Abraham looks at the photographs on the wall inside the medical clinic at the Peyton Manning Children’s Hospital at St. Vincent Indianapolis Hospital.

The child from Kosovo had a heart defect when she and her mother were serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960

Sara Bodenmiller, left, and Dr. Simon Abraham examine the echocardiogram of a child to determine if the child is a good candidate for the life-saving heart surgery that is provided to poor pediatric patients from around the world by the Children’s Heart Center at Peyton Manning Children’s Hospital at St. Vincent Indianapolis Hospital.

Catholic Conference gears up for 2011 legislative work

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

A new year brings hope and challenges. That message rang crystal clear for those who headed to the state Capitol for the opening of a new legislative session of the Indiana General Assembly on Jan. 5. This group includes a re-energized Gov. Mitch Daniels, a Republican-controlled House and Senate made up of 150 state lawmakers—24 of them who are newly elected—and the Church’s public policy voice, the Indiana Catholic Conference.

What kind of initiatives will Gov. Daniels and a legislature dominated by Republicans pass this year? And how will those issues compare with priorities that the Catholic Church is advocating?

"Only time will tell," said Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference. "A mixed blessing is most likely. "We expect some potentially positive changes in education for school choice, and some potentially negative consequences affecting those in our immigrant community,"

Tebbe said. "We are hopeful there will be other positive gains in the area of [opposing] abortion, protecting the institution of traditional marriage and other laws that benefit families.

"Our goal this year, as is [the case] every year, is to promote a consistent life ethic," Tebbe added. "The Indiana Catholic Conference will be working to protect families and children—and all underlying necessities to support families and children."

This pro-life, pro-family agenda has taken many forms in the 40-plus years that the ICC has been actively advocating on behalf of the Indiana bishops. Some of the public policy initiatives include: halting embryonic stem-cell research; encouraging adult stem-cell research in Indiana; reducing abortions; providing basic needs of the poor, disabled and elderly; limiting and ultimately abolishing the death penalty; improving immigration laws; and protecting the institution of marriage.

"Among our priority issues to assist families and children this year, we will be working with state lawmakers to create legislation to further reduce abortion, improve school choice opportunities for all Hoosier children and pass a same-sex marriage ban," Tebbe said. "There will be many issues on the table, and we will be taking part in the process to ensure that the voice of the Church and the least among us are heard."

Tebbe said that, as in years past, the success of the ICC’s legislative agenda this year will also be determined in part by: 1) the willingness of the leadership in the House and Senate to hear the bills heard in committee; 2) a willingness of lawmakers to take part in the process to ensure that the voice of the Church and the least among us are heard."

Pope begins new year with call for religious freedom and end to violence

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Opening 2011 with a strong call for religious liberty, Pope Benedict XVI condemned deadly attacks against Christians and announced a new interfaith meeting next fall in Assisi, Italy.

At a Mass on Jan. 1 marking the World Day of Peace and a blessing the next day, the pope voiced his concern about fresh episodes of violence and discrimination against Christian minorities in the Middle East.

In particular, the pope condemned an attack on Jan. 1 against Orthodox Christians in Egypt, calling it a “despicable gesture of death.” A bomb that exploded as parishioners were leaving a church in Alexandria, Egypt, left 25 people dead and dozens more injured.

The pope said the attack was part of a strategy of violence that targets Christians, and which has negative repercussions on the entire population. He offered prayers for the victims and their families.

The pope also denounced the recent practice of “planting bombs close to the homes of Christians in Iraq to force them to leave.” At least seven Christian homes in Baghdad were targeted in bombings on Dec. 30, leaving at least 13 people wounded.

The pope said the latest attacks in Egypt and Iraq “offend God and all humanity.”

Addressing pilgrims at his noon blessing on Jan. 1, the pope said he was planning to invite religious leaders from the world’s major faiths to gather in Assisi, the birthplace of St. Francis, in order to “sincerely renew the commitment by believers of every religion to live their religious faith as a service to the cause of peace.”

“Whoever is making his way toward God cannot fail to transmute peace, and whoever builds peace cannot fail to draw nearer to God,” he said.

See PEACE, page 2
Transforming the life of a child

In 2000, the program reflects the continuing commitment by St. Vincent Health to work in unison with the Church's efforts; four religious sisters arrived in Indianapolis in 1881.

"From St. Vincent's, especially among the Daughters, it's really walking the talk," Abraham says. "Providing charity care is something they're very serious about. They saw this approach to pediatric heart care as within their mission. They do a lot of charity care locally, and they saw this as a way to extend it to an international level."

Those international life-saving efforts are also part of the Children's Heart Project, a program run by Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief organization. The Children's Heart Project works with leading hospitals across the United States to provide surgery for children who live in countries where the medical expertise and equipment are not available.

The Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St. Vincent does more charity care heart surgeries than any other hospital in the Children's Heart Project. The project identifies patients from poor countries who need heart surgeries. Samaritan's Purse also provides plane fare and visas for the patient, a parent and an interpreter.

"The children are usually seen by a visiting cardiologist in a number of countries," Abraham explains. "We're sent a package that comes with a medical history and an echocardiogram of two or three children. We usually accept two children at a time from the same location. We try to choose patients that we think will get a significant improvement in their life expectancy."

The resulting change in the children's condition is something they're usually dramatic. From when they first arrive at the hospital, according to Sara Bodenmiller, the coordinator of the international pediatric heart surgery program. "Some of these children who come over, their color is blue," says Bodenmiller, a pediatric nurse practitioner. "They can't walk across the room without getting tired. To watch the transformation of that child after surgery or five or six weeks later when they're going home, you wouldn't recognize the child. They're pink, they're smiling and they're playing."

Helping the children is a team effort that flows through the hospital and even into the community. Host families provide a place to stay for the child and the parent.

"The fact that our host families open their homes to these strangers shows how thoughtful people can be to one another," Bodenmiller says. "I'm so pleased that St. Vincent has been willing to continue its commitment to this international outreach. There are so many children in need throughout the world. Although we're only able to help a small portion, even to be able to do that is wonderful."

So is the response from the parents of the young patients.

Gifts of music, trust and joy

"The expressions of gratitude from parents for their children's surgeries have come in different ways. Abraham received a couple of musical instruments after he helped children from Mongolia. "I also have at home this incredible Mongolian robe that they gave me," he says. "Still, he insists that the best gift that he receives is the trust of the parents who place their child's care in his hands."

"It's the usual mothers who come with their children," Abraham says. "The relationship between a mother and a child is pretty universal. Obviously, they know they're coming here because their child is sick. It's amazing they put so much faith in the hospital, in the operating room team and even me. "They basically need to trust someone who is going to make things better for their child, and they do. Obviously, there's great anxiety until they see their child after the surgery. Then there's relief. And joy."

"In the years that follow, letters arrive at the hospital with photographs of the former patients from across the globe. The pictures fill a scrapbook and the walls of the clinic. "The walls of our office are lined with these photos," Abraham says. "That's great. Some of these kids are probably teenagers now. "I do show what a faith organization can do. It's one of the big reasons I'm here."

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A ‘routine’ year: Pope’s 2011 calendar holds full slate of events

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—For Pope Benedict XVI, the 2011 calendar already holds a full slate of meetings, liturgies and foreign trips.

What is not on the calendar—at least so far—is a special “year of” or a “year for.” In 2009-10, the pope declared a Year of St. Paul. He designated 2009-2010 as the Year for Priests.

Perhaps 2011 will mark the Year of Business as Usual for the German pontiff, who turns 84 in April.

Unlike the past three years, there is no Synod of Bishops on the horizon in 2011. Most people are not expecting a consistory this year, either, and there is no sign that the pope plans to convene the world’s cardinals at the Vatican for other reasons.

What many people don’t realize is that the papacy is not just about commemorative years and cardinal summonses. “Business as usual” for the pope means a steady series of events that began with a New Year’s Mass to mark World Peace Day, and ends with a “te deum” prayer service of thanksgiving on Dec. 31.

In between are hundreds of papal encounters with individuals and groups, ranging from heads of state to schoolchildren.

The first half of January is typical. After the New Year’s Mass, the pope presided over a liturgy to mark the feast of the Epiphany on Jan. 6. Then he celebrates the feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 9 in the Sistine Chapel, personally baptizing more than 10 infants.

The next day, the pope shifts gears and delivers his annual “state of the world” address to the diplomatic corps at the Vatican. He is expected to underline his concern about recent acts of violence and discrimination against Christian minorities around the world, which was a main theme of the World Peace Day message this year.

And with that, Pope Benedict will be off and running. In 2010, the pope presided over more than 50 major liturgies. Similar celebrations are already penned into the 2011 calendar—at home and abroad. They range from one-hour prayer services to three-hour ordination masses, and normally include at least two liturgies to proclaim new saints, one in the spring and one in the fall. Already on the probable saints list for 2011 is the founder of the Xavierian Missionary Fathers, Blessed Guido Conforti.

Easter arrives very late in 2011—on April 24—and with it comes the heaviest week of liturgies and public appearances by the pope. Ahead of Easter, the Vatican plans to publish Pope Benedict’s new volume in his series on the life of Christ, Tidied Jesus of Nazareth: Part Two, Holy Week: From the Entrance Into Jerusalem to the Resurrection, it picks up where the best-selling first volume left off.

For U.S. bishops, 2011 will bring the start of a series of encounters with the pope and his aides, the weekly “ad limina” visits that begin in November. Bishops from Region I in the Northeast will be the first group to arrive at the Vatican on Nov. 7, followed by Region II (New York) on Nov. 24 and Region III (New Jersey, Pennsylvania) on Dec. 1. The last time that U.S. bishops came through Rome on “ad limina” visits was 2004, so many of them it will be their first major meeting with Pope Benedict.

Throughout the year, the pope will hold “ad limina” meetings with bishops from other countries, the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Australia, Angola, New Zealand and the Pacific Ocean area.

