A new choice in education

Voucher system opens doors for more families to attend Catholic schools in Indiana

By John Shaughnessy

The anguish shows on Megan Ward’s face when she recalls her children’s education last year—the communication problems with teachers, the sense that her children weren’t getting the education they needed, and the lack of emphasis on values at the public school they attended.

But seconds later, the 28-year-old mother of four smiles when she is asked about the effect of Indiana’s new voucher system on her family and the experience her three oldest children are having at their new school, Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis.

“It seems there’s a plan of success for every child here,” Ward says. “My kids love it, and I have tons of information from the teachers about how to get in touch with them and what they’re doing in school. I have noticed a difference in values, too. They told us on the very first day that if there’s bullying, they wanted to know about it, and there would be consequences. It’s harder here that you need to treat people the way you want to be treated.”

She pauses and then adds, “I think the voucher system is ultimately going to give my children better lives. It will give them a better education, and I would pay for it if I could. I think education is the key to success in life. If we can get them to see how important education is, it gives me a lot of hope for their futures.”

Ward’s three oldest children are among the 1,028 students in Catholic schools across the archdiocese who have benefited from the Indiana voucher program. The program, which went into effect on July 1, offers financial assistance to families of certain income levels to help them select a school of their choice for their children.

While the impact of the voucher system for archdiocesan Catholic schools has been most noticeable in the Indianapolis area, it has also made a difference in archdiocesan schools from Franklin to New Albany and from Terre Haute to Richmond.

“The overall feedback I’ve received is that people are thrilled with the ability to make an independent choice to find the best school that meets their child’s needs,” says Rich Ruhl, principal of Seton Catholic High School in Richmond, which has seven students who have been helped by the voucher system. “It’s opening doors for our kids and our families to attend our best school that meets their child’s needs.”

Indianapolis resident becomes first woman elected national president of St. Vincent de Paul Society

By John Shaughnessy

Sheila Gilbert knows there will be major changes in her life since she became the first woman elected president of the national council of the U.S. Society of St. Vincent de Paul on Sept. 3.

Still, the 31-year-old Indianapolis resident hopes to continue the commitment she has made each week to people in need in Indianapolis. Every Tuesday morning, the grandmother of seven personally greets the hundreds of people who line up to shop at the Client Choice Food Pantry of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Indianapolis.

“This is where I get my life, being with the people who are coming here to shop,” says Gilbert, a member of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis. “You see the same people every week, and you can build relationships with them, get to know them a little bit. To me, this pantry on a Tuesday is like a party with 800 of my best friends. I go home exhausted, but I’ve had a good time.”

Holy Father, religious leaders mark 9/11 anniversary

ANCONA, Italy (CNS)—Remembering the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Pope Benedict XVI appealed to government leaders and all people of good will to work toward a future marked by solidarity and peace.

The pope marked the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks in the United States after celebrating the closing Mass for the Italian National Eucharistic Congress in Ancona, on Italy’s Adriatic coast.

Before leading the midday Angelus prayer with about 80,000 people gathered at a shipyard, the pope recalled the anniversary.

“In commending to the Lord the lives of the victims of the attacks carried out that day and their families, I ask leaders of nations and people of good will always to refuse violence as a solution to problems, to resist the temptation of hatred and to work in society, drawing inspiration from the principles of solidarity, justice and peace,” the pope said.

Pope Benedict also sent a message to about 300 religious leaders gathered in Munich to commemorate the anniversary at the beginning of the annual interreligious dialogue meeting sponsored by the Community of Sant’Egidio, a Rome-based lay movement.

The theme of the gathering was “Bound to Live Together,” and the pope said that when people do not open themselves to learning from, sharing with and respecting others, living together “can become a hell.”

Religious leaders, he said, must ask themselves how they can become forces to promote peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

Religious promote peace when they lead people to an encounter with God, and to a life lived out of obedience and love for God and for the men and women he created, he said.

“If religious want to bring people to God, if it lowers God to itself instead of raising us to God,” the pope said.

For full text see POPE, page 16.
Refugee Resettlement Program seeking new student ambassadors

By Mary Ann Garber

Life-changing. Bishop Chatard High School junior Andria Assalley will never forget her incredible experiences as a student ambassador for the archdiocesan Catholic Charities Indianapolis Refugee Resettlement Program. “The gift I have been given by working with this program is bigger than you or I,” Andria explained during a recent speech.

“It’s bigger than money or a car for your 16th birthday. I’ve been given the ability to change lives,” she said, “and today I stand here before you on my 16th birthday.”

God put me in this position, and he will get me through it. Whatever reasons. I look at the job sometimes and think, God. In God’s provident time, this was it. And it was me for whatever reasons. I look at the job sometimes and think, God. In God’s providence, it’s probably impossible. But if, with God’s providence, it’s

Another day. But I think it’s time for us to move beyond our comfort zone. We need to find ways to pull them together to really tend my garden. To me, that’s a pulling and a connecting. I’ve had to stop because you can’t practice on the pavement. But I love the idea of walking with the refugees after they have arrived at the Indianapolis International Airport. Then helping them get settled in their homes. I was inspired to know that at his young age he would be forever changed by the refugee experience.

And I’ve watched myself grow and change. Because I’ve had so many opportunities to look at the job sometimes and think, God. In God’s providence, it’s probably impossible. But if, with God’s providence, it’s very little hope that anything is going to get better. That’s why I’m interested in systemic change. As a society, we have been very good at meeting the immediate needs of people, and that gives them the ability to survive another day. But I think it’s time for us to move beyond that. We need to help people to thrive. We need to change the conditions that keep them where they are, forever. That’s where I want to go.

Gabrielle Campo

A gift, she realized, that is priceless. Andria, who is a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis and resides in Fishers, Ind., in the LaVista neighborhood, was one of nine high school and college student ambassadors who each earned a $500 stipend by participating in the Refugee Resettlement Program’s 2010-11 service learning effort.

This month, high school and college students are invited to apply for a service learning position before the Sept. 29 application deadline.

Seven students will be selected to assist the Refugee Resettlement staff with educational outreach and fundraising efforts. They also will have opportunities to meet and help refugee families from several countries that are being resettled in central Indiana by the federal government and U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Q. What does it mean to you to be the first woman to become president of the national council of the U.S. Society of St. Vincent de Paul?

A. I really believe that my path to holiness, my way to be in a relationship with God, is serving people who are in need. And the St. Vincent de Paul Society, with the council and the conferences, gives me a faith community where I can do that, where I can grow in understanding what God is asking of me.

Q. Who were your influences that led to your involvement in helping people in need?

A. “My mother was always helping. Until she was 85, she would answer the telephone as a pick-up-line volunteer for St. Vincent de Paul— to help get the donations so we would have something to give to people. She did that right up until she couldn’t see.” My grandmother inspired me in a different way. My grandfather had a stroke, and I watched my grandmother care for him at home with such love and devotion for so many years.

Q. Being national president involves travel nationally and internationally as well as spending time at the national headquarters in St. Louis. Talk about that commitment.

A. “I thought about that seriously I’m a gardener, and another place I get life in is in the soil. My garden this year is a sin and a shame. It’s awful because I have not been home to really tend my garden. To me, that’s a pulling and a connecting. Also, for probably 60 of my 70-some years, I was really trying to learn to play the piano. I was taking lessons again. I’ve had to stop because you can’t practice on the pavement. So those are everything. I can’t say, I did this. I’ve had to learn I have limits.”

