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spiritual erosion that has occurred in highly violence that are religiously motivated, and the two forms—terrorism, including acts of “new and frightening guises.” He singled out discord,” he said.
"no threat of a great war hanging over us,” but Today, the Cold War is over, and there is in a cold war between two opposing blocs.
including acts of violence that are religiously motivated; and the spiritual erosion that has occurred in highly secularized societies.
"The worship of Mammon, possessions and power is proving to be a counter-religion in which it is no longer man who counts, but only personal advantage,” he said. He cited the illegal drug trade and drug dependency to show how desire for happiness today can degenerate into “an unbridled, inhuman craving.”
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Superintendent says educational experience helped shape his support of school vouchers in Indiana
By John Shaughnessy
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"Later, some of my classmates had to leave St. Anthony’s in the middle of the year. I later found out it was because their moms and dads couldn’t afford for them to continue either. That memory in grade school days I’ve carried every day of my life. Because I think the greatest social injustice we have in education is the fact that far too many times the demography of a child determines their
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ASSISI

continued from page 1

mention of specific conflicts by participants, with the exception of a brief reference to Jerusalem as a contested city.

That is not because wars have disappeared from the horizon, but because world harmony is seen as threatened in alarming new ways:

• The growing risk of cultural conflicts was highlighted by Ja-Seung, a Korean Buddhist. Other speakers warned that globalization has sometimes prompted a backlash among those who fear the weakening of cultural identity.

• The world is ignoring massive loss of life among the poorest, said Anglican Archbishop Rowan Williams of Canterbury, making a point echoed by several leaders.

• Others said the economic crisis has sometimes prompted a backlash among young people, “it feels as though we are gambling with the welfare and happiness of a generation.”

• Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople expressed concern that changes set in motion by pro-democracy movements in Arab countries may end up leaving Christian minorities less protected than before.

• Julia Kristeva, a nonbeliever and self-described humanist, who was invited to Assisi, told the assembly that “people’s fundamental abilities to care for each other, to raise children and to tend the land were all threatened by ecological disaster unless lifestyle changes are made. Cardinal Peter Turkson, head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, may have summed it up best when he said people’s relationship with nature was increasingly distorted.

• “The strong resource competition among peoples in a climate-constrained environment threatens to dissolve the fabric of human society and devour the very order of creation which St. Francis praised in his ‘Canticle of the Sun,’” he said.

• Naturally, there were many hopeful words and prayers at Assisi to balance these rather daunting assessments. One pastor representing Reforming Churches said at the closing ceremony that a world with more open borders, shrinking distances and better communications should make it easier for people of faith to have an impact.

But at Assisi 2011, it seemed clearer than ever that building world peace will require much more than eliminating armed conflict.

ASSISI

continued from page 1

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Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, left, Pope Benedict XVI, Rabbi David Rosen and Wande Abimbola, representative for the Yoruba religion of Nigeria, smile as a dove is held up during the interfaith meeting for peace outside the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, Italy, on Oct. 27.

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CHRIST OUR HOPE: Compassion in Community PARISH AND ARCHDIOCESEAN ANNUAL APPEAL

PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

$1.75 million

• Bostons Catholic education and faith formation

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENTS

$2 million

• Offers education for our seminarians and diaconate and rectory beneﬁts for our priests

EXERCISING THE MINISTRY OF CHARITY

$1.95 million

• Provides a helping hand to people who are most in need

Charity $1.95 million

Celebrate $2 million

Please visit www.archindy.org/ChristOurHope to donate a gift or to learn more about the annual appeal.

Submitted photo

In this 2010 file photo, Our Lady of Perpetual Help School seventh-grade students Allie Orbenos, from left, Camryn Gettelfinger, Olivia Stemple and Elaine Slusser take part in an experiment during their science class at the New Albany school.

APPEAL

continued from page 1

paid in order to support the ministry, the same is true in the archdiocesan parish.

“At the same time, just as in the parish, the remainder of the funding goes directly to good works like the sacraments, the school, and religious education outreach to those in need.”

Those participating in Christ Our Hope may designate a specific ministry that they want to support through their contribution.

If participants chose this option, they can funnel their contributions specifically to support Catholic education and religious education programs, formation of future priests and deacons, and the support of retired priests, or the ministries of Catholic Charities agencies across the archdiocese.