Spain’s King Juan Carlos kisses the hand of Pope Benedict XVI after a Mass at which the pontiff consecrated the Basilica of the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, Spain, on Nov. 7. The pope will make four foreign trips in 2011.

The pope will break away from the Vatican on four foreign trips: on June 4-5 in Croatia; on Aug. 18-21 in Madrid for World Youth Day; on Sept. 22-25 in Germany, including the capital of Berlin; and on Nov. 18-20 in the West African country of Benin. He will also make a two-day visit to Venice in May, and three other trips in Italy during the year.

At the Vatican, the pope resumes his weekly audiences every Wednesday, where he has been sketching brief biographies of early Church saints, writers and mystics. He normally makes at least one other public appearance each week, greeting pilgrims from his apartment window at midday on Sundays.

In addition to his World Peace Day message, the pope generally furnishes messages or letters to mark a whole slew of other annual events—for migrants and refugees, for the sick, for religious, for priestly vocations, for missionaries, for young people, for the hungry and for communicators.

Although Pope Benedict is widely seen as less prolific than Pope John Paul II, his verbal output each year is impressive: about 300 speeches and talks, more than 50 homilies, and nearly 100 other missives of varying length and importance.

In his recent book-length interview, Pope Benedict said that the day-in, day-out schedule of the papacy was pretty taxing for someone his age. He spoke openly about his diminishing energy, and even left open the possibility of eventual papal resignation—but as his 2011 calendar makes clear, he is not ready for that yet. †

Solemn Mass, march and pro-life rally begin at noon on Jan. 24 in Indianapolis

By Mary Ann Wyand

A Mass for Life, pro-life march and respect life rally in downtown Indianapolis on Jan. 24 will peacefully and prayerfully protest the 37th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion on Jan. 22, 1973, and memorialize the deaths of more than 52 million unborn babies killed in abortions since 1973.

The solemn pro-life observance begins at noon with a Mass for Life at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis.

Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, vicar general of the archdiocese, will be the principal celebrant for the liturgy, which coincides with the National March for Life in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 24.

The Mass will be the most significant event in our local solemn observance to peacefully and prayerfully protest Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton, the Jan. 22, 1973, Supreme Court decisions that legalized abortion during all nine months of pregnancy,” said Servants of the Gospel Life Sister Diane Carollo, the director of the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry.

“The will pray in a special way for the unborn victims of legalized abortion,” Sister Diane said, “and for their post-abortive parents.”

Following the one-hour Mass at the cathedral—which is also open to pro-life supporters from other faith traditions—adults, families and students will carry a variety of pro-life signs as they walk to the Veterans Memorial Plaza, 431 N. Meridian St., for a respect life rally.

Keynote speaker Rebecca Kiessling of Rochester Hills, Mich., who was conceived in rape and whose mother was encouraged to abort her twice, will discuss her unique perspective on Roe v. Wade.

Kiessling’s mother decided to carry her pregnancy to term and place her baby for adoption.

The international pro-life speaker has five children, and has saved countless lives by sharing her story and speaking out for the rights of the unborn.

Her inspirational speech will be followed by several Silent No More campaign testimonials presented by men and women who have been harmed by the tragedy of abortion.

“Through personal testimonies given by post-abortive men and women, the public will be made aware of the devastation that abortion brings to women, men and their families,” Sister Diane said. “The goal of those giving testimonies is to make known the emotional and physical pain of abortion, which is shrouded in secrecy and silence. The participants want to expose abortion for what it is so that people may be healed from its trauma.”

(For more information, contact the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry at 317-236-1569 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1569.)

Sr. Diane Carollo, S.G.L.
Opinion

Editorial

Renewing hope, seeking justice

This week marked National Migration Week, declared by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. It began on last Sunday, the feast of Epiphany. The week has been observed now for over a quarter century. The theme this year is “Renewing Hope, Seeking Justice.”

Following the lead of Pope Benedict XVI, who is focusing on migrant families for his 2011 World Day of Migrants and Refugees message, the bishops have decided to focus on the family as a sub-theme this year. A poster distributed by the conference’s Migration and Refugee Services shows the Holy Family resting during its immigration into Egypt to escape King Herod’s soldiers.

Contrary to what many people believe, the Church does not encourage illegal immigration and wants its laws to be changed so that people who are suffering tremendous poverty and hardships can immigrate to our country legally.

The bishops’ “Justice for Immigrants” campaign reflects five specific immigration reform goals articulated by the bishops’ Committee on Migration:

• Bring the undocumented population in this country out of the shadows and give them a chance, over time, to achieve permanent residency and citizenship.
• Preserve family unity by strengthening family-based immigration.
• Create legal avenues for immigration so that migrant workers, who labor in many important industries in our nation, are able to enter the country legally, and in a safe and orderly fashion.
• Give immigrants their day in court consistent with American values by restoring due process protections that were removed in 1996 legislation.
• Work with neighboring countries and the international community to address the root causes of migration, such as economic inequalities, so that immigrants and their families can remain in their home countries and support their families in dignity.

The bishops’ website says that Catholic social teaching provides the foundation on which the Church addresses issues related to migration. Reflecting both Scripture and Church tradition, the bishops developed a set of moral principles to inform the decision-making process of policymakers as they address legislation related to these issues. The Church recognizes that there has to be a careful balance between the rights of migrants to move due to economic necessity and the rights of sovereign states to govern their borders. Particularly vulnerable populations, such as unaccompanied children, should be given special attention and care.

In 2003, the bishops of the United States and Mexico issued a pastoral letter to provide points of reflection for all Catholics to use as they consider the issues surrounding illegal immigration, migrants, refugees and other people on the move. The five basic principles articulated in “Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope” are:

• Persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland.
• Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families.
• Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders.
• Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection.
• The human dignity and human rights of all migrants should be respected.

In particular, the bishops noted that American companies, especially those in the agricultural field, are clamoring for more workers to do the work that Americans seem to refuse to do, people from Mexico and other Latin American countries are unable to migrate to the United States because the quotas for those people are too low.

The cap today for highly skilled migrants, known as the H1B visa, is 65,000 per year. H1B migrants can stay for a maximum of six years then must leave the United States. For non skilled, non-agricultural workers, the quota is 5,000, making it nearly impossible for a Mexican man, for example, to come in legally.

The United States has always been a country of immigrants, but those immigrants, unfortunately, have always had a difficult time being accepted. As our country ages, we need immigrants as much as any time in our history. At the same time, we should do what we can to help those countries that are not as wealthy as ours, the fifth bullet point of the bishops’ “Justice for Immigrants” reform goals mentioned above, so that people don’t have to risk their lives to come to this country. They come in most cases because they are desperate to be able to support their families. We must help them.

—John F. Finn

The Human Sidd

Fr. Eugene Hemrick

A peaceful 2011 to you!

“I think we have to blow this place up!” said outgoing Sen. George Voinovich of Ohio.

He continued. “There’s a lot of partisanship out there. Then they come over to the Senate and they carry their bad habits with them. Some of them, they still remember battles from 10 years ago. It’s like they’re keeping score.”

The “place” he spoke of is the U.S. House of Representatives. The “they” that he referred to are representatives who became senators.

Voinovich echoes a universal disgust that Americans harbor over habitual disharmony, much of which we can do something about. This is how we make the hurt you have endured, he counseled, also remember those you have hurt.

The exercise will increase our humility, soften hardened hearts, and enable us to be more at peace with ourselves and others. Each New Year encourages us to let life begin anew. The air today is filled with disharmony, much of which we can do nothing about and much of which tends to keep our wounds open.

Within ourselves, however, we have the power to do something about it. When we are at peace with ourselves, it is much easier to spread peace and unity around us.

So what has all that got to do with the peace that the angels announced at Jesus’ birth?

Having quoted a Pope, an author and a group of angels, it seems fitting to quote our Savior, “The kingdom is here among you” (Lk 17:21). Isn’t that what Jesus said? He said that very much in the present tense: “Peace on Earth!”

The peace of the kingdom of God is here, all wrapped up in humanity, where it has been since the angels sang that joyful song. To quote Jesus again: “Be not afraid!” (Mt 10:31).

The true peace of Christ is here, within our grasp, if only we would dare to receive it.

—Steve Setz

Our Guest

Steve Setz

God’s gift of true peace is within our grasp in our common humanity

Just a few weeks ago, as the aroma of Christmas dinner drifted from the kitchen, memories of Christmas past began flooding my mind.

How quickly, though, I was snapped back to reality by the happy sounds of my family gathered together, a family sharing generations.

From the little child, unaware of this first deposit in her Christmas memory bank, to the eldest child who sadly recalls my first Christmas years ago.

The sound of wrapping paper being ripped away, the occasional “aww!” and “Mom, look!” made me realize, for all the things that set each Christmas apart, in this way, they are all the same—gifts given and gifts received.

So it has been about 2011 years? Imagine it. You are a shepherd on night watch.

Just another night, except there is that peculiar star. “What’s up with that?” you wonder.

And then the whole sky lights up as a choir of angels joyously announces, “The God has just joined us in history, and is lying in a stable! ‘Peace on Earth!’ they sing! The gift of peace, given to all people brave enough to truly receive it, was given to them. Peace—it is not just for Christmas! In just a few words, “If you want peace, work for justice,” Pope Paul VI went right to the heart of why we—all of humankind—never give up their quest. God represents that gift of peace, but instead have spent centuries fighting over our concept of it. Could it be that the kingdom that God offers is more than the lack of conflict? Could it be that we are afraid of what the justice part of the equation means? It could be, but one thing is certain. Until we are brave enough to really work for it, we will never find it.

The gift of Christ, the greatest gift of all time, came wrapped in human flesh, and it is up to us to find that he is real.

This is where we, as disciples of Christ, have our work cut out for us. To take up the challenge of the Church, we have no choice but to drop the armor of prejudice and self-righteousness, the false sense of ownership, and instead embrace the stewardship that we have been entrusted with.