Q. Could you share a personal situation of how your work with the society has made a difference to someone?

A. “I had done home visits for about 15 years. But then a woman moved into my neighborhood, and I saw her sitting on her front porch crying. So I went over to her and asked her what was wrong. She said she was homeless, she was working, and she had spent everything she had to put this house into this house. And she had no money left for anything else, and she wasn’t going to get paid for another week. So that contact with that lady then led me to go into her for eight years. I have watched her grow and change. And I’ve watched myself grow and change. Because I’ve been in a real relationship with her, I have a very different understanding now of what it means to struggle every day of your life and there’s very little hope that anything is going to get better. Out of that I have come to realize the society is all about— giving hope to people who don’t have any hope.”

And that’s why I’m so interested in systemic change. As a society, we have been very good at meeting the immediate needs of people, and that gives them the ability to survive another day. But I think it’s time for us to move beyond that. We need to help people to thrive. We need to change the conditions that keep them where they are, forever. That’s where I want to go.

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Saint Meinrad monk creates images for new missal

By Sean Gallagher

For more than 1,000 years, the Church has encouraged the production of beautiful books to be used in its liturgy and especially the Mass, the “source and summit of the Christian life,” as the bishops at the Second Vatican Council described it. Today is no different as book publishers across the English-speaking world will soon release new missals to be used for the first time on the weekend of Nov. 26-27 when the new translation of the Mass will be implemented at churches.

Benedictine Brother Martin Esparza, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, followed in the footsteps of monks going back to the early Middle Ages by creating a series of 18 new images for an edition of the Roman Missal to be published by Liturgical Press.

Brother Martin knows that his works will have a limited audience. But he hopes that they will, in some way, help all people at Mass to pray better.

“Most people won’t be looking at the missal. It will be the priest,” he said. “But the idea is similar to that of ancient books where you’re trying to embellish the word, and make the book more of a beautiful object so that it has a certain presence in the liturgical context.

“It’s so much more substantial than a loose leaf binder. Like all the objects that are used in worship, you try to have them designed in such a way that they bear the weight of the mystery.”

The mysteries he portrays are wide and varied. Brother Martin has created for this missal images of Christ’s Nativity, his Transfiguration, the Annunciation of Mary, and images for the Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul and All Saints.

In all, he created 19 images for the missal that originally were a combination of paintings and pencil drawings. The style in which Brother Martin created these images is based on medieval artistic methods often employed by Benedictine monks in monastic scriptoria.

“The focus in the earlier art was always on the spiritual truth. After the Renaissance, I think the focus was perhaps more on just the artistic quality and composition. I tend to look at earlier work because I think there’s something really wonderful to try and understand about it. And I try to incorporate that into my own work, not in the sense of a copy, but as taking those ways of rendering these theological mysteries and portraying them in sort of an ancient yet a contemporary way at the same time.”

The contemporary nature of his work is also seen in the production of the books. In the Middle Ages, Brother Martin said, books were handmade, and liturgical books received great attention because of the importance of their use. Today, publishers have to mass produce missals so they are not as precious as those designed in such a way that they bear the weight of the mystery.

“Work that gets done through my hands has a life of its own, and either lives or dies on its own. Once I’m finished doing it, it’s sort of out there and I’m moving on to the next thing.”

The image of the Transfiguration of the Lord is found in a new edition of the Roman Missal that is being published by Liturgical Press. The image was created by Benedictine Brother Martin Esparza, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad.

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(For more information about the new Missal translation and what parishes can do to prepare for it, log on to www.archindy.org/worship or www.usccb.org/romanmissal.)
Cohabitation and fornication

A few weeks ago, the U.S. Census Bureau publicized the fact that its 2009 survey found that people are waiting longer before marrying. Furthermore, marriages are at a record low, with only 52 percent of adults 18 and older saying they were married. For the first time, the percentage of adults who have never been married between the ages of 25 and 34 was higher—46.3 percent—than the percentage of those married—44.8 percent.

The decline in marriage doesn’t mean that young adults aren’t continuing to pair off. It is just that today they start living together without getting married. Even most couples who eventually marry now live together first.

That brings us to another survey, this one by the Center for American Families at the Institute for American Values and the National Marriage Project, based at the University of Virginia. That study found that 24 percent of the nation’s children are now born to cohabiting parents. Furthermore, more than 40 percent of those children will someday spend some time in a cohabiting household.

That study also found that children born to cohabiting parents are much more likely to experience a parental break-up than if their parents were married—hardly surprising. Besides the problems of instability, the children of cohabitating parents are three times more likely to be physically, sexually or emotionally abused than those in intact married-parent homes. They are also more likely to experience delinquency, drug use and school failure. The researcher at the University of Virginia said, “If Mom is living with a boyfriend, they may have less trust, less emotional security in their relationship, less sexual fidelity.” Who could possibly expect anything different?

All this is more evidence that the children of cohabiting parents are more likely to experience fornication than children of married parents—hardly surprising. Such a bizarre warehouseing of children is not only as outlandish as it seems. In fact, fertility clinics in the United States already warehouse more than 50,000 children in high-tech freezers filled with liquid nitrogen, children who are crystallized byproducts of the in vitro fertilization process.

Parents can choose to “re-animate” their embryonic children by thawing them, implanting them and getting them pregnant, but in other instances, they end up being abandoned because their parents are now too old to carry a pregnancy or are content with the number of their already-born children.

The multi-billion dollar business of in vitro fertilization in the U.S. has been aptly described as a kind of “Wild West,” a lawless frontier where nearly anything goes, including the daily freezing and stockpiling of scores of humans who are still in their embryonic stages. This practice stands out as one of the great humanitarian tragedies of our age.

Few commentators, however, dare to raise their voice against this injustice, which is practiced right under the noses of national reproductive choice and freedom. Because our frozen children have no voice to speak in their own defense, we slip into a sleight of hand that ignores their inherent dignity.

But not every country has been so blind. Germany has a constitutional memory of the consequences of ignoring human dignity, declines to participate in these charades. Strikingly, human embryos are not being frozen anywhere in the country, and virtually none are kept in cryogenic storage. Meanwhile, countless American parents find themselves caught in agonizing dilemmas about what to do with their offspring held in suspended animation.

Not much reflection is needed to realize the serious injustice involved in forcefully “stopping” a person completely. The freezing and thawing process itself subjects embryonic humans to significant risk, and up to 50 percent of embryos do not survive the process.

Stored embryos often end up being donated to a kind of perpetual stasis, locked in time in the harsh wasteland of their liquid-nitrogen orphanages. This injustice, once it is understood, could be a powerful impetus for the production of extra embryos, experimentation on embryos, cloning of embryos and genetic testing of embryos.

The radical stockpiling of embryonic humans has become a part of our everyday life in our society as such humans are reduced to little more than “stony objects” to be warehoused and manipulated—valuable commodities for how they can serve the commercial interests or the personal desires of others.

The temptation to dehumanize our own brothers and sisters is a perennial one, hearkening back to that time in our country, not so long ago, when slaves could be considered only three-fifths of a person for purposes of congressional representation. Treating embryos as less than a person could be a more deplorable violation of human rights.

The U.S. urgently needs embryo protection laws. Men and women of conscience must pressure lawmakers to act. The putative and widely-touted “self-regulation” of fertility clinics remains a dismal failure. Laws, like those in Germany and Italy, while they would not stop every injustice done to these infants, could go a long way toward assuring that further forms of scientific barbarism and human exploitation do not become commonplace.

(Father Tadeusz Pachelczyk, Ph.D., earned his doctorate in molecular biology from Indiana University and did post-doctoral work at Harvard University. He is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as the director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org.)

Letter to the Editor

Newspaper questioned about policy concerning letters to the editor

Shame on The Criterion for publishing an unsigned letter to the editor containing danegeld political opinion. The letter in the Sept. 9 issue regarding the 10th anniversary of 9/11 signed merely “Pax Christi Indianapolis Membership.”

The editors harshly criticized our nation’s actions in combating terrorism following that act of war, suggesting we were as ruthless and uncaring as the perpetrators. That criticism detracts substantially from a number of good points made in the letter.