Another option in Christ Our Hope is to designate contributions to support ministries that have the greatest need.

Theresa Horonc, principal of Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in New Albany, said she appreciates the support given to the archdiocese’s Office of Catholic Education by contributions to Christ Our Hope.

“I am extremely grateful because we would not have the quality schools that we do in the archdiocese without the connection to the Office of Catholic Education,” Horton said. “There are webinars that we participate in, and they offer professional development. I contact them whenever I have school issues or questions to get their feedback on it.”

Deacon candidate Steve House, who ministers at Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh, has participated in the archdiocese’s deacon formation program since 2006. It is supported by the Christ Our Hope appeal.

“I think the archdiocese has a top-notch program,” said House, who, along with his 15 classmates, expects to be ordained a permanent deacon next June. “I would have to say, along with all the other deacon candidates, that we all feel thankful for this opportunity to learn, to become better ministers, and [to] be transformed.

“I think we’re being transformed, not just in the roles that we play, not just in the clothes that we wear, but in who we are as people and how we relate to others and, certainly, how we look to God.”

Transformation is what Bill Bickel and his co-workers at Holy Family Shelter, a ministry of Catholic Charities Indianapolis, see happening every day in the homeless families that come through their doors.

“We’ve seen time and time again broken, suffering homeless families transformed into competent, thriving families who not only go on to do great things,” said Bickel, director of Holy Family Shelter and Holy Family Transitional Housing. “They [also] come back and ask how they can give of themselves by helping with the next homeless family.”

(For “Stories of Hope” and more information about “Christ Our Hope: Compassion in Community,” log on to www.archindy.org/ChristOurHope.)
Father James Arneson served in Jennings County for 20 years

By Mary Ann Garber

Father James E. Arneson, a retired diocesan priest, died unexpectedly on Oct. 23 at his home in South Pasadena, Fla. He was 70.

His last ministry assignment was as administrator and then pastor of St. Joseph and St. Ann parishes in Jennings County from 1973 until 1994. He was granted early retirement from active ministry for health reasons in 1994.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10 a.m. on Nov. 5 at St. Joseph Church in Jennings County. Burial will follow at the parish cemetery.

Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, apostolic administrator, is scheduled to be the principal celebrant and homilist.

Father Jonathan Meyer, pastor of St. Ann and St. Joseph parishes and St. Mary Parish in North Vernon, remembered Father Arneson as a very pastoral priest with a wonderful sense of humor.

The priests enjoyed occasional, long-distance calls after Father Meyer was assigned to the three Jennings County parishes in 2008.

“He was a very dedicated man to his flock,” Father Meyer said. “He gave himself tirelessly for his sheep pastorally, spiritually and sacramentally.

“He was, in some ways, a pioneer when it came to taking on multiple parish assignments,” Father Meyer said. “At one point, he had three parishes, which was not normative in those days.”

Father Arneson founded the Four Corners Knights of Columbus Council #10422, Father Meyer said, and also paid for new roofs and air conditioning at St. Joseph and St. Ann churches.

“He paid for that out of his own pocket,” Father Meyer said. “He was very, very dedicated to the mission of the churches and their vitality, and didn’t want the parishioners to be burdened [with building repairs].”

WASHINGON (CNS)—Two Congolese Catholic leaders visited Washington in late October to lobby U.S. government Congolese Catholic leaders visit U.S. to lobby for country’s suffering people.

“He was a very pastoral, very caring man. He had some health problems, but was always very caring of his people and his parishes. That meant a lot to the people of those faith communities,” Jennifer Aronson of Chicago, Father Arneson’s niece, said her uncle was “always thinking about his parishioners and family members, and always helping his neighbors. We had a lot of great tributes about how much he was helping a lot of people who are shut-ins and elderly in Florida. He had taken people to hospitals and done all sorts of nice things for people down there.

“He felt very strongly about all the places that he represented as a priest and a pastor,” she said. “While he had been on medical leave for quite some time because of some very serious illnesses, he never forgot his roots in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, and never forgot all the parishioners and people there who had helped him along the way.”

James Edward Michael Arneson was born on April 15, 1941, to Edward M. and Gertrude (Lawhorn) Arneson, who were members of St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis.

He attended St. Philip Neri School, Holy Name of Jesus School in Beech Grove and the former Latin School in Indianapolis.