C.S. Lewis, in “The Problem of Pain,” wrote, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

Can you hear it? Around the world, and here in our backyard, God is shouting loud. He has been shooting through the centuries, even within our own hearts, “I am!”

So what has all that got to do with the peace that the angels announced at Jesus’ birth?

Having quoted a pope, an author and a group of angels, it seems fitting to quote our Savior’s angel. “The kingdom is here among you” (Lk 17:21). Isn’t that what Jesus said? He said that very much in the present tense: “Peace on Earth!”

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The true peace of Christ is here, within our grasp, if only we would dare to receive it.

—Steve Setz (a member of St. Louis de Montfort Parish in Fishers, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese)
**El discurso de un futuro vocacional a sus compañeros brinda un testimonio público excepcional**

E l apostolado vocacional, especialmente el llamado al sacerdocio, es un tema que me interesa mucho. El momento de las vocaciones forma parte de mis responsabilidades como vicepresidente de la región Este de la FFA. Fue un discurso impresionante. Tyler se atrevió a tomar su decisión en público. Es un orador talentoso y presentó su relato de forma convincente. Convenció a muchos de nosotros para escuchar nuestra voz interior, lo que nos dice nuestro corazón y no simplemente la presión de los compañeros, la granja y el mundo. Me imagino que los padres de Tyler, que se encontraban en el público durante la ceremonia de la FFA, estaban orgullosos de su valentía y de su habilidad como orador. Aceptaron su decisión y se sienten comprometidos a visitarlo en el seminario Bishop Bruté.

**Archbishop/Bispo: Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B.**

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Events Calendar

January 7

January 8
St. Roch Parish, Family Life Center, 3605 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Single Seniors, meeting, 1 p.m., age 50 and over. Information: 317-784-4207.

January 9
MKVS, Divine Mercy and Glorious Cross Center, Rexville, located on 925 South, 8 mile east of 421 South and 12 miles south of Versailles, Mass, noon, on third Sunday holy hour and pitch-in, groups of 10 pray the Marian Way, 1 p.m., Father Elmer Burowski, celebrant. Information: 812-689-3551.

January 12
St. Malachi Parish, 9833 E. County Road 750 N., Brownburg, “Catholics Returning Home,” session two of six, 7 p.m. Information: 317-650-5751.

January 13

January 14

January 15
St. Michael the Archangel Parish, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. Helpers of God’s Precious Infants, pro-life Mass, Father Eric Johns, celebrant, 8:30 a.m., followed by rosary outside abortion clinic and Benediction at church. Information: Archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, 317-236-1569 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1569.

January 16
Richmond Catholic Community, 701 N. A St., Richmond. Charismatic prayer group, 7 p.m. Information: dickenscenc@parallax.ws.

January 17
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, 10655 Haverstick Road, Carmel, Ind. (Diocese of Lafayette) Parish mission, “Listening to God’s Call,” Benedictine Archabbot Lambert Reilly, presenter. 10-11:15 a.m. and 7-8:15 p.m. Information: 317-846-3850 or www.seas-carol.org.

Serra Club announces vocations essay contest

“Love One Another” is the theme for the 2011 John D. Kelley Vocations Essay Contest sponsored by the Serra Club of Indianapolis. 

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“Ave Maria Guild donation

Benedicte Sister Sharon Bierman, right, the administrator of St. Paul Hermitage in Beech Grove, receives a donation of $3,000 from Vicki Spicuzza, the president of the Ave Maria Guild, an organization that supports the nursing home and retirement facility operated by the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. The donation was made during a Dec. 14 guild luncheon at the Hermitage. Guild members also donated several gifts in kind to the Hermitage’s chapel.
“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:12-13).

These familiar words come from the final discourse that Jesus gave to his disciples at the Last Supper. He had just washed his disciples’ feet and commanded them to do the same. Now, as he faced his own Passion, Jesus issued this final commandment to love. “Love one another” (Jn 13:34) were his parting words.

The command of Jesus reminds us that if we love him, then we will love what he loved and we will love how he loved. This is our call and the essence of all Christian vocations. At its heart, it is a love that involves a decision to will the good of other people. To love as Christ loved means responding concretely, in sacrifice and service, to the needs of others.

This love rejoices in the truth and speaks it with charity. It nourishes the goodness of others, challenges and consoles. It is manifested when we enter into other people’s joys, sufferings, hopes, fears and longings.

Most of all, I believe that these stories remind us that vocations to the priesthood, the permanent diaconate and the consecrated life, like all vocations, are ways of living out Jesus’ call to love as he loved.

Priests, deacons, and religious brothers and sisters live and minister among us in a wide variety of ways. They serve as teachers and catechists, administrators and pastors, counselors and confessors.

In their lives and ministry, they proclaim the Gospel, care for the sick, serve the poor and comfort the dying. They lead us and keep us in prayer, celebrate the sacraments and call us to holiness. They stand with us in the midst of life’s challenges, joys and tragedies, and point to the presence of Christ that stands with us as well.

Behind all of this is Christ’s commandment to love as he loved, manifested in a lived commitment, and animated by lives of generous sacrifice, service and joy. This witness provides us with a unique image of Christ’s own love. It invites us to consider how we are to live out Christ’s commandment in our own unique vocational call. For this, we can be grateful. In our gratitude, may we nurture and support this gift of loving as Christ loved.

May we also encourage those who choose to live out the call to love as priests, deacons, and religious brothers and sisters.†
The power of sharing the Gospel

Franciscans serve as missionaries in Papua New Guinea for 50 years

By Mary Ann Wyand

OLDENBURG—As five Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis visited in the parlor at their historic motherhouse on Dec. 9, their thoughts were far from southeastern Indiana.

Their conversation centered on the Oldenburg Franciscans’ five decades of educational and pastoral ministries in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea, a remote and mountainous South Pacific island nation, from 1960 to 2010.

Now retired, the former missionary sisters enjoyed sharing fond memories about how they and 21 other Oldenburg Franciscans helped the Capuchin Franciscan priests and brothers bring the Catholic faith to the indigenous people.

After their arrival in Papua New Guinea 50 years ago, the Oldenburg Franciscans founded primary and secondary schools in Mendi, Tari and Kagua to educate illiterate women and children as well as a convent for the religious formation of the native Franciscan Sisters of Mary.

They also taught the people about hygiene, basic health care and equality. Sister Kate Holohan, one of the four founding sisters, served in Papua New Guinea from 1960 to 1982.

Two of her sisters from Streator, Ill., were also Oldenburg Franciscans and missionary sisters. Sister Cecilia Holohan ministered in Papua New Guinea from 1969 until 1985, and Sister Doris Holohan began her missionary service in 1965 and is still serving there 45 years later.

“We went as teachers,” Sister Kate recalled. “I began teaching and had experience as a practical nurse so I did a lot of nursing. Then I got involved with the educational system… My role was to visit our schools, and keep them in line with the government regulations and rules. After that, I was asked by the bishop to start the native community of sisters.”

Her years as a missionary sister “were like a dream come true,” she said. “The people were so welcoming. The Capuchin Franciscans had been there for five years. The trust and the confidence they had acquired with the people were automatically turned over to us.

“As missionaries, we went as guests to the country and were well received,” Sister Kate said. “The call to missionary work kept increasing and empowering my own gifts… To share the Good News of Jesus was so powerful there. I had opportunities to be a part of the birthing of a nation, the birthing of the local Church, the birthing of an education system and the birthing of a community of native sisters there.”

Sister Noreen McLoughlin, a native of St. Mary Parish in New Albany, also was a founding missionary sister in Mendi.

She served in primary and secondary education as well as health care ministries from 1960 until 1989.

“We were useful and needed in so many different ways,” Sister Noreen said. “We were brought over mainly to help get the women into the schools because up to that time there had hardly been any education as well as health care ministries automatically turned over to us. The call [to missionary work] kept increasing and empowering my own gifts… To share the Good News of Jesus was so powerful there. I had opportunities to be a part of the birthing of a nation, the birthing of the local Church, the birthing of an education system and the birthing of a community of native sisters there.”

—Sr. Kate Holohan, O.S.F.

Academically talented seminarian loves life, serving the Church

By Sean Gallagher

When Daniel “Danny” Bedel graduated in 2006 from North Decatur High School in Decatur County as the valedictorian of his class, he could have studied at many first-class universities in fields that would be financially lucrative and socially prestigious.

But Bedel instead chose to become a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. If God willing, he is ordained a priest in a few years, he won’t earn a large salary. Nor will he be seen as a mover and shaker in society.

When Bedel shared his decision to enter the seminary with others during his senior year in high school, a friend of his, who also excelled academically but was a self-avowed atheist, was astonished.

“He was like, ‘Why? Why are you going to throw that talent away?’” recalled Bedel, 22, a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Enochsburg. “I just told him, ‘Well, I believe that I’m going to be doing much more good for people with this than I could with any other profession I could choose.’”

Although many people and events led him to discern a possible call to the priesthood, Bedel came to peace with it while praying in his parish church before school one day during his senior year.

“It just hit me like a ton of bricks,” he said. “This is what I want to do with my life.”

“What other life could compare with this? That moment of a deep sense of fulfillment has always kind of kept me going, even before I joined the seminary. And that fulfillment really hasn’t ever sputtered out.”

Bedel is in his first year of graduate theological studies at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

He is the oldest child of Tom and

See BEDEL, page 14
GREENWOOD—"In anything that I do as a priest, my number one goal is to make a positive difference in the life of the people around me.

This is how Father Vincent Lampert summarizes the meaning of his priesthood and ministry.

He has ministered as a priest in the archdiocese for nearly 20 years. For the last eight years, he has served as the pastor of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood.

The number of people in that Indianapolis South Deanery parish has increased dramatically during his tenure there, growing from some 600 households to approximately 1,300 households.

Father Lampert is a relatively young priest. But not in his parish.