As the editor and publisher of a newspaper, it was my insistence that to gain publication, letter writers must agree to identify themselves and stand personally behind their thoughts.

Who exactly is Pax Christi? Who composed the letter? Are the thoughts expressed those of the entire body of Pax Christi?

I respect the right of expression by everyone. But the execution of that right demands accountability, in particular when others are harshly criticized.

Jerry L. Cosby
Retired publisher
The Spokesman newspaper Indianapolis

(EDITOR’S NOTE: Pax Christi USA is a national Catholic organization that advocates for peace and social justice. The Indianapolis chapter was formed in 1990. Harman is the six-term chair of the organization. The letter printed contained more than a dozen signatures, including those of Susan Ahern, Carl Cressman, Providence Sister Patty Wallace, Wesley Bremer, Fran Quigley, Mary Jane McCarthy, Providence Sister Terry Morris Dows, Stephen A. Lich, Providence Sister Susan Ahern, Rosalie Kramer, Stephen Kramer, Jeanne G. Hudigio, Franciscan Sister Norma Rocklage, and Val and Ed Fillenworth. Due to space constraints and because of our familiarity with the organization and its mission, The Criterion did not publish all the signatures in the Sept. 9 issue.)

Making Sense Out of Bioethics/Fr. Tad Pachelzy

Human stockpiling and its consequences

A recent news report chronicled a Chinese woman named Huang Yijun. Sixty years ago, her unborn child died, but the pregnancy was never expelled from her body.

Instead, her baby’s body slowly began to calcify inside her, becoming a crystallized, stone-like mass. Such stone babies—known as lithopediones—are extremely rare. When Yijun was 92 years old, the baby was discovered in her abdomen and successfully removed.

This rare medical event prompts us to consider a thought experiment. Imagine a drug that might be injected into a woman to crystallize her, but without killing him. The process would turn the child into a static mass for as many years as the parents wanted, another injection would reverse the process, and allow the child to wake up and continue growing.

A woman who decided to make a break from parenting could bring their kids to the clinic, and pay to store them as crystals for a lifetime span of time. Children subjected on human embryos, is then used by others to argue on behalf of an even more egregious offense against their dignity, the destructive strip-mining of embryos to acquire their stem cells.

The radical stockpiling of embryonic humans to become a commodity in our society as such humans are reduced to little more than “stony objects” to be warehoused and manipulated—valuable commodities for how they can serve the commercial interests or the personal desires of others.

The temptation to dehumanize our own brothers and sisters is a perennial one, hearkening back to that time in our country, not so long ago, when slaves could be considered only three-fifths of a person for purposes of congressional representation. Treating embryos as less than a person could be a more deplorable violation of human rights.

The U.S. urgently needs embryo protection laws. Men and women of conscience must pressure lawmakers to act. The putative and widely-touted “self-regulation” of fertility clinics remains a dismal failure. Laws, like those in Germany and Italy, while they would not stop every injustice done to these infants, could go a long way toward assuring that further forms of scientific barbarism and human exploitation do not become commonplace.

(Lisa Cota and Alan Buel process out of Our Mother of Sorrows Church in Greeley, N.Y., at the end of the wake for John E. Buechlein in 2008. Both figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau found that marriages in the country are at a record low."

It is a word that people who have sexual relations outside of marriage don’t like to think of themselves as committing “making love” sounds better.

St. Paul condemned fornication in his letters to the Corinthians, Thessalonians and Galatians. In his First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 6:9, for example), he began with “fornicators” in his list of those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. The list also includes “adulterers” and “sodomites.”

The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults says, “Fornication [an unmarried couple living together] involves the serious sin of fornication. It does not conform to God’s plan for marriage and is always wrong and objectively sinful.”

As for those who think that living together before marriage might be a good idea, the catechism says, “Fornication does not guarantee successful married life, as has been revealed in the painful experience of many, and is detrimental to future commitment.”

Sadly, fornication is encouraged, or at least considered inevitable, in modern society. A recent encouragement is the new mandate by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that requires health plans to cover contraception at no cost. That means that college students who are covered by health plans will be able to get free contraceptives. What do we think that decision is going to do for the “hook-up culture” at many colleges?

Undoubtedly, many couples who fornicate are deeply in love. Our society teaches that that is sufficient. However, the Church insists that they have not made the commitments necessary for sexual activity. They have not taken the vows of marriage that should be implicit in sexual relations.

Our young people today have temptations that older generations could not have imagined. We hope they will listen to the words of Pope Benedict XVI.

In his introduction to the new Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church, the pope wrote, “You need to be more deeply rooted in the faith than the generation of your parents so that you can engage the challenges and temptations of this time with strength and determination.” —John F. Fink

The Criterion

Most Rev. Daniel M. Buechlein, O.S.B., Publisher Greg A. Olsolki, Associate Publisher Mike Krokos, Editor

John F. Fink, Editor Emeritus

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I respect the right of expression by everyone. But the execution of that right demands accountability, in particular when others are harshly criticized.
D e vez en cuando disfruto una buena hora de música sacra. Por coincidencia, recientemente vi su imagen en el concierto de la Hora de Música Gospel Sature presentada desde el Teatro Orpheum en Memphis. Fue impresionante y recordé algunas de las piezas que me recomendaron para el rezo. Me sentí bien y tuve la sensación de que estaba en una buena comunión esté y que el espíritu pero no con la clase de sustento que se ofrece por medio de la comunión en la misa.

Parece que estamos buscando una nueva forma de unirnos a la iglesia, especialmente para aquellos que prefieren reunirse en una iglesia más informal. Las nuevas mega-iglesias evangélicas en las urbanizaciones residenciales muestran que esta tendencia está en aumento.

Necesitamos el enriquecimiento de nuestra fe y nos brindar un lugar donde encontrar solaz y paz de espíritu. Pero recordemos que la razón fundamental por la cual nos reunimos en nuestras iglesias es, primero y principal, para adorar a Dios y no por lo que podamos obtener de ello. Nos juntamos para alabar a Dios y a nuestro Padre, y a aceptar sus dones de amor y gracia.

Buscamos la Cara del Señor
Saint Meinrad art exhibit

"Merric County Barn" by Marianist Brother Joseph Barrish is among his artwork on display at the Saint Meinrad Archabbey Library in Saint Meinrad through Oct. 14. The exhibit of paintings and prints, which is free and open to the public, includes oils, watercolors, serigraphs, woodcuts, linocuts and collages. Subjects include figurative work as well as brightly colored abstracts, cityscapes and landscapes. Brother Joseph is a native of Cleveland. For library hours, call 812-528-5774 or 800-867-7317 or log on to the Archabbey Library’s website at www.saintmeinrad.edu/library/library_hours.aspx.
Catholics must link beliefs with political action, speakers say

NEW YORK (CNS)—Politics is a good thing, participation in public life is a moral obligation and Catholics need to do a better job of linking their beliefs to their actions, according to speakers at a Sept. 6 conference on “Faithful Citizenship: Voters, Bishops and Presidential Elections.”

The program at Jesuit-run Fordham University featured a lively exploration of a document on political responsibility issued every four years by the Catholic bishops of the United States.

“Polarization is seeping into our ecclesial life and very often we wonder if our faith shapes our politics or if it gets turned around to our politics shape our faith. We can divide the work in our Church, but we should not be dividing our community of faith,” said John Carr, executive director of the U.S. bishops’ Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development.

“All of us—bishops, professors, staffs, ordinary laypeople, academics, students—need to do a better job of linking what we believe to how we act in public life,” he added.

Since 1976, the Catholic bishops have issued a quadrennial statement linking Church teachings to political responsibility. The most recent version, in 2007, is called “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship.”

Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States at this moment of intense cynicism and frankly justifiable frustration with the political system, the process, the most counter-cultural thing the Church teaches and the bishops have said is that politics is a good thing, that participation in public life is a moral obligation and an essential part of political responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States.

“At this moment of intense cynicism and frankly justifiable frustration with the political process, the most counter-cultural thing the Church teaches and the bishops have said is that politics is a good thing, that participation in public life is a moral obligation and an essential part of political responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States,” Carr said.

He added, “That is more counter-cultural in some ways than all life is sacred, that war ought to be a last resort, that the poor ought to come first, that marriage ought not to be redefined.”

He said Catholics share a bond of faith, not politics. “We are a Church and not a lobby. We are a community of faith and not an interest group. What brings us together is the word of God and the teaching of the Church, not politics and not ideology.”

Carr said the “Faithful Citizenship” statement lays out basic principles and applies them to pressing issues facing the country. Historically, versions of the document have summarized Catholic teaching, with an emphasis on the role of the lay and encouraged participation and engagement. “In public life, we, what we bring is not only what we believe, but what we do. Who feeds the hungry? Who shelters the homeless? Who cares for the poor?”

Carr said the statement “never declared any notion of telling Catholics how to vote,” and has always given “priority to human life and dignity, expressed in different language through the years.”

“Faithful Citizenship” urges formation of conscience and practice of prudence. Carr said it tells Catholics to resist evil and act on their affirmative responsibility to make things better. It says people must distinguish between issues of unequal moral importance. As an example, he said, “A million abortions are not the same as a cut in the WIC program.”

“We need more Catholics in both parties in public life, taking what we believe into the public square and fighting for it,” he added.

“We need more dialogue within our Church, and we need to understand if politics is about our fundamental values, then it is just about money, ego and power.”

Panelist Robert George, professor of jurisprudence and director of the James Madison program in American ideals and institutions at Princeton University, acknowledged that neither major political party fully embodies the principles laid out by the bishops.

He said the Republican Party needs “more of a dose of Catholic social thought, and the Democratic Party needs a very heavy dose of the pro-life and pro-family message of the Catholic tradition.”

He said Catholics can use the issue of slavery as a template for political response in current times. Then, as now, people were raised in a culture that blocked their vision of the true and equal dignity of all members of the human family, he said.

George said Catholics can emulate Abraham Lincoln’s response to slavery: “We have to be persistent and relentless and join forces across the lines of religious differences to offer a common witness to inherent principles of basic justice.”

Carr suggested that both major parties establish life and dignity caucuses that would take the “rough edges off the libertarianism of the Republican Party and the individualism of the Democratic Party,” and ultimately “get institutions working together to lift people up and empower people.”

Stephen Schneck, director of the Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, said “Faithful Citizenship” conveys the “glory and richness” of Catholic teaching, and recognizes that politics and government are designed by the Creator and are useful for human dignity and the common good.

He said the document confesses some readers who look for “absolute and specific criteria that can be applied juridically to make a summary judgment that voting for such-and-such candidate would always be wrong. Politics is not reducible to morality in quite that way. Prudence is the primary virtue of political life,” he said.

The event was sponsored by the Fordham Center on Religion and Culture, and took place at Fordham’s Lincoln Center campus in Manhattan.

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Catholic schools when they may have been precluded in the past because of cost.”

Indiana’s voucher program is targeted toward students coming from a public school or students who received a tax credit scholarship during the 2010-11 school year.

Rick Ruhl

To be eligible for the voucher program, families have to meet certain requirements concerning family income. For a family of four with a total income below $41,348, the total annual voucher could be up to $4,500 for students in first grade through eighth grade, and more than $7,000 for students in high school.

For a family of four with a total income between $62,022 and $41,348, the voucher is for 50 percent of the school tuition amount.

The voucher amount is for each eligible student in the family, and the voucher would be received for each year through a student’s senior year in high school.

For a Catholic school student who has been helped by the state’s voucher system this year, the average financial benefit has been about $4,000.

The overall impact is about $4.3 million for families to help pay tuition and fees at the Catholic school of their choice for the 2011-12 school year, according to Ron Costello, superintendent of Catholic schools for the archdiocese.

Beyond the financial assistance, Costello says the students are receiving a choice for the 2011-12 school year, a form of education that is also marked by academic success. “It has always been a point of our schools to teach Catholic education. We haven’t deviated from that approach,” Costello notes.

“Across the archdiocese, about 20 percent of our students are non-Catholic. They choose a Catholic school knowing they’re going to get a religious education. At the same time, one of the real strengths of our schools is the academic success. They’re getting a good solid education that will allow them to continue in post-secondary education. About 97 percent of our students go on to post-secondary education. And they do quite well.”

Monica Poindexter says the voucher system allows her daughter, Mia, to continue in the Catholic school system that has already made a difference in her life.

Of the 1,028 students in Catholic schools who are benefiting from a voucher, Mia is among the nearly 300 students who were already enrolled in a Catholic school thanks to the assistance of a tax-credit scholarship that was made available to low-income families in recent years.

For her first seven years of school, Mia attended Holy Angels Catholic School in Indianapolis. The voucher system has made it possible for her to continue her education at Cardinal Ritter Jr/Sr High School in Indianapolis.

“Without this voucher, being a single mom, there’s no way we could continue this education much further,” Mia’s mom says. “Mia has just done very well. By the end of Mia’s kindergarten year, she was reading full-fledged books. When she took the I-STEP [Indiana Statewide Test of Education Progress], she passed [at the highest level] both sections [of math and language arts/English].” This is clearly the type of environment that’s working for her—the small class sizes, the family atmosphere.

Even with the voucher system, Poindexter says she still has to sacrifice to help pay for the tuition amount that the voucher doesn’t cover. “But it’s worth it to me,” says Poindexter, who also has a son in kindergarten at Holy Angels Catholic School. “As a parent, we just want what is best for our child, and this is working for Mia. To see her successful makes you feel successful as a parent.”

Poindexter’s joy reflects the overall attitude of parents whose children have been helped by the state’s voucher system, according to Kathy Mears, an assistant superintendent of Catholic schools in the areas of curriculum and learning resources.

“The Church teaches that the parents are the first and primary educators of their children,” Mears says. “This is a natural step in the process, that they would have a choice in the education of their child.”

—Kathy Mears, assistant superintendent of Catholic schools

This list contains the top 25 schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis that have benefited in enrollment of students for the 2011-12 school year thanks to Indiana’s educational voucher system. To the right of each school in the above graphic is the number of students using vouchers there. All the schools listed, with the exception of Sacred Heart School in Jeffersonville and Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in New Albany, are located in Indianapolis. Read the complete list of schools, with the story, online at www.CriterionOnline.com.

 Principals, priests and staff work hard to share benefits of voucher program

By John Shaughnessy

Rita Parsons already had a plan in place when the Indiana school voucher program went into effect on July 1.

As the principal of Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis, Parsons wanted to help as many families as possible benefit from the state program that offers parents of certain income levels financial assistance to select a school of their choice for their children.

Her approach was also supported at the parish level when Mug Plante Koetter, pastor of Holy Spirit Parish, encouraged eligible parishioners to look into the voucher program as a way of making a Catholic education more affordable for their children.

A result, 89 students at Holy Spirit School are benefiting from the voucher program, which puts the eastside elementary school at the top of the list for Catholic schools in the archdiocese. Forty-four of those 89 students are new to the school, according to Parsons.

“Parents are just as excited to have their kids here,” she says. “It’s been very emotional. Some people were crying. A lot of our families were cutting nickels and dimes. We have one family of four boys, just a neat family, who were members of the parish, but there was no way financially for them to be here. But because of the vouchers, they are able to do it. It’s something they’ve always wanted, but they had no choice before. They’re very appreciative.”