He graduated from St. Mary’s College in Kentucky, he studied for the priesthood at the former St. Mauro Seminary in Indianapolis.

He was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Paul C. Schulte on May 1, 1967, at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church in St. Meinrad.

Father Arneson celebrated his first Mass on May 14, 1967, at Holy Nativity Church in Beech Grove.

His first assignment was as associate pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville on May 23, 1967.

On Dec. 1, 1975, he was appointed associate pastor of St. Mary Parish in New Albany.

Father Arneson was named chaplain of the Knights of Columbus Cardinal Ritter Council #12121 in Jennings County on March 6, 1972.

On July 5, 1973, he was appointed administrator of St. Joseph Parish in Jennings County.

On March 4, 1975, Father Arneson was named administrator of Our Lady of Providence Parish in Brownstown while continuing as administrator of St. Joseph Parish in Jennings County.

He was named to his first pastorate on Aug. 27, 1977, at St. Joseph and St. Ann parishes in Jennings County and Our Lady of Providence Parish in Brownstown.

He ministered at Our Lady of Providence Parish until Aug. 14, 1994, and moved to Florida.

Surviving are a sister, Anna Bruce of Indianopolis, and several nieces and nephews.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Little Sisters of the Poor, St. Augustine Home for the Aged, 2345 W. 86th St., Indianopolis, IN 46260.
A world political authority to manage the world economy

Back in 2009, when Pope Benedict XVI issued his encyclical “Caritas in Veritate” (“Charity in Truth”), it was a controversial part of his call for a reform of economic institutions to produce a “true world political authority” to manage the world economy.

Now the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace has followed up on the pope’s encyclical with a 41-page document that also calls for a world political authority with sufficient power to regulate financial markets, and correct what it calls “inequalities and distortions of capitalist development.” The document was released on Oct. 24.

Surely the Vatican realizes that sovereign countries will be unwilling to give such power to a universal public authority that would transcend national interests. Why, then, would it issue such a document, which, although not written by Pope Benedict, surely has his support since it is an elaboration of positions he has said in his encyclical?

See related story, page 7.

Because it is convinced that some mechanism is required to place the common good at the center of international economic activity. The pontifical council recognizes a growing inequality between the rich and poor in the world. It is convinced that this is contrary to the Church’s teachings regarding justice and peace.

It is unfortunate that Catholics too often pay little attention to the Church’s teachings when it comes to economics and finances. It is as if the seventh commandment, “Thou shalt not steal,” doesn’t exist.

That commandment includes, as the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults says, “consideration of the relationship between the economy and social justice, the importance of solidarity among nations, and a preferential love for the poor” (p. 421).

Just as the Church bases its teachings about the life issues on the sacredness of human life and the dignity of every individual, so it does when it comes to social justice. Its focus is on justice for all people, but especially for the helpless and the poor.

And many of those helpless and poor are living in developing countries that, the pontifical council believes, are being hurt by current global economics. The current global financial crisis, the new document says, has revealed “selfishness, collective greed and the hoarding of goods on a great scale.”

A major part of Pope Benedict’s encyclical “Caritas in Veritate” was devoted to globalization because it has become a facet of everyday life. That is evident when we realize that the United States has become dependent on China to support its national debt, Local debt, when it is almost impossible to buy anything not made in China or other countries, and when we make a phone call to try to get a repairman and find ourselves talking to someone in India.

The pope’s encyclical said that globalization in itself is neither good nor bad. He said, “We should not be its victims, but rather seize the chance the global economy offers to take advantage of its many opportunities for development.”

Since globalization is entrenched, the new document says, the continued model of nationalistic self-interest seems like a “contradiction in terms.” It says, “In a world on its way to rapid globalization, the reference to a world authority becomes the only horizon compatible with the new realities of our time and the needs of humankind.”

The document calls globalization “the new world dynamics.”

The Vatican is quite aware that a “long road still needs to be traveled before arriving at the creation of a public authority with universal jurisdiction.”

It will have to be a delicate project, the document says, and will have to be set up gradually. It will have to be done through international agreements and never imposed by force or coercion.

The document also stresses the Church’s constant teaching about the principle of subsidiarity, which means that governments should help and support individuals and groups for whom they are responsible without controlling their freedom and initiative.

Therefore, it says, the world political authority would intervene “only when individual, social or financial actors are intrinsically deficient in capacity or cannot manage by themselves to do what is required of them.”