"This is a very young parish. The average age of parishioners is 35. I'm 47. That makes me above average," said Father Lampert with a laugh.

Rob Richardson, the president of SS. Francis and Clare School, which is growing as quickly as the parish that sponsors it, gives much of the credit to his pastor.

"It's because of his spirituality, because of his ability to relate [to people]," Richardson said.

Although Father Lampert wants to make a positive difference in the lives of all his parishioners, he pays special attention to youth.

"You look around and the teenage population, for the most part, is not here," he said. "You wonder, if that generation is not here, are their children going to be here? So how do you reach out to them?"

To do that, he has served for the past eight years as the chaplain of the football team at nearby Center Grove High School.

In interacting with the players and other high school students, Father Lampert has seen some of them come to church that hadn't been doing so in the past.

"It's a way to go to where the young people are," he said. "If they're not getting here, how do you go to where they're at?"

His interest in people has taken him far beyond a local public high school. One of Father Lampert's favorite pastimes is traveling.

For a man who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s in Holy Trinity Parish on the near west side of Indianapolis—arguably at the time the epitome of an ethnic neighborhood parish—Father Lampert has gone far in his travels, touring countries throughout Europe, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East and North Africa.

He has also crosscrissed the United States, visiting more than half of the approximately 400 parks and memorials operated by the National Park Service. His favorite is Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah.

"It's about how we see the face of God around us— whether it's in other people or in the beauty of God's creation," said Father Lampert. "That's kind of what I strive to do [on my travels]."

In turn, Father Lampert seeks to bring the face of God to those to whom he ministers, especially those who face trials in life.

"As a priest, you encounter people who are struggling," he said. "How do you take the face of Christ to them to give them a sense of hope in the midst of whatever they're going through?"

Father Lampert does this by reaching out to youths, who often face many challenges in making the transition to adulthood, as well as to Catholics who seek a declaration of nullity on a previous marriage, and even—in his ministry as the archdiocese's exorcist—to those who believe that their lives may be especially burdened by the influence of the devil.

Earlier in his life, however, it was a pastoral approach taken to him by a teacher and how he faced his own challenges that led him to the priesthood.

When Father Lampert was in the fifth grade at the former Holy Trinity School, he got high marks one day on a religion test. That caught the eye of his teacher, Franciscan Sister Ramona Lunsford, who died in 2007.

Sister Jenny, speaking about all of the women in the congregation’s vocation program, those who are in discernment or might be considering discernment, reflected on how love reveals itself through a spiritual connection.

"I see in their hearts the longing and desire to come to God more deeply and, in response to that love, to use each one’s unique gifts as a witness and messenger of God’s love, mercy and justice in our world," Jenny said. "These women desire to be part of something greater than themselves, to connect with others who share that same passion and vision for a better world for all of God's people, and for the Earth itself."

Explaining how she lived out Christ’s call for unconditional love, Sister Dina said, "I try to follow Jesus’ words of love for others by trying to understand and respect where they are coming from while trying to stay true to myself. Every single person has within himself or herself an indomitable spirit destined for holiness, and that spirit cannot exist independently of others. A level of trust and openness must be honored in order to live honestly and lovingly."

Sister Regina agrees.

"It first and foremost begins with my relationship with Jesus. It begins with my asking the questions and praying for the grace to be open to answers. When I focus on my relationship with Jesus, when I look at how he lived his life, in his humanity, I am given glimpses of how I am called and challenged to live my life in order to truly love another as he has loved me/us. It is not always easy."

"To bring to life the commitment of flourishing love, especially in times when we least expect it, "Sister Jenny added.

"As a messenger of God's love, mercy and justice in our world, I am able to witness God's presence, asking to step out of the way to allow God to do the work with the students," she said. "Some work very long hours on their own, others desire to enter into full communion with the Church."
Deacon candidate learns how to serve from life experiences

By Sean Gallagher

As a youth, deacon candidate Brad Anderson faced the challenge of a troubled family life.

But he overcome many obstacles through the loving care offered to him by his grandmother, an older brother who took him into his home and members of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, who taught him at a Catholic school in his hometown of Peru, Ind.

He raised a family of three children with his wife, Kathy, and developed a successful small business.

Anderson, 54, a member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus, is on his way to being ordained a deacon and to be of service to others as so many people had served him early on in his life.

Part of this desire to serve others came from his work for more than 20 years in technology for the company in which he is a partner, the Indianapolis-based Carbide, Cutting Tools, Abrasives, Inc. In this position, Anderson often drove through neighborhoods in the city marked by a high crime rate.

He saw many youths and young adults standing on street corners who reminded him of his years growing up.

“That was me,” Anderson said. “I wanted to learn how to reach out to help those kids.”

After he was accepted into the archdiocese’s deacon formation program in 2008, he was eventually assigned to minister at Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis, where he expected he would have to mentor a youth to help him minister to city-center neighborhoods.

“I didn’t get a mentor. I got a community,” Anderson said. “The people at Holy Angels—they know how to get from poor A to point B. Their motto is to be a ‘beacon of light.’ And they are that. It’s an entire community that’s several generations deep, and they’re positively effective.

“They’re my home base. They’re my foundation. I went to them as a student. And they have taught me a lot.

They have taught him a lot, in large part, because he felt so welcomed by a faith community that is quite different from his home parish.

Holy Angels is an urban parish comprised of 250 households and made up mainly of blacks.

With 1,659 families, St. Bartholomew Parish is more than six times the size of Holy Angels. It is located in a mid-sized city in south central Indiana, and is largely made up of white Catholics.

“I’ve never been welcomed like that—in any arena,” Anderson said of his ministry at Holy Angels Parish. “They receive visitors in a way that you don’t feel they’re receiving you some day, you know? I was bowled over. I was humbled.”

He and his wife felt so welcomed that Kathy accepted an invitation to join Holy Angels’ Gospel choir, and she helped organize a concert of choirs.

St. Bartholomew Parish on Oct. 2. “It was like two families meeting each other and coming together,” said Kathy, who continues to work as an administrative assistant at St. Bartholomew Parish.

One member of Holy Angels Parish who traveled with the choir for the concert. Essie Thomas, ministers with Brad in her parish’s St. Vincent de Paul Society conference.

“They were so receptive to the music,” Thomas said. “It was just mind-blowing. It really was.”

This meeting of the faith communities marked by two distinct cultures is something that the Holy Angels pastor, Father Kenneth Taylor, hoped would be a fruit of Anderson’s ministry in the parish.

“It’s important for the larger Catholic Church to know what’s happening within the black Catholic world,” said Father Taylor. “It’s also important that we stay connected to the wider Church. We’re not just an independent Catholic Church all here by ourselves. We’re part of the archdiocese, part of the universal Church. And we need to stay connected.”

Father Taylor said that Anderson has helped his parish by bringing along the members who collaborate with him in various ministries how those programs relate to the wider Church.

Currently, Anderson assists at Holy Angels Parish with its Men’s Ministry, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and various liturgical ministries. But the ministry that really fires Anderson’s imagination is reaching out to those who live in the neighborhoods surrounding Holy Angels Church and School, often through the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

“I’m able to move in and out of the apartments, the projects, the neighborhoods,” he said. “I’ve got to know these folks, their neighbors [and] some of their family.

“The world within Holy Angels is extremely positive. One hundred paces off that campus, the world changes dramatically. That’s something that I’m praying my way through, that I’m thinking my way through.”

In reaching out to the people, Anderson has two goals in mind—sharing the word of God with them and helping them learn how to help themselves.

“A lot of the people in that area—and in any economically challenged area where you give multiple generations of poverty—often don’t understand their own worth,” Anderson said. “Until you get there, they’re not going to understand the worth of their neighbor or anyone else.”

“It’s really what the nuns at St. Charles [School in Peru] taught me. You are somebody. You are a child of Christ. You’re worth something. They relentlessly taught that.”

After helping people recognize their own dignity, Anderson hopes to put his business skills to work to give them the desire and capability to help pull themselves out of poverty.

Anderson and his 16 classmates in the current permanent deacon formation program have about 18 months before they are ordained.

Until then, Anderson hopes that he continues to learn how to be a better servant.

“From the beginning, as I began on this path, I felt that the diocesan would make me a more effective servant of the Lord,” he said. “And, obviously, I hope that happens.

“It better happen. If it doesn’t, I don’t have any business being a deacon.”

(For more information about the archdiocese’s deacon formation program, log on to www.archindy.org/deacon)

Woman gives up her computer career to serve the elderly poor

By Mary Ann Wyand

Love for God and the lord led Amy Love to her religious vocation as a Little Sister of the Poor.

“When I was growing up, I had a sense that I had a Love for God and the elderly led Amy Love to her vocation as a Little Sister of the Poor.

She said, ‘God wants me for himself,’ and I think that’s how I felt about my own call to religious life. I liked the advice that she always gave to the novices. She would say, ‘Jesus is waiting for you in the chapel.’ ”

She explained during a Dec. 8 interview at the St. Augustine Residence in Washington, D.C., that she always gave to the novices. She would say, ‘Jesus is waiting for you in the chapel.’ ”

Sister Amy recalled. “We prayed the Office of Readings together then watched the [canonization] Mass on TV. Some of our novices and sisters got to go to Rome so we were united with them in prayer.

Learning about St. Jeanne Jugan’s ministry to the elderly poor from in 1839 until her death in 1879 confirmed Sister Amy’s decision to join the Little Sisters of the Poor.

“St. Jeanne Jugan was older when she discovered what God wanted for her,” Sister Amy said. “It took some time. She was ‘God’s daughter for herself’, and I think that’s how I felt about my own call to religious life. I liked the advice that she always gave to the novices. She would say, ‘Jesus is waiting for you in the chapel.’ ”

The fifth of seven children, she grew up in Oklahoma City, attended Catholic schools and thought she would become a nurse.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in elementary education, she decided to continue her studies and complete a master’s degree program in computing information systems.