The hard work of principals, priests and other school staff members has made a huge difference in enabling 1,028 Catholic school students across the archdiocese to benefit from the voucher program, according to Rob Rash, an assistant superintendent of Catholic schools for the archdiocese.

That aggressive approach also had a significant impact at Cardinal Ritter Jr/Sr High School in Indianapolis, where 58 students are being helped by the voucher system.

“It’s a wonderful benefit for families,” says Gregory Perkins, Cardinal Ritter’s president. “There’s still a sacrifice on people’s parts because vouchers do not cover the full tuition, but they do provide a better bridge to that gap. You see the smiles on people’s faces. They can see that they can really make it work. They’re not coming for free, but they can make it within the household budget. And that’s a key point.”

The vouchers can also have a ripple effect on the school’s finances.

“IT does free up financial aid for other families, and there’s definitely an impact on the school budget,” Perkins says. “We would have met the budget anyway, but it does give us a cushion. Still, we’re not in it for the financial gain. We’ve always wanted to give families a choice, and the voucher system makes that possible. We would have survived without it. It just fits in nicely with making Catholic education available for more people.”

Sources:

Catholic School

Students with Vouchers

St. Teresa’s Catholic School

8

St. Elizabeth Seton School

14

St. Joseph School

28

St. Philip Neri School

57

Central Catholic School

40

St. Vincent De Paul School

24

Holy Cross Central School

12

Holy Name School

11

Our Lady Of Lourdes School

21

Catholic High School

18

Holy Angels Catholic School

29

Central Catholic School

18

St. Michael The Archangel School

11

St. Monica School

6

St. Mark School

27

St. Mark School

27

Our Lady Of Lourdes School

20

Monica Poindexter praises Indiana’s new school voucher system, saying it will let her daughter, Mia, continue to receive a Catholic education at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr High School in Indianapolis.
Franciscan sisters celebrate 50- and 60-year jubilees

Special to The Criterion

Twenty-three Sisters of the Congregation of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg are celebrating their jubilees of religious profession of 60 years or 60 years. Franciscan Sisters Rosaire Bishop, Margaretta Black, Ruthann Boyle, Janet Brosnan, Sister Mary Louise Werner, and Sister Judith Werner are marking a half century as Franciscans.

A native of Indianapolis, Sister Rosaire Bishop ministered in the archdiocese at St. Christopher, St. Mark, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) and St. Bernadette parishes, all in Indianapolis. She also taught at Central Catholic School and Martin University in Indianapolis.

In 1996, Sister Rosaire began serving as the librarian at Oldenburg Academy. Currently, she ministers as the librarian for the convent library at the motherhouse.

Sister Margaretta Black ministered in the archdiocese at Sacred Heart Parish in Clinton, St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, St. Mary Parish in North Vernon and St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis.

She also taught at Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception. In 1966, Sister Margaretta began a 39-year teaching career at Marian University, formerly Marian College, as a French professor and academic dean.

In 2000, Sister Margaretta was elected a member of the general council for the Oldenburg Franciscan community. She ministered in that leadership position until 2006 then returned to Marian University as a French professor.

A native of Indianapolis, Sister Ruthann Boyle, formerly Sister Brendan, ministered in the archdiocese at the former Holy Trinity School in Indianapolis and St. Mary School in New Albany.

In 1963, Sister Ruth Ann began missionary service in Papua New Guinea, where she ministered at Tari and Mendu until 2001. After 38 years of missionary work in New Guinea, she returned to Oldenburg.

Currently, she serves as director of the motherhouse sewing department.

A native of Indianapolis, Sister Janet Brosnan, formerly Sister Terrence, ministered in the archdiocese at St. Andrew School in Richmond. St. Mary School in New Albany and former Holy Trinity School in Indianapolis.

In 1977, Sister Janet entered the hospital field and parish ministry, and served at the Oldenburg Franciscans’ health care center as coordinator of pastoral care.

Currently, she ministers as a chaplain at University Hospital in Cincinnati.

A native of Batesville, Sister Ruth Mary Forthofer, formerly Sister Lydia, ministered in the archdiocese at St. Michael School in Indianapolis, former St. Francis de Sales School in Indianapolis and Holy Name of Jesus School in Beech Grove.

She also served on the staffs of the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education and Marian University in Indianapolis.

In 1995, she returned to the Oldenburg motherhouse. Currently, she serves in the advancement office at the Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception.

Sister Barbara Hileman, formerly Sister Concetta, ministered in the archdiocese at St. Louis School in Batesville, St. Mary School in Aurora and former St. Bernadette School in Indianapolis.

In 1978, Sister Barbara began working in parish ministry.

She served as a parish minister at St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville, St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis and St. Joseph Parish in St. Leon.

Sister Barbara also ministered as a teacher, principal, director of religious education and pastoral associate for 25 years.

Currently, she serves as a chaplain at St. Vincent Hospital in Carmel, Ind., and St. Vincent Seton Specialty Hospital in Indianapolis.

Sister Marilyn Hofer, formerly Sister MaryL, ministered in the archdiocese at St. Michael School in Brookville and Holy Name of Jesus School in Beech Grove.

From 1967 until 2010, Sister Marilyn ministered on the faculty of the education department at Marian University.

She also served as assistant director of alumni affairs at the university.

Currently, she resides at the Oldenburg motherhouse and ministers as a health care facility at the motherhouse.

Sister Dolores Meyer, formerly Sister Joseph Mary, ministered in the archdiocese at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School, St. Mark School and St. Mary School, all in Indianapolis.

She also taught at St. Andrew School in Richmond, St. Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg and St. Joseph School in Shelbyville.

Sister Rose Marie also served at Marquette Manor in Indianapolis.

Currently, she resides at St. Clare Hall, the health care facility at the motherhouse.

Sister Dolores Meyer, formerly Sister Joseph Mary, ministered in the archdiocese at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School, St. Mark School and St. Mary School, all in Indianapolis.

She also taught at St. Michael School in Brookville, Sacred Heart School in Clinton and former Catholic Central School in New Albany.

Sister Dolores also served as a principal, director of religious education and pastoral minister.

Currently, she volunteers in community ministry at the motherhouse.

Sister Dolores Meyer served as director of alumni affairs at the university.

In 1996, Sister Mary Norma Rocklage ministered in the archdiocese at St. Mary School in North Vernon.

From 1965 until 1974, Sister Mary Norma served at Marian University as an assistant professor of classical language, dean of academic affairs and director of scholarships.

In 1974, Sister Mary Norma was elected a member of the general council for the Oldenburg Franciscan community for a term of six years.

She later returned to Marian University and served as vice president for mission effectiveness and planning then as interim vice president for academic and student affairs.

Currently, Sister Mary Norma resides at Marian University and ministers as executive director of education formation outreach.

A native of Greensburg, Sister Helen Saler, formerly Sister Devota, ministered in the archdiocese at St. Mark School, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School and St. Michael School, all in Indianapolis.

She also taught at St. Gabriel School in Connersville, St. Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg and former St. Joseph School in St. Leon.

Currently, she ministers as a principal, teacher and director of religious education.

Sister Francesca Thompson ministered in the archdiocese at the Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception then at Marian University as an associate professor of theater.

From 1983 until 2005, Sister Francesca served at Fordham University in New York as an assistant dean for minority affairs, and associate professor of communications and African-American studies.

Currently, she resides at the motherhouse.
Hotline to heaven: How relics connect people to community of saints

VAUGHN CITY (CNS)—A saint’s lock of hair, bone shards, a vial of blood, even a severed hand whose discolored fingers curl in a macabre way are venerated by many members of the Catholic Church. Others may just get the heebie-jeebies, and wonder why holy people’s body parts are even put on display.