We will see how much attention the secular world pays to this proposal.

—John F. Fink

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Letter to the Editor

What the poor do with your donation of money doesn’t take away from the gesture

I’m sure that many people share the thoughts of the letter writer in the Oct. 14 issue of The Criterion concerning giving money to panhandlers. They don’t know if they use agencies that can help them or not.

I do know that smoking isn’t just a habit, but an addiction, and is difficult to understand. But years ago, a priest gave me the following advice on smoking.

“I do my part by donating money to the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.

The editors reserve the right to select and edit letters for space, time, clarity, brevity and taste.

The Better Angels of Our Nature

Steven Pinker, a psychology professor at Harvard University, recently published a book titled The Better Angels of Our Nature, which argues that throughout human history we live in less violent than any other period in history.

Archaeological studies of pre-state societies suggest that as many as 15 percent of the population met violent deaths. They seem to confirm the philosopher Thomas Hobbes’ claim that life in the state of nature was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. Murder rates in Europe today are 10 times lower than they were in the Middle Ages.

Pinker attributes this “civilizing process” to a number of causes—the increasing power of the state, the growth of commerce, improvements in the status of women and even progress in our moral reasoning.

Whether we actually do get better at moral reasoning is a very complicated question. It may be that we reach different conclusions when we apply the same principles in different social situations.

Take the issue of capital punishment. The Church has long taught that the state can take a criminal’s life if that is the only way to defend human life. Some of the early Church fathers tolerated and even approved of the practice.

Augustine mentions capital punishment as an exception to the commandment against murder. Aquinas argues for the execution of men dangerous to the community “in order to preserve the common good.”

In recent years, though, the Catholic Church has been increasingly insistent in its condemnation of executions. In his 1995 encyclical “Evangelium Vitae,” Blessed John Paul II stated the growing consensus that the state restricts or abolishes the death penalty.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, quoting Blessed John Paul, notes the traditional teaching about the state’s authority to defend human life. It then goes on to say that, in the modern world, “as a consequence of the possibilities which the Church has [securely incarcerating the criminal] without definitively taking away from him the possibility of redeeming himself—the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity ‘are very rare’, if not practically nonexistent’ “ (# 2267).

I have been thinking about Pinker and the pope the last few weeks, when our attention has been fixed on two prominent death penalty cases.

One involved Lawrence Brewer, a white man convicted of brutal but failed to get a right human being who was executed. Brewer was convicted of shooting a police officer in Georgia. Let us assume the truth of the man’s innocence and become a focal point for the anti-death penalty movement. His case, however, is lost amid the noise of Pope Benedict XVI, among others. He was executed the same day as Brewer.

Let us take a look at Brewer and Davis, who were bad men, as they said in the South, “needed killing.”

Davies was caught in the act of pistol-whipping a homeless man who was approached by the ficitious officer. As for Brewer, he was a cruel, sadistic racist who tortured and eventually beheaded a black man named James Byrd. Brewer was executed. Davis was caught in the act of pistol-whipping a homeless man who was approached by the fictitious officer.

The Church’s clear contemporary teaching is that Texas and Georgia should do so only if it was necessary to protect their people from further attacks.

Given the quality of the state prison systems, it is hard to make that claim.

Many folks would say that the punishments were justified because Brewer and Davis were bad men who, as they say in the South, “needed killing.”

Let us assume the truth of the evidence against Davis, as we might do before 20 years of legal review. He was, on that point, a bad man or perhaps, a man who did some very bad things. He was convicted of shooting another man and was executed.

Davies was caught in the act of pistol-whipping a homeless man who was approached by the fictitious officer. As for Brewer, he was a cruel, sadistic racist who tortured and eventually beheaded a black man named James Byrd. Brewer was executed. Davis was caught in the act of pistol-whipping a homeless man who was approached by the ficitious officer. As for Brewer, he was a cruel, sadistic racist who tortured and eventually beheaded a black man named James Byrd. Brewer was executed.

The Church seems to be moving in that direction. Although as last month’s cases show, we are not there yet.

(John Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.)

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Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be informed, relevant, well-expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous and respectful.

The editors reserve the right to select and edit letters for space, time, clarity, brevity and taste.

Readers must be signed, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “…Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367.
Operation Rescue president committed to ending abortion in U.S.