“And after I graduated,” she said, “I got a job working with computers as a server administrator at Boeing.”

But her heart continued to feel restless while she worked at the aerospace company’s facilities near Oklahoma City for seven years.

“I felt a sense of holy restlessness,” she said.

And she continued to work for Boeing when I found out about the Little Sisters while doing research [about religious vocations] online and read about their vow of hospitality.

“I was 34 when I entered the congregation.”

Sister Amy said she thought about her religious vocation to St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the Little Flower, as well as Pope John Paul II.

Above, deacon candidate Brad Anderson, center, leads a Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) class on Dec. 8 at Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis. Listening to Anderson are, from left, RCIA candidates Marie House and Moe Edwards.

Right, deacon candidate Brad Anderson, right, smiles while watching a Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) ritual during a Dec. 5 Mass at Holy Angels Church in Indianapolis. Anderson helps lead an RCIA class at the parish.

A few months after her paternal grandmother’s death, she also mourned the deaths of Pope John Paul II on April 2, 2005, and Terri Schiavo, a 41-year-old woman with profound brain damage who was legally denied nutrition and hydration for several weeks before she died on March 31, 2005.

Providentially, on the first anniversary of the pope’s death, she participated in a vocations retreat at the Jeane Jugan Residence, the Little Sisters’ home for the elderly poor in Kansas City, Mo., and felt God’s call to join the congregation.

“I was so impressed with the home,” Sister Amy recalled. “The sisters were happy, the residents were happy and the employees were happy. By the atmosphere and cleanliness at the home, you could see that they take very good care of the residents. After that, I spent some time with the Little Sisters at the St. Joseph Home in Palatine, Ill. While I was there for another retreat over my Christmas vacation in 2006, I asked to enter the congregation.

During her postulancy at the Jeane Jugan Residence in Washington, D.C., she met then-President George W. Bush and first lady Laura Bush, who visited the Little Sisters and residents on Dec. 18, 2007.

It is a special gift to know what God wants you to do with your life, Sister Amy said, and it is a joy to serve God as a Little Sister by caring for the elderly poor.

“The Little Sisters see Christ in those whom we serve,” Sister Amy said. “We see Christ in the poor. We try so hard to provide the best quality of care for them and to give them their dignity because we believe that Christ is present in every person. … We count on the help of our benefactors and volunteers. We’re very grateful for all the good that people do for us and for our residents.”

(For more information about the Little Sisters of the Poor, log on to www.littlesistersofthepoor.org. For more information about the Little Sisters’ ministry at the St. Augustine Residence for the Aged, log on to their new website at www.littlesistersofthepoorindianapolis.org.)
By Sean Gallagher

Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein established Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary just six years ago. But in that relatively short time, it has moved from its first home in St. Francis Hall on the campus of Marian University in Indianapolis to the former Carmelite Monastery of the Resurrection, approximately one mile south of Marian. It has grown from a handful of college seminarians for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to an enrollment of some two dozen seminarians from eight dioceses. In the process, it has filled its current home to capacity.

The seminarians take classes in philosophy and theology at Marian University, and receive human, spiritual and pastoral formation at Bishop Bruté.

Father Robert Robeson has served as Bishop Bruté’s rector since its founding. He is currently assisted by vice rector Father Patrick Bredalman, director of spiritual formation, Jesuit Father Thomas Widner; and associate director of spiritual formation, Benedictine Father Jonathan Fassero.

The seminarians’ busy days often begin with Mass and Morning Prayer. Breakfast usually follows. And then, Monday through Friday, most seminarians are off to Marian for classes.

But life at Bishop Bruté isn’t just praying and studying. The seminarians take turns doing kitchen duties. And when they have free time, they will sometimes play a pick-up game of football on the seminary’s spacious grounds at 2500 Cold Spring Road.

Although Bishop Bruté has grown steadily over its six-year history, it will need additional housing in future years to allow it to continue to grow.

At a recent meeting of the board of directors of the Catholic Community Foundation, vicar general, Msgr. Joseph F. Schaedel, announced that archdiocesan leaders are starting to discuss ways that such an expansion could be funded.

(For more information about Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, including ways to contribute to its growth, log on to www.archindy.org/bsb.)

Above, with seminarians listening, Father Robert Robeson, the rector of Bishop Simon Brute College Seminary in Indianapolis, preaches a homily during a Mass in the seminary’s chapel on Dec. 1.

Left, Sean Wilson, a seminarian for the Cincinnati Archdiocese, practices juggling in his dormitory room on Dec. 9 at Bishop Simon Brute College Seminary in Indianapolis. He is a senior at the seminary.

Above, Tyler Tenbarge, left, a seminarian for the Evansville Diocese, talks with Philip Frederick, a seminarian for the Cincinnati Archdiocese, on Dec. 1 at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis. Tenbarge is a junior at the seminary. Frederick is a sophomore.

Right, Joseph Cole, a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, kneels in prayer during a Mass on Dec. 1 at the chapel of Bishop Simon Brute College Seminary in Indianapolis. Cole, a member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford, is a freshman at Bishop Bruté.

Above, Vincent Jansen, left, Father Robert Robeson and Peter Jansen have a conversation over breakfast on Dec. 1 at Bishop Simon Brute College Seminary in Indianapolis. The Jansens, who are brothers, are a freshman and junior at the seminary. They are seminarians for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, and members of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood. Father Robeson is the rector of the seminary.

Right, Jeremy Goebel, a seminarian for the Evansville Diocese, clears a stove after breakfast on Dec. 1 in the kitchen at Bishop Simon Brute College Seminary in Indianapolis. Seminarians take turns doing chores around the seminary. Goebel is a senior at Bishop Bruté.

Above, Father Robert Robeson, right, rector of Bishop Simon Brute College Seminary in Indianapolis, teaches a class on Catholic beliefs and practices on Dec. 1 at Marian University in Indianapolis. Most of the students in the class are seminarians. Marian provides the intellectual formation for Bishop Bruté’s seminarians. Human, spiritual and pastoral formation for the seminarians takes place at the seminary.

Left bottom, Jeff Stegbauer, left, prepares to punt a football during a Dec. 1 pickup game on a cold, snowy day at Bishop Simon Brute College Seminary in Indianapolis. Joining him in the game are Sean Wilson, center, and Vincent Jansen, right. Stegbauer and Wilson are seminarians for the Cincinnati Archdiocese. Jansen is a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.
boys unless we could accept the girls. We
but we said that we wouldn’t accept the
girls were not allowed in the classrooms,
their customs. … At the beginning, the
ever seen,” Sister Ruthann said. “Life was
people in the Southern Highlands had
were the first white women that the
Beech Grove, served in Papua
up in Holy Name of Jesus Parish in
interested in learning about the world.”
had seven languages, but they had learned
our family and lived with us. When I got
classroom before the boys.
knees into church in their grass skirts
didn’t know their language,” she said.
three years.
to Kagua high school to teach
School in Tari for seven years then went
to English.”
students were ages 6 to 26. … It was a
was teaching the first grade and my
sisters. The Capuchin priests started it. I
beginning of the school there with the
Mendi and went to Tari. That was the
Province. I helped with whatever was
asked to teach at the first high school in
our province. I helped with whatever was
needed. … I had the privilege of being in
charge of the health care of the students.”
Even as the sisters began ministries,
she said, “we were always very much
aware that we went there to work
ourselves out of our positions and to help
the people learn how to help themselves.”
She also served in religious education and
later in religious vocations.
“We had grade school and high
school girls as boarders for years,” Sister
Noreen said. “We enjoyed their
culture. We were very pleased as the
Church was formed and the people
became active ministers. We were happy
when students were baptized and
received first Communion. Seeing the
faith of the people was humbling. You
could see the Lord working there. It was
a great delight.”
Sister Lorraine Geis, who grew up in
St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville, served in
“My teaching was a tremendous
occasion. I will be forever grateful for the
fact that we were a part of this ministry.
Once you go to a foreign mission, especially to one as
primitive and startling as the one we went
to, you will never be the same. You will
look at everything differently.”

During the 50th anniversary celebration of the Oldenburg Franciscans’ missionary service in Papua New Guinea in October, Sister Barbara Piller, second from left, the congregational minister of the Sisters of St. Francis, and Sister Susanna Helmes, second from right, pose for a photo wearing garlands of flowers given to them as welcome gifts when they arrived in Mendi.

Above, Franciscan Sister Ruthann Boyle, second from left, teaches three Franciscan Sisters of Mary how to use a sewing machine to sew their habits at their convent in Mendi, Papua New Guinea.

Right, Sister Barbara Piller, right, the congregational minister for the Sisters of the Third Order at St. Francis in Oldenburg, accepts a handmade banner from a New Guinea woman during an October celebration in Mendi to mark the 50th anniversary of the Oldenburg Franciscans’ missionary service in Papua New Guinea.

St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, served in Papua New Guinea from 1974 to 1994. “I taught at the high school,” Sister Ruth said. “It has been a tremendous blessing to go to a foreign country and meet people from different cultures.

“History was unfolding right before our eyes,” she said. “In 1984, Pope John Paul II came to Papua New Guinea for the first time. He came up to the Southern Highlands, and that was a tremendous occasion. I will be
eternally grateful for the fact that we were a part of this ministry.

Another “nun run” will take place on Feb. 18-19.

Vocations directors for the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis of Oldenburg, the Daughters of Charity, the Little Sisters of the Poor, the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods and the Sisters of St. Benedict of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove have organized a “nun run” that will take place on Feb. 18-19.

During that time, “nun run” participants will visit, pray and share meals with members of these religious communities who minister in Indianapolis and Beech Grove.

Women ages 18-45 who are interested in learning more about these religious communities can participate.

Transportation, meals and overnight accommodations are provided.