But if one believes these men and women lived holy lives and accomplished extraordinary things, “wouldn’t you want a souvenir,” a way to connect and remember that person and what they have done, said Elizabeth Lev, an art historian and professor of art history at the Rome campuses of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa., and the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.

The relic becomes a concrete reminder that the blessed or saint’s body is here on Earth and his or her soul is with God, she told Catholic News Service.

“It feels like you’ve got almost like a hotline into heaven,” she said. The relic is “something we can see and touch, and it becomes our portal to a world we cannot see and cannot touch.”

In the Catholic Church, relics fall into one of three categories: a first-class relic is the physical bodily remains of a saint or blessed like bones, blood and hair; a second-class relic is a personal possession, including nonbelievers. A relic has no special or magical powers, Lev said. It would be a mistake to believe any object, even a holy object, can be a sort of “remote control” to make God do one’s bidding or fulfill some heartfelt wish.

In the modern secularized West, tours of saints’ relics have been enormously popular. More than a quarter of a million people turned out to see the relics at St. Thérèse of Lisieux when her remains toured cities and villages throughout predominantly Anglican England and Wales in 2009.

In early Christian times, small holes were often made to run vertically down into a saint’s tomb or even straight into the sarcophagus so that devotional items could be lowered onto the tomb’s surface or come in contact with the relics of the saint.

Creating such third-class relics became very popular in the late fourth-century in Rome after Emperor Theodosius banned the sale and distribution of corporal relics.

The sale of any relic is staunchly prohibited in the Church. eBay has banned the sale of body parts, and Church officials have called the sale of relics on the Internet sacrilegious.

Nonetheless, demand for relics, mostly third-class relics, of Pope John Paul II skyrocketed after it became clear that he would be beatified quickly. The promoters of his cause, which were giving out third-class relics for free, had to publicly and repeatedly state that relics are never for sale.

Massive crowds also flocked to see her remains during a U.S. tour in 1999, surprising even the event planners.

The huge turnovers sparked curiosity in the secular media and questions about why relics would attract so many people, including nonbelievers.

Lev said an over-secularized world that rejects the divine and embraces the finite and man-made “leaves a void in people, a hunger to know that there is more” than just life and death on Earth.

In the Catholic tradition and in its liturgies and commission of saints, there is a constant reminder that those who have died are still always present and part of the Church, she said.

“The Mass itself is the most beautiful representation of this interwoven between heaven and Earth,” she said.

But the nature of first-class relics has changed. Most relics of modern-day blessed and saints are now just a snippet of hair or a vial of blood. It is inconceivable in the West today that a deceased’s hand, finger or head would be removed from the body and put on display.

People forget “how earthy” the Church once was, when there was a very strong emphasis on various devotions to the blood or the heart of Jesus, and practically every body part was appropriate for a relic.

“Hands, fingers and other body parts were very tangible, very lapel-grabbing ways of saying this is part of the body of someone whose soul is in heaven,” she said.

Even unusual relic traditions, like the supposed foreskin of Jesus, have a deep spiritual significance representing the first blood he shed, giving special meaning to the devotion of the precious blood of Christ, she said.

Paradoxically, many people today seem more squeamish or upset about the venerated body parts of saints than the bodies of living women, men and children being exploited, disrespected and demeaned, Lev said.

“The utter schizophrenia of the 21st century regarding the human body gives a false respect to things that are really not important and no respect to things that really matter,” she said.

The faithful can look upon the thousands of Church relics across the world with an eye of skepticism as to their authenticity because, after all, “Blessed are those who have not seen and still believe” (Jn 20:29), she said.

Above, the hand of St. Francis Xavier is seen in a relicary at the Jesuits’ Church of the Gesù in Rome on Sept. 8. Relics of holy people have been venerated since early Christianity.

Right, French Sister Marie Simon-Pierre carries a relicary containing a vial of blood of Pope John Paul II during the late pope’s beatification Mass celebrated by Pope Benedikt XVI in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on May 1. Sister Simon-Pierre’s cure from Parkinson’s disease was accepted as the miracle that paved the way for Pope John Paul II’s beatification.

Below, a board of Our Lady of Fatima is held in the church at the Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Rome, owned and operated by the Sisters of Our Lady of Fatima. Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Kearney, Neb., is offering a three-day retreat this September, and wants to invite every couple to spend an evening with your spouse or fiancé and friends!

Sister Therese of Lisieux was Meditation Teacher at the Retreat Center.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House is offering this three-day retreat for couples this September. Couples can spend an evening with their spouse or fiancé and friends! The Date Night Presentation will be held September 24, 2011 at 6:30 PM.

$52 per couple includes dinner and the program. Register by visiting our website or call us!

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Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, founded in 1980, is a place to be with God in the presence of Jesus and His Mother Mary.

Our staff has over 100 years of Catholic education!
Retreats renew us for a deeper life of faith and ser vice

By David Gibson

Many people tell stories of how a religiously oriented retreat helped redirect their lives.

“Owen is a seminarian 44 years ago, I experienced the power of a Cursillo retreat,” Cardinal O’Malley wrote. He recalled that the weekend retreat was conducted in a Spanish with a group that included soldiers from Argentina and “undocumented Salvadoran refugees, Cuban workers and some American youth workers.”

The retreat forged the group “into a fraternity, a community of friends, fellow disciples on fire with love for Christ, and our desire to make him known, loved and served,” Cardinal O’Malley said. He indicated that the experience strengthened his vocation to the priesthood.

Father Eugene Hemrick, a noted Church researcher and syndicated columnist, often leads retreats for priests. He shared two goals that many priests have when they come to retreats.

First, many priests want to spend time reflecting seriously “on their vocation and ministry, especially their relation to God and how well they are maintaining that relationship,” Father Hemrick said.

Second, many priests want to “relax with friends.” In Father Hemrick’s view, this dimension of a retreat represents its “informal education” component.

“A priest might get together [during the retreat] with a classmate or other priest, take a walk and discuss a personal problem, a parish problem or just something they want to air,” he said. “All of this is done in an informal setting, and I believe it is often more beneficial than the retreat’s conferences and spiritual exercises.”

There are various reasons for going on a retreat. Many young men and women participate in retreats that help them discern whether they have a vocation to the priesthood, religious life or married life.

The members of numerous parish councils have gone on retreat together. A goal for them is to refocus on faith and prayer in their parishes. The parish’s basic goal—fostering faith development among all parishioners.

Retreats can offer time for a group to think through a particular issue or to reignite their faith life. There are various reasons for going on a retreat. Many young men and women participate in retreats that help them discern whether they have a vocation to the priesthood, religious life or married life.

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Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

Even After That: A book that helps with grief

In my last column, I shared information about Father Terrence Curley and his book, *Peace Beyond Understanding: Caring for One Another*. Now, here is more about this important dimension to the subject of death and consolation through poetry.

As a poet myself, I was instantly drawn to this collection written in tributes to Father Curley’s students who passed away in 2009.

To conserve space for her prologue, I share the first poem in prose form.

“So it began … more than 50 years ago, when first we met. The meeting was arranged by our mothers over a bridge game. Forced into a blind date, the man who would become my husband had one parting phrase for his mother that night: ‘Don’t you ever do this to me again and she didn’t. She didn’t have to because he never dated anyone else. Now, more than 50 years later, I want to say goodbye for now. For those of you who have not yet been torn apart from your partners, let me also say: ‘Don’t you ever do this to me again.’”

I must admit I shed tears as I read that. The first time I heard those words. I married my husband, Paul, and I was married on Aug. 30, 1958. I pray daily that he will hold me tight and never let me go. So often have I thought of him. Sadly, his father died shortly after we were married.