For more information or to register for the “nun run,” call Daughter of Charity Theresa Sullivan at 812-963-7563 or send her an e-mail at Theresa.Sullivan@doc-ecp.org.
Sister who made demands of God lives a life of ser vice

By John Shaughnessy

Growing up with four older brothers who often teased her, Cathy Anne Lepore learned not to be intimidated—which may help to explain the four demands she made of God on the day that changed her life.

The day was Dec. 26, 1993, and Lepore was visiting Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, the home of the Sisters of St. Benedict. Seventeen years later, she jokes about how she was “kidnapped” by a friend and taken to the monastery that day, but in her heart she acknowledges that it was the work of God that brought her there.

After all, she was 34 in 1993, and the journey of her life was already filled with interesting twist and turns. She grew up in New England, had 141 first cousins, and believed her command of a curve ball and a sinker at 9 years of age meant she was destined to become a professional baseball player.

When reality dashed that dream, she went to college to become an athletic trainer and also taught at a high school before moving to Bloomington to earn a master’s degree at Indiana University.

All during those years, she was involved in youth and music ministry at the parishes where she was a member, including St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, and all during those years, there was the gnawing thought within her that the encouraging belief from others that God was directing her to a vocation as a religious sister—which leads back to her visit with the Benedictine sisters in the monastery and her four demands of God.

“During my visit, I left the sisters, who were older, went to the chapel and put four questions to God,” she recalls. “I told him, ‘First, I want to hear you call me by name. I can still hear that echoing.’

Moments later, someone walked into the dark chapel and asked, ‘Cathy, are you here?’

‘I was called by name, and it was by [a sister] who was younger than me,’ she recalls. ‘Her third demand was answered later that day when she returned to the chapel just before leaving the monastery. As she walked into the chapel, choir members were practicing and the lyrics were, ‘The Lord is kind and merciful.’”

“It’s the whole psalm of forgiveness,” she recalls. ‘My whole boat was rocking. Three months later, I knocked on the monastery door in March and said, ‘I would like to investigate living with you for the rest of my life.’”

So there is the essence of the vocation story of Benedictine Sister Cathy Anne Lepore. Seventeen years later, it continues as the story of how her life has changed and how she has changed the lives of others.

Since 1997, she has been a part-time religion teacher at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. “I thank her for the strength it gave me. I really like teenagers,” she says with a smile. “Of course, I get to send them home.”

As part of her course, she even teaches the art of manners to her students, including the basics of “please,” “thank you” and “may I?”

“If I don’t want them to get thrown out of restaurants, I allow her to use her different gifts to witness God’s love for people.

“I get to use my sense of humor, my organization and my knowledge of the healing arts, my sensitivity and my knowledge of the human body. Having both ministries creates a balance for me.”

At 51, she feels a peace that comes from knowing she is following God’s plan for her life. “It’s definitely a journey,” she says. “It’s learning about facing yourself and facing God. I’ve learned he’s much bigger than I am. Nothing is impossible with God.”

She smiles and adds, “We have an idea of what we should be doing and then God says, ‘Yeah, that’s good, but I want you to look over here. Turn your gaze and look at me.’ When we do that, a door opens. Then the question is, ‘Will I do it?’”

Sister Cathy Anne has learned to say yes to God. “God is in everything we’re doing—if we just turn and look.”

“To learn more about vocations at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, log on to www.benedictine.com.”

Father Lampert

Father Vincent Lampert, the pastor of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, gives Confirmation to a young man of his parish during an Aug. 8, 2010, Mass at the parish’s church.

Father Vincent Lampert

- Age: 47
- Parents: Joseph and Sharol Lampert
- Home Parish: Holy Trinity Parish in Indianapolis.
- Favorite Scripture verse: “He must increase. I must decrease” (Jn 3:30). “What I do is not about me,” Father Morris said. “It’s about the mission of the Church.”
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- Parents: Joseph and Sharol Lampert
- Home Parish: Holy Trinity Parish in Indianapolis.
Mary Bedel, and has four younger brothers and a sister. Faith was at the center of their life in their rural Decatur County home, which is less than a mile from their parish church.

“Our faith was always very important to us,” said Mary Bedel, who teaches at St. Nicholas School in Ripley County. “We prayed the rosary. We’d go to the Stations of the Cross during Lent. When he [Danny] was little, I’d read him stories from the Bible before he’d go to bed.

“Being a good person and being a good Catholic was what mattered the most. Being the smartest person or the greatest athlete or the most popular person isn’t what matters.”

Faith didn’t simply form the habit of prayer in the Bedel family. It also served as the ultimate foundation for a healthy and happy life in their family home.

“They’re my best friends,” Danny said of his parents and siblings. “I just love going home to visit my family. We play basketball together. We play paintball together. We watch movies together. We’re pretty close.”

“He enjoys life,” Tom Bedel said. “When he comes home for the weekend, it’s a party atmosphere.”

Ben Lutterbach was a high school friend of Bedel and often joined in the fun. They shared similar interests in music, sports and books.

But they differed in matters of faith. In high school, Lutterbach was a Baptist. So they often had friendly debates about their religious beliefs.

“Just for fun, I’d take the devil’s advocate, just for the sake of good fun in having an argument,” he said. “We’d talk about a lot of stuff. And I actually learned a lot [from him], too.”

In part because of his friend’s good example, Lutterbach was received into the full communion of the Church in 2009.

“When Danny talks about Catholicism and the faith, he’s very positive, very happy,” Lutterbach said. “My wife [whom Danny knew while in high school] always put it really well. She says that he makes you want to know what he’s so happy about.”

Beidel was also formed in his faith by the example of priests who served at his home parish. Father Patrick Commons, who died at age 86 last October, stood out among them.

“In a lot of ways, he was my spiritual grandpa,” Bedel said. “Whenever we would talk or get together, he would have all these stories he would tell of his experiences. They were fun to listen to, and very inspiring in a lot of ways.

“He was just such a happy [priest]. His smile would brighten your day.”

Father Robert Robeson, the rector of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, directed Bedel’s first four years of priestly formation when he was a student there from 2006-10.

He likes the fact that the former high school valedictorian is putting his talents to the service of the Church.

“We need the best,” Father Robeson said. “We need the people who are talented as priests.

“Danny is a very, very talented young man. He could do whatever he wanted to do. The fact that he responded to the call to the priesthood is a sign that he’s cooperating with God’s grace in his life.”

While at Bishop Bruté, Bedel taught himself how to play the piano and organ in order to assist with liturgical music at the seminary.

“It was a desire [of his] to contribute to the community,” Father Robeson said. “He was always a good example for the other guys. He was somebody that the other guys looked at as someone who’s authentically trying to live the life [of a seminarian].”

Bedel looks forward to continuing this life of service as a priest in a few years.

“Even though I feel fulfilled in the sense that I know that this is where I need to be right now, I almost wonder to myself how awesome is it going to be when I say that first Mass,” Bedel said. “How ecstatic is it going to be when I raise that host up and say, ‘This is my body.’ ”

(To learn more about seminarian Daniel Bedel, other seminarians of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis or about how to become a seminarian, log on to www.HearGodsCall.com)
Old communication principles still apply to new media

By David Gibson

A family is a complex affair, and every family is complicated in its own unique ways. After all, the members of a family rely upon each other. They look to each other for emotional support, cooperation, love and companionship, and in resolving the practical problems that arise with startling regularity in a household.

Often, this mutual reliance is a source of envy for those outside a family. At other times, the support that family members require of each other feels burdensome.

The fact is that family members at once are pulled together and pushed apart. They are confronted in virtually the same manner by the priorities of the home, the priorities of the workplace and schools, and the priorities of other communities that fulfill vital roles in their lives.

Things easily become complicated—

and stressful.

Families are not abstractions. Every family is dynamic, acted upon and influenced in its daily functioning by constantly changing forces inside and outside itself. No wonder the family’s unity is always at issue.

To function well and to shore up their unity, family members need to communicate well.

But the high level of communication that family members usually require is not always easily achieved.

faced with the pressures of real life, family members may communicate in hurried ways, rushing on from personal to business matters and back to personal again. Furthermore, the hurried ways of communicating that family members usually require is not sufficient for genuine physical presence. There is no substitute for laying your eyes on your spouse or child. The glow in another’s voice and the light in another’s eyes are best experienced when people are together at one time in one place.

Nonetheless, family members in our 21st century must attempt to bridge the divides that divide them. Drawing upon the finest strengths of the new technologies is one way to do this. But our own greatest strengths as persons need to be coupled with the technology. The basics of effective human communication do not lessen in importance just because the communication is enabled by one or another technological tool.

Family members rely upon each other for respect. That means they need to hear each other out respectfully, whatever the outward form of their communication. And in strong families, people resolve problems together.

In strong families, people find ways to communicate their belief in each other.

In today’s commuter world, family members, including spouses, often find themselves separated for the week or much longer by considerable physical distances. What doesn’t diminish for them is the distance that is their need to communicate.

No doubt the texting, e-mailing and cell phoning that are so much a part of people’s existence nowadays are a great boon to families as they attempt to hold things together from a distance.

Family members need to keep track of each other, and to be assured of each other’s well-being and safety, and of their continued care for one another, all of which is assisted by the new social media that serve as definite aids to family unity.

But our many technologies are inadequate substitutes for genuine physical presence. There is no substitute for laying your eyes on your spouse or child. The glow in another’s voice and the light in another’s eyes are best experienced when people are together at one time in one place.

Nonetheless, family members in our 21st century must attempt to bridge the divides that divide them. Drawing upon the finest strengths of the new technologies is one way to do this. But our own greatest strengths as persons need to be coupled with the technology. The basics of effective human communication do not lessen in importance just because the communication is enabled by one or another technological tool.

Family members rely upon each other for respect. That means they need to hear each other out respectfully, whatever the outward form of their communication. And in strong families, people resolve problems together.

In strong families, people find ways to communicate their belief in each other.

A big challenge for families when it comes to communicating from a distance is not to allow themselves to become distant in their actual communication. To the extent that the new technologies foster various forms of anonymity—in other words, to the extent that the “screens” of our technological world begin to serve as excuses for weak communication or walls to stand safely behind—they cannot serve family unity well enough.

In family life as elsewhere, actions tend to speak as loudly or loquacious words. Families function at their best when their members act upon their commitment to each other, demonstrating visibly that they trust and hope in each other; and despite the struggles of ordinary life continue to love each other.

To accomplish noble goals of this kind, however, family members need to find ways to become really present to each other.

Good communication in a family, whether aided by technology or not, calls for more than the expression of clear thoughts and well-honed words. It requires more than the practice of a set of skills.

When family members communicate well, it becomes clear that they are investing themselves in each other’s happiness and well-being, are willing to expend time and energy on each other’s behalf, and want and intend to remain a personal and caring presence in each other’s lives for the long haul.

But, yes, it is complicated.

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

Family communication can be aided by social media websites

By Scott J. Rutan

That the new forms of what are called “social media” are revolutionizing how people communicate is old news. The debate over whether or not these forms are improving communication is just beginning though.

While these debates will go on for some time, there are many stories of how new technologies are helping families make stronger connections, often creating bonds that otherwise would not exist.

“Our closest family member lives about 750 miles away from us,” pointed out a friend, Laurie Barr. “We have a niece in New Mexico whom we haven’t seen in years.”

Despite the distance, they have become very close thanks to the very popular social networking site Facebook.

“When she announced that she was expecting her first child, two other Santuses, Grandpa and I were all talking together live on Facebook—as across three different time zones,” Barr said.

For her family, Facebook is the medium of choice, affording them the opportunity to send out brief greetings, share pictures and videos, and chat online in real time.

Because of this, Barr and her niece have become more than “friends.”—Facebook’s word for those included in a person’s network.

“We’ve become real friends,” Barr said, and talk about everything, especially their latest recipes.

“Elisa will often write, ‘try this dish, Aunt Laure! It’s really good’!”

Such networking sites—some other popular ones are MySpace, Yahoo! Groups and Twitter—are becoming the medium of choice for casual family conversations. Unlike mail, messages on these sites are sent and received instantly.

Unlike a phone call, a sender doesn’t have to wait for the other party to be at home.

On the downside, however, there are real privacy issues regarding who can read a person’s postings. Constant care must be taken regarding what one is willing to share.

David and Eva Moore, however, have found a way around this.

Eva’s family is from the Philippines, which is 13 time zones away from where she and David live.

“Nineteen years ago, when we were first married, there wasn’t even phone service in her hometown,” David pointed out.

Now the village has phone service, which is incredibly expensive, and Internet access.

“We Skype Eva’s family all the time,” David said. Skype is another computer tool that uses the Internet, a microphone and a computer so that the computer becomes essentially a video phone.

Because of the poverty in the Philippines and our own limited budget, we find the computer much cheaper,” David explained. “I have refurbished donated computers and given them to family members. This lets us have unlimited conversations for the cost of the usual monthly Internet fee.

“We are able to see Eva’s sisters face to face, and check up on how the nieces and nephews are growing.”

When asked how easy this kind of computer hardware and software are to use, David said, “It’s not for everyone though.”

But said that her family will not be getting it in their home any time soon.

“We have a sixth-grade daughter here, and we’ve heard too many stories about strangers making video calls and doing some rather not-nice things online,” she said.

The new technologies are not perfect, which could probably be said about every form of communication, including face-to-face conversations. Even so, families are finding new and beneficial ways to use them.

“Because of Facebook,” David said, “Eva discovered that she had a first cousin living in Toronto. When we contacted her, she immediately invited us to her baby shower that next week.”

For them, it was a priceless opportunity to connect in a way that wouldn’t have been remotely possible even five years ago.

Because of today’s different forms of social networking, the miles and time zones seem to be disappearing and families are becoming closer than ever.

(Scott J. Rutan is an adult and family faith formation coordinator in Walworth, N.Y.)
The light and the darkness of our Catholic faith

Since childhood, I have been drawn to contrasts in light. However, when playing with friends, I always wanted to be the peacemaker rather than an antagonist. Said the way we think good over evil and couldn’t understand why other children would want to get into trouble. I still believe that good overcomes evil, but experiences in life since then have honed my sensibilities to better assess the variations of good to and evil.

As it was with great interest last month when I read a blog, Peace Garden Mama, by Roxane Salonen, who lives in Fargo, N.D., with her husband and children. Her blog can be found online at http://roxanesalonen.blogspot.com

I was moved by her observations and deep thoughts that remind me of myself when my husband, Paul, and I were raising our three daughters. However, Salonen is probably much bolder than I am when it comes to defending our Catholic faith. Not long ago, she came across an atheist’s blog where she found that a woman had observed that she respectfully responded to her, sharing her completely opposite point of view. She shared beautiful thoughts about her Catholic faith, and the other blogger defended her own beliefs. Salonen believes that “one can be lifted from the darkness by faith.” She wrote, “This listener responded for me, as one who has experienced the light of faith with every fiber of my being [body and soul] to go with this except back to the Light of Light.”

One of Salonen’s friends shared the cross once wrote—something to the effect that, “It is not the ones who boast about sincerest things next to God who are closest to him, but those who are silent because they realize how impossible it is to contain God in their words. In the end though, there is nothing I can say to appease those who believe that a life of non-violence is the most likely way to reach the right path. The lived reality of its fruits are enough.”

We can only know what we have been taught by parents, teachers and life circumstances. It is important to keep in mind that everyone has something to learn, and everyone has something to teach.

We spend so much time and energy focused on what makes us different than other people—those who don’t look like us, think like us, talk us or live like us—that we miss the absolute blessing that God makes us different for a reason.

The zebra has excellent eyesight and the guu has a keen sense of smell so they each have their best defense. We often see a wildebeest, which nearly every time we see a herd of zebra, they were drinking or grazing alongside a taller grass, while gnus have only lower teeth, making it more difficult for us to eat the grass low to the ground. It makes them perfect dinner partners. Our trip was all about diversity and growth. It is a surprise.

We should never put up barriers or be afraid to explore the differences that God has designed into each of us. We can only know what we have been taught by parents, teachers and life circumstances. It is important to keep in mind that everyone has something to learn, and everyone has something to teach.

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My mind immediately became aware of the lesson here for humans. It is that our diversity—or things which we make different, when brought together—makes us all much better off than we are on our own. I need your best gifts and you need mine.

We spend so much time and energy focused on what makes us different than other people—those who don’t look like us, think like us, talk us or live like us—that we miss the absolute blessing that God makes us different for a reason.

On our way home, I asked our tour guide if there was a reason for this phenomenon, and he explained that these two animals work together to survive. It is not the ones who boast about sincerest things next to God who are closest to him, but those who are silent because they realize how impossible it is to contain God in their words. In the end though, there is nothing I can say to appease those who believe that a life of non-violence is the most likely way to reach the right path. The lived reality of its fruits are enough. We can only know what we have been taught by parents, teachers and life circumstances.

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Sunday, Jan. 9, 2011

• Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
• Acts of the Apostles 10:34-38
• Matthew 3:13-17

As winter begins each year, the Church celebrates three great feasts to joyfully focus on our salvation in Jesus, and also to teach us the meaning of salvation in Jesus. Christmas was the first of these feasts. Then came the Epiphany of the Lord. This weekend is the third celebration, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Each of these feasts, through its Liturgy of the Word, introduces us to a vital dimension in the identity of Jesus and an important consideration for Christians as they seek to follow the Lord.

Sunday Readings

Msgr. Owen F. Campion

Jews, whose heritage Peter shared, but that Peter offered salvation not just to Apostle, a responsibility given to him by discharging his responsibility as an Peter preaches in the name of Christ, passage. He appears before Cornelius, verifies the structure of the Church even the first generation of Christianity. It the Apostles, reveals what life was like in the first century A.D. so many homes had ceremonial baths. Archaeologists who excavated the ruins of Masada, the great Jewish fortress high on a mountaintop overlooking the Dead Sea, discovered ceremonial baths in the ruins there. Being baptized, or bathing in these special pools, symbolizes the yearning of a person to be rid of sin. It was as if sin stained not just the soul, but also the body. John the Baptist salutes Jesus as God's anointed. Then, marvelously and miraculously, God appears and identifies Jesus as the Son of God. God could be seen and heard. To clarify the message even more, God speaks and gestures ancient Old Testament words and symbols that no Jew would have misunderstood.

Reflection

This feast of the Baptism of the Lord reveals to us the Lord's identity. He is the Son of God, with all the force and mystery contained in this reality. He is the Savior, rescuing us from eternal death by assuming our sins and by making amends to God for our sinfulness. He is the mediator, uniting us with God. The Church makes the words of Peter to Cornelius its own, calling us to the Lord as our Savior. The Church also calls us to admit that we are sinners. We need Jesus to reconcile us with God, our hope and our life.

Question Corner

Fr. John Dietzen

Slander and gossip are serious sins that can destroy lives and relationships.

Q am the sponsor for one of our parish Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults candidates. During an RCIA session about the Ten Commandments, the speaker claimed that we can often lie by what we don’t say as well as by what we do say. Someone asked how that could be, but the speaker gave a short answer and didn’t seem too sure. Can we lie by what we don’t say? What would be an example? (Virginia)

A There certainly are such lies by omission. In fact, they can be some of the worst lies. We can be lying, even by telling only half-truths to blacken or destroy another person’s reputation, for example, by saying the sin of slander.

Obviously, a person commits a seriously sinful falsehood by what he or she purposely doesn’t say that can lead to a negative perception about another person. Far from being outlawed, these kinds of deceit are tragically common today. They may not always be so blatant, but they are nevertheless destructive and morally wrong.

This happens notably in what passes for political discourse, particularly during election campaigns. Misleading accusations, only half true at most, are purposely spread through the media to deceitfully destroy an opponent’s good name.