Through the years, I have shed tears, grieved long and prayed long for family members, friends, colleagues, pastors, teachers, neighbors and so many more. I also mourn when beloved pets die, but believe that Our Heavenly Father will allow us to be reunited with all of our loved ones—even our pets. This is a much-needed book, *Even After That*, is published by Author House in Bloomington. Readers can contact them at 1-888-211-9647 or via email at info@authorhouse.com. de Wilde published children’s books while getting her master’s degree. She now teaches New Jersey, and has had other writing assignments. For approximately eight years, she was the caregiver for her husband, who suffered a stroke. She lives in a small town in southern New Jersey. When she died, she found solace in writing. Photography also helps provide comfort.

(Shirley Vogler Meister, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, is a regular columnist for *The Criterion*.)

Catholic Education Outreach/ Kay Scoville

Should I stay or should I go?

There has been much “buzz” and excitement in the Office of Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Indianapolis with the approaching conference we are hosting for National Catholic High School Youth (NCYC). Why would a young person want to go to this conference?

National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC)?

Selling anything outside of the realm of faith and fortune and success can be a challenge! Our culture is very focused on entertainment. We try to get ahead in life so that one can be guaranteed there is “something in it for me.” It is very difficult to engage young people in a religious event, especially if it will take time away from school, sports and friends. But if I were to say to them to tell them about the dynamic and inspirational speakers, the amazing musical talent and the many young people from all over the country to be present. And as a bonus, we can entice them with the fact that NCYC is at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, IN. But would that do it?

The fact remains that these times are so uncertain for young people because of the changes that have been the past. Their hopes of achieving the “American Dream” are questionable in this high cost of living. They can be confused by the declining value system, and discouraged by the jobless rate and poor economy. And they may be feeling a violent turmoil around the world. What better time to offer an opportunity which promises to be an inspiration and a challenge?

NCYC is an opportunity for our Catholic teenagers to participate with their peers in a positive environment. As one youth commented, “I never knew there were so many Catholics!” The presence of music, inspirational speakers, and religious men and women offers a spotlight on vocations in the Church.

Youth are taught from such a gathering is intense, and gathers momentum throughout the event to the closing liturgy. At the end of the event, we are encouraged and united in love, so that the young people attending this conference—the desire expressed by St. Paul to the Colossians—is, “Let your speech always be full of grace” (Col 4:6). As it happens, as a general rule the Office of Readings is part of the morning liturgy, I should try to make them more familiar with the sacred Scriptures. We must never forget that all authentic and living Christian spirituality is based on the Word of God proclaimed, accepted, celebrated and meditated upon in the Church” (#121). Among the most meaningful is the need for God to work in us, bringing the Scriptures to life in our lives. We must then be encouraged to approach the Word of God with the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist. That is what gave me the idea for my next series of columns.

The Office of Readings is part of the Liturgy of the Hours. It consists of a hymn, three psalms or sections of psalms with reflections, the “Reading of the Scriptur,” a reflection. After that come two readings, and the first of them is always an extended biblical reading. I decided that, if the Church considers these biblical readings to be important enough to include them in its official liturgy, I should try to make them more familiar to my readers. Of course, the Church also includes biblical readings in the Mass, as part of its official liturgy, but the readings in the Office of Readings are different from those in the Mass. This column introduces the series of readings coming up during the 24th week in Ordinary Time, the readings are from the Book of Ezekiel. When I became the series editor, I’ll write about the readings coming up during the following week and that happen to be St. Peter’s Letter to the Philippians. As you can see, the readings move back and forth between the Old and New Testaments. Furthermore, some of the books are deemed so important that more than one week is devoted to their study. This is true mostly for the books Isaiah, which is read throughout Advent. Four weeks are devoted to Revelation about the future, and three weeks to Exodus during Lent.

We won’t cover the entire Bible this way. Surprisingly, there won’t be anything from Genesis. But with these readings, plus the daily Mass readings that are found each week on the next page of this newsletter, readers will be able to become familiar with a considerable part of the Bible.

As it happens, as a general rule the Office of Readings devotes a full week to readings from a particular book of the Bible. This is for the following week and that happen to be St. Peter’s Letter to the Philippians. As you can see, the readings move back and forth between the Old and New Testaments. Furthermore, some of the books are deemed so important that more than one week is devoted to their study. This is true mostly for the books Isaiah, which is read throughout Advent. Four weeks are devoted to Revelation about the future, and three weeks to Exodus during Lent.

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As Christians, however, we know that the first time. It “hit home” because I lived it. Perhaps make it easier for you or someone you know. Perhaps it will make you think about it the next time you are looking for a good gift for someone you know. Perhaps it will make you think about it the next time you are looking for a good gift for someone you know.
Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Sept. 18, 2011

- Isaiah 55:6-9
- Philippians 1:20-24, 27a
- Matthew 20:20.1-16a

The last section of the Book of Isaiah provides this weekend with its first reading.

As the last reading, the Church chooses a passage from the Gospel of St. Matthew.

It is a parable which employs agricultural images that would have been very familiar to the audience who heard the Lord speak these words. The circumstances of hiring laborers also would have been familiar to them.

Three powerful lessons are related in this parable.

The first is that God's generosity is enormous, never calculated or doled out reluctantly.

Is God unfair, however, in paying workers as much for a short time of labor as is paid others who work much longer? God is not unfair. This is another lesson.

To put it simply, God's ways are not our ways.

Finally, the parable has a strong overtnote of the universality of salvation. The fruits of redemption in Christ are not given solely to those who seem never to have estrayed from the Lord or for whom the Lord once was unknown. Salvation is lavishly extended to all people.

This last point is implied in the Lord's use of the term “vineyard.” It immediately brought to mind Old Testament references to Israel as God's vineyard.

A denarius was a unit of Roman currency, and was a typical day's wage for the time.

Reflection

We have passed the time, thank God, in which people anticipate, or have no hope for, eternal life based on ethnicity.

However, still very real for us all is the fact that sin—as well as indifference to God or ignorance of God—can keep us apart from God and make us latecomers to the banquet of life.

If we truly convert, if we genuinely reform ourselves, will God penalize us for the time that we stood at a distance or even for the times that we rejected God by sinning?

No. Even for those who come late in the day, God is merciful. The loving, merciful Father opens wide the gate to the vineyard.

However, we must be worthy. We must labor. The vineyard is no place to lie down.

The Church prefers that weddings take place in a Catholic church.

We have a 23-year-old son who will be getting married next summer. His fiancée is not Catholic, and they have decided to have an outdoor wedding.

We are wondering how this is looked upon in the eyes of the Church. We have heard several different answers and need some guidance.

Will their marriage be recognized by the Church, or would they have to have the marriage blessed by the Church later on? (Barron, Wis.)

A it is far from unusual for young couples to be caught up in the fascination of an outdoor wedding. A beach, a garden or a winery are some of the most desired locations.

Most often, the couple’s motives are pure and admirable. They experience the wonder of God most directly, they may tell you, in such nature settings.

The Church’s guidelines on weddings are governed by its Code of Canon Law, particularly, in this case, #1118. That norm presumes that, generally speaking, Catholic weddings will take place in a Catholic church.

Each local bishop, through, has the authority to grant exceptions. Probably the most common one is when a Catholic man is marrying a baptized Protestant woman, and permission is granted for the wedding to take place in the bride’s church.

But a bishop’s discretion is even broader. For appropriate reasons, particularly with the marriage of a Catholic to someone who is not baptized, he can allow the wedding to take place not in a church, but "in another suitable place" (#1118).

By far, the majority of bishops demonstrate a clear option for a religious setting. They are conscious of the contemporary statistics on marriage and divorce, and have read about some widely reported and silly settings for weddings—parachuting from a plane, while scuba diving or at second base on the couple’s favorite baseball field.

The Church always tries to bring into focus the religious dimension of the ceremony—recognition by the couple that God had a hand in bringing them together as well as their desire that God bless their union and continue to offer his support.