Of course, those whose prejudices are in the same direction eagerly believe these reports and pass them on as truth without the slightest hesitation that maybe the allegations are false, thereby becoming accomplices in the sin. We tend to believe what we want to believe, with hardly a moment’s thought given to what harm is being committed. It is often noted that this kind of lying is a major cause of the current near-total collapse of civil conversation and dialogue in the United States, and even in the Catholic Church.

But it is a spiritual challenge in more personal associations as well. Usually, it is called gossip, which sounds trivial but arguably destroys more lives and relationships in our human family than any other sin.

I’m glad that your speaker mentioned this as part of the commandments. Slander deserves a lot more attention than we usually give it.

Q We would like your comments on going to confession by telephone. Apparently, it’s not allowed, but why? (New York)

A Sacraments are always actions of Jesus Christ exercising his saving power in the world. However, Jesus acts through the human ministers of the sacraments involved, and through the words and actions of the sacramental rite. This has always meant that personal presence is required between the minister of the sacrament and the one receiving it. Just as a priest is not ordained or a baby is not baptized over the telephone, so one cannot receive the sacrament of penance that way either.

An individual’s faith, trust in God, sorrow for his or her sin, and desire for the Enchanted Reconciliation can bring forgiveness of sin and other graces from God that these sacraments are intended to provide.

My Journey to God

Winter’s Beauty

In this enchanted place all white and glistening, You can faintly hear the flutter of fairy wings. If you’re still enough and listening, Trees adorned in diamonds and lace. Glisten in the morning sunlight. Like penitent souls now filled with grace. As I gaze at this winter wonder, Where not even deer have tread, I give thanks for the beauty all around me. This lovely gift from God. By Hilda L. Buck

(Photograph by Hilda L. Buck)

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experience of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column. Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, P.O. Box 45206, Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.org.
Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in The Criterion. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.


EMMONS, Colleen and Arthur Cota, Kathleen Heath, Karen McDowell, Colleen and Arthur Field IV.


WARNER, Margie, 71. St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Dec. 3. Mother of Maureen Kruer, and Religious Sisters and Brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

A man walks his dog near the Genesee River in Rochester, N.Y., on Dec. 1. Heavy rain turned to snow late in the morning, giving area residents their first measurable snowfall of the season.

Offering the Finest in Contemporary and Updated Women’s Fashions and Accessories Invites you to Visit our Newest Location in ...
Oxford, England (cns)--the shrine of lady Lourdes, one of Europe’s best-known pilgrimage sites, has been partially closed for repairs amid reports that falling rocks in its fabled grotto could signal a major landslide.

Work to secure the massive rock face above the grotto started on Jan. 3, and was expected to continue through February, said the Diocese of Tarbes and Lourdes.

Despite the work, the grotto remained open for “adoration” during construction, the diocese said.

Bishop Jacques Perrier of Tarbes and Lourdes detailed some of the work to be completed during a December news conference. He said that the celebration of Mass would be canceled, then daily rosary service at 3 p.m. would continue until repairs are completed.

“The rope inspection revealed that the rock on the northern wall has been most affected during bad weather by very high humidity, which has led to the development of vegetation,” Bishop Perrier explained.

“These conditions have contributed to erosion in the rock, particularly horizontal, which have caused water to stagnate in the stone and split it when frozen. Year by year, the rock is shifting,” he said.

The project will find workers affixing loss chunks of rock, some weighing up to 15 tons, to the existing rock face. Safety nets also will be installed to catch any rocks that may fall in the future.

Lourdes, near the Pyrenees mountains in southern France, attracts about 6 million visitors annually. There has been a place of pilgrimage since 1858, when St. Bernadette Soubirous experienced there the first of 18 visions of Mary.

According to Tornielli, at the end of 2010, the presumed miracle passed the first three stages of a five-step process that involves medical experts, a medical board, theologians and the pope himself. The final stage is expected to be completed during a December news conference.

Bishop Perrier explained. The initial diocesan phase of the cause was completed in April 2007. After a team of theological consultants to the Congregation for Saints’ Causes studied the matter.

According to Tornielli, at the end of 2010, the presumed miracle passed the first three stages of a five-step process that involves medical experts, a medical board, theologians, and the pope himself. The final stage is expected to be completed during a December news conference.

“The miracle—invoking a French nun said to have been cured of Parkinson’s disease—has been approved by a Vatican medical board and a group of theologians, and is now awaiting judgment from the members of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes,” according to Italian journalist Andrea Tornielli.

If the congregation accepts the healing of Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre as a miracle attributable to the late pope’s intercession, then Pope Benedict XVI still would have to sign a decree formally recognizing it before a beatification liturgy can be scheduled.

Tornielli, who covers the Vatican for the newspaper Il Giornale, wrote on Jan. 4 that the process is so far advanced that Pope John Paul II could be beatified sometime in 2011.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, told Catholic News Service on Jan. 4 that the final step before beatification requires the pope’s approval, and that the pope is free to make his own decision on the matter.

Report in newspaper says Pope John Paul miracle nears final recognition

By Brandon A. Evans

This week, we continue to examine what was going on in the Church and the world 50 years ago as seen through the pages of The Criterion, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

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Sex abuse survivor says her love of Eucharist helped restore her faith

GREEN recently recounted how, though she “left the Catholic Church forever many times,” her love of the Eucharist endured and, with the support of Arlington diocesan priests, Office of Victim Assistance programs and Arlington Bishop Paul S. Loverde, she was able, eventually, to enter a church without fear and receive the body of Christ.

Earlier this year, Green published Restoring Sanctuary (Dog Ear Publishing), a book that’s part memoir, part spiritual reflection and part impetus for healing.

The book immerses the reader in the Church’s painful wound through the eyes of a victim, yet Green does not give explicit details of abuse. But she is explicit when she defines the nature of the crime: “Sexual abuse of children is violence by sexual means by predators who, in theirown judgment, deem their behavior to be good and normal, who regard their domination of another person by sexual means to be justifiable and reasonable. It is rape; it is rape.”

For “priest predators,” there is “a meticulous grooming of the mind to prepare it to be broken,” she said. “They make themselves a false idol, the dominant power. As a sapling, it cuts to your core.”

The physiological, spiritual and physical costs of Green’s sexual abuse were great. In her book, she recounts her many health problems and an abusive relationship—all, she believes, with roots in the abuse.

Yet, Green does not linger on the costs. In the chapter “Story,” she writes that she reached a point where “suffering was about to be redemptive.”

After years of therapy, self-help books, support groups—often either rejecting the healing potential of Catholicism or highly suspicious of it—and struggles with faith, Green recognized there was an “imprint of Catholicism on me, an imprint on Christ on me that went deeper than any wound.”

Even though she understood the imprint, and therapy had led her toward healing, she had yet to integrate her “wounded faith into the process.”

“Everything seemed different” when she first spoke with Father Mealey, the coordinator of the Office of Victim Assistance in the Diocese of Arlington, and Oblate Father Mark Mealey, vicar general. Both offered two things: They recognized evil and they heard her pain, not just with words but with actions.

Father Mealey encouraged Green to share her story on paper. “I think he was imagining a two-page article maybe, and he got a full book,” she said.

As she began to weave fragments of her life into a cohesive whole, she became involved in diocesan victim assistance programs, which helped her farther along a path that would restore her wounded faith.

Despite my age, I was carrying memories jumbled still by the pain they carried, and I bumbled like a child,” said Green, as she recalled talking with Bishop Loverde for the first time. “That is when my memories became a story, and the story revealed to me my own authentic faith.”

It was a powerful healing moment to have a bishop “just sit and listen,” she said.

Green is quick to express her sympathy for the priests and bishops who were betrayed by the sins of their brother priests—and who often are chastised for those sins.

Priests and bishops have been “betrayed by those they trusted as well,” she said. “They need to be cared for, too.”

In Restoring Sanctuary, the refrains arguments that to curb clergy sexual abuse, the Church should prohibit gay priests or allow priests to marry. She also said it’s “not a liberal or conservative thing.” It’s a matter of evil, she said.

Green, along with the diocesan outreach that Green embraces gratefully—a testament to Christ’s love present in the sacrament that kept calling her back to the faith.

“The world is full of conflict,” she said. “The Eucharist has something beyond the conflict of the world.”

PEACE

continued from page 1

The pope said the gathering, planned for October, is meant to recall “the historic gesture” made by the late Pope John Paul II when he convoked the first World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi in 1986.

In his homily during the morning Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica on Jan. 1, the pope spoke about the theme he chose for World Peace Day 2011 — “Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace.”

He said that religious freedom was challenged today by two extremes at work in the world — secularism that banishes religion to the private sphere, and fundamentalism that seeks to forcefully impose religion on everyone.

He said that religious freedom is the best path for building peace because wherever religious freedom is guaranteed, human dignity is also respected.

Pope Benedict called on political leaders and all people of goodwill to not give up when faced with “the negative force of epistem and violence,” and to not become jaded into thinking that conflict, which puts lives and the future at risk, is inevitable.

War, he said, reflects “the most horrendous and violent face of history.” He called on everyone to promote and build peace, reminding people that “words aren’t enough for this difficult task.”

He said that a “concrete and constant commitment is needed by heads of nations, but above all what’s needed is that every person be inspired by an authentic spirit of peace,” which is fostered by prayer and lived out in one’s day-to-day activities.

Peace does not come because “weapons, nor economic, political, cultural and media power,” he said.

Peace is both a gift from God and the result of a change in the human conscience, which becomes open to truth and love, he said.

The pope presided over an evening prayer liturgy with eucharistic adoration and the singing of a special hymn of thanksgiving to God on Dec. 31 at St. Peter’s Basilica.

After the liturgy, the pope went by popemobile into St. Peter’s Square, where he visited the Vatican’s Nativity scene. While chortlers sang, the pope stood at the groto house, gazing at the larger-than-life-size figures of the Holy Family and knelt in prayer.