A wedding involves not just the couple, but also a community of believers offering their prayers and gathered where they customarily come to pray.

For all of the reasons above, while aware that the beauties of nature can reflect the glory of God, bishops prefer weddings to be in churches where most people tend to think instinctively of God.

But I know of—and have been involved in—cases where exceptions have been granted:

- A bride’s mother was seriously ill and because of that the wedding took place at the mother’s home.

- Because a Catholic woman was marrying a Jewish man with the potential for the Jewish family to feel awkward surrounded by Christian symbols, the wedding was permitted to take place in a neutral setting, in this case, at a reception hall.

A Catholic wedding was marred with a devout Muslim so the ceremony was held in a garden at the country estate of the Muslim parents.

There is some latitude here with the opportunity for pastoral instincts to prevail.

Your question stated simply that your son’s fiancée is not Catholic so I don’t know whether such circumstances as those mentioned above for non-Catholics might pertain.

In any case, it is up to the bishop of the diocese to permit where the wedding will take place so it would be prudent for your son to inquire as soon as possible.

Should permission be granted in advance, the wedding would be recognized by the Catholic Church.

Should permission not be granted, here is another possibility. Sometimes prior to the outdoor wedding, a priest could marry the couple in a simple, quiet ceremony at church with as few as four people—recognized by the bride and groom accompanied by two witnesses. The couple’s parents may want to join them.

A more elaborate outdoor ceremony and reception could follow sometime later, perhaps with the couple repeating their vows and a prayer of blessing recited.

(Responses may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at kfd Doyle@gmail.com and 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.)

My Journey to God

On the Mountain of Francis

On the mountain of Francis
I arrived in Assisi
So worn and tired, so spent from everyday life.

On the mountain of Francis
I prayed in Assisi
God, show me your light and give me your peace.

On the mountain of Francis
I was touched by the hand of God
And my soul refreshed as never before.

From the mountain of Francis
I departed Assisi
With the peace of the mountain in my soul.

On the mountain of Francis,
I reflect at home—
Keep me, Lord, in your holy light and peace forever!

O precious God, help me to live my life Always as on the mountain of Francis.
So that I may do your will every day for your every moment of my life.

(Marie LeRoy is a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis. The sun sets near the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi in Assisi, Italy, on Nov. 8, 2007.)

Grant me the grace to choose you
In every decision I make.
And when I fail, grant me the courage
To return to the mountain.

Amen.

By Marie LeRoy

Daily Readings

Monday, Sept. 19

Januarius, bishop and martyr
Ezra 1:1-6
Psalm 126:1-6
Luke 8:16-18

Tuesday, Sept. 20

Andrew Kim Taegon, priest and martyr
Paul Chong Hasang, martyr and their companions, martyrs
Ezra 6:7-12, 18-20
Psalm 122:1-15
Luke 8:19-21

Wednesday, Sept. 21

Matthew, Apostle and evangelist
Ephesians 4:17-11:13
Psalm 19:2-5
Matthew 9:9-13

Thursday, Sept. 22

Haggai 1:1-8
Psalm 149:1-6, 9
Luke 9:7-9

Friday, Sept. 23

Pio of Pietrelcina, priest
Haggai 2:1-9
Psalm 43:1-4

Saturday, Sept. 24

Zechariah 2:5-9, 14-15a
(Responsorial Psalm)
Zechariah 3:1-10
Luke 9:43-45

Sunday, Sept. 25

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Ezekiel 18:25-28
Psalm 25:4-9
Philippians 2:1-11 or
Philippians 2:1-5
Matthew 21:28-32

(Continued from previous page)
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.


CAITO, Dagmar, Grandmother of 97, St. Mark the Evangelist, Edwards, Maria (Marek), Mother of Julie and Nancy mother of 10. Great-grandfather of 19.


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HASKAMP, Janie Ellen, 70, St. Mary, Greenwood, Sept. 4. Mother of Antoinette Campbell and Bernard Haskamp Jr. Grandmother of four.


INKOSEE, Andrew A., 68, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, Aug. 27. Husband of Mardy Inkosse.


LANGSTON, John R., 80, St. Mary, Indianapolis, Aug. 27. Brother of Frank Langston. Great-grandfather of 19.


WIEZCHCECK, Edward, 80, St. Mary, Indianapolis, Aug. 27. Brother of Raymond, Gladys, John and Wanda. Great-grandfather of eight. Great-great-grandfather of one.


Bishops aim to mobilize Catholics to guard consciences on contraception

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The U.S. bishops are working to mobilize Catholics across the country to tell the Obama administration that contraceptives and sterilization do not constitute preventive care for women, and must not be mandated as part of health reform.

Through a website at www.usccb.org/conscience, the bishops hope to generate thousands of comments to the Department of Health and Human Services about its Aug. 1 proposed rule that would nearly all employers to provide sterilization and all FDA-approved contraceptives, including some that can cause an abortion, at no cost to women covering their health care plans.

But time is of the essence because the 60-day comment period on the HHS proposed rules closes on Sept. 30.

The bishops send a second “action alert” asking Catholics to tell their members of Congress to co-sponsor the bishops’ legislation that seeks to change the health reform law.

The bishops say that “conscience protection.”

Senator Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, in a Sept. 7 letter to Congress.

The Respect for Rights of Conscience Act “would change no current federal mandate for health care coverage, but simply prevent any new mandates under the health reform law,” according to the U.S. bishops’ Office for Pro-Life Activities, about “the high costs of ‘free’ birth control.”

Doctoring said it is “necessary to see the proposed mandate as requiring that health plans offer contraceptives without co-pays or deductibles as ‘free birth control.’”

“Catholics, women and women’s health care coverage pay for it through their premiums, and sometimes also have a co-pay or out-of-pocket expense,” he wrote. “Under the new mandate they will still pay for it, but the cost will be buried in the overall premium—and everyone else, including churches and other religious employers as well as individual Catholics, will be forced to pay for it in their premiums too, so payments coerced from those who object will make birth control coverage a bit cheaper for those who want it.”

The site also offers information about the HHS mandate and what the bishops have done to protest the mandate. Check out the law website for an “action alert” asking all employers to provide sterilization and all FDA-approved contraceptives, including some that can cause an abortion, at no cost to women covered by their health insurance plans, log on to www.usccb.org/conscience. "The deadline to comment is Sept. 30."

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What was in the news on Sept. 15, 1961? A plea fr om the pope to negotiate for peace, and religion in the German election

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.

Here are some of the items found in the Sept. 15, 1961, issue of The Criterion:

- **Negotiate for peace, Pope asks world leaders**
  - Five named New Delhi observers
  - **VATICAN CITY—For the first time in history, the Church will send official observers to a meeting of the non-Catholic World Council of Churches. Five Catholic theologians have been named to attend the New Delhi, India, general assembly of the council November 18 to December 6. They were picked by the Vatican’s Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. A U.S. priest and a Dutch layman are included.**
- **Sacred Heart landmark: Razing of old convent stirs fond memories**
- **Bishop insists on union labor**
- **Religion in the German election**

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Federal aid
- **U.S. priest named British auxiliary**
- **Painfully ironic**: Scores indifference to educational TV
- **Painfully ironic** is what Bishop James A. McNulty of Patterson, N.J., called it. Thus he described the prospect that, if enrollment and financial pressures should force a cutback in the Catholic school effort, public schools might handle the influx of new students by using the very tool which could have saved the Catholic schools in the first place—educational television.
- **Recalls early struggle for racial justice**
- **Personal responsibility to be stressed at N.D.**
  - **Asks equal status for all at Council**

(Read all of these stories from our Sept. 15, 1961, issue by logging on to our archives at www.CriterionOnline.com)