God blesses us with babies, Operation Rescue president Troy Newman emphasized during a pro-life fundraiser in Indianapolis, and it is our moral imperative as Christians and Americans to protect defenseless children from the moment of their conception.

The co-author of Their Blood Cries Out, resident of Wichita, Kan., and ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church who was the keynote speaker for the 25th annual Celebrate Life awards dinner on Sept. 27 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, said, “In this fight for children’s lives, we can’t be mediocre,” he said. “We can’t be middle of the road. … because the children’s lives demand it.”

Sponsored by Right to Life of Indianapolis, the event also recognized State Sen. Scott Schneider (R-Indianapolis) and his parents, William and Patricia Schneider, who hold the Charles E. Stimming Sr. Pro-Life Award that he received from Right to Life of Indianapolis on Sept. 27 during the organization’s 25th annual Celebrate Life dinner at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Kane and Margaret Winans, an Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Carmel, Ind., member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, received the organization’s E. Stimming Sr. Pro-Life Award for founding a Teens for Life Club at that public school.

The pro-life organization also tackled health code and legal violations at abortion facilities in Kansas, he said, to reduce the number of clinics in the state from eight providers to only three centers today.

“One of them, Planned Parenthood, is facing 107 criminal charges,” Newman said, “23 of which are felonies.”

To achieve these life-saving successes, he said, “we had to do a fundamental shift in the way the pro-life movement in Kansas was doing business. We had to make abortion ugly. We had to make it what it is. We had to report every single botched abortion. … We made abortion a daily issue in the state of Kansas.

“That’s the sort of pro-life grassroots activism that supports legislation,” Newman said, “and gives the legislators the [facts] that they need to pass pro-life laws, … to follow Indiana’s example and defund Planned Parenthood and pass a strong sonogram law.”

The pro-life movement must focus on “peaceful, nonviolent, direct action exposing the crimes of the abortionists,” he said. “We must denounce every act of violence, every single one.”

Recent polls indicate that 63 percent of Americans want serious restrictions placed on abortion, Newman said. “Americans can no longer tolerate abortion. … This year, 480 pieces of pro-life legislation have been introduced in statehouses, and following Indiana’s lead seven states have [tried to defund] Planned Parenthood.”

Fifty abortion mills have closed in the U.S. during the last 18 months, he said, and 1,400 abortion centers that were closed during the past 15 years have not reopened.

“Seventy percent of the abortion industry [in the U.S.] has closed,” Newman said. “The abortion industry is a dying business.”

Yet, in Indiana, he added, there are still nine abortion facilities killing unborn babies and receiving help from our tax dollars.

Pro-life Americans must continue to work hard to overturn the health care reform bill signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2010, he said, and to defend more Planned Parenthood businesses throughout the country.

“St. Luke the Evangelist parishioner Jon Kane of Indianapolis holds the Charles E. Stimming Sr. Pro-Life Award that he received from Right to Life of Indianapolis on Sept. 27 during the organization’s 25th annual Celebrate Life dinner at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Kane and Margaret Winans, an Our Lady of Mt. Carmel parishioner from Carmel, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, and Jon Kane, a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, received the organization’s E. Stimming Sr. Pro-Life Award for founding a Teens for Life Club at Carmel High School.

“We’re on the winning side,” Newman said. “We are pressing toward victory. We have to be goal-oriented. … We must win this battle. We must come together and be God’s voice on behalf of the children.”

Respect Life Award recipients, from left, Patricia and William Schneider of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis and their son, State Sen. Scott Schneider (R-Indianapolis), accept their awards from Right to Life of Indianapolis president Mars Tuttle during the Celebrate Life dinner on Sept. 27 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

What was the news on Nov. 3, 1961? Words of praise for Pope John and an update on the number of Catholics worldwide

By Brandon A. Evans

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

The stories are found in the Nov. 3, 1961, issue of The Criterion:

• Hails Pope John’s efforts to promote Christian unity
• Pope to observe twin anniversaries
• Bitterness gone; Catholic and Anglican pulpit labors coalesce
• Two rabbis, minister, priest win awards
• Soviet blast called ‘mad’ by Vatican
• Honored at banquet: Four receive Catholic Student’s Mission Club Hoey winner

Catholic Church advised
• Social evils, Red advance are linked
• Editorial: Pope John... It is the product of his arguments. And he is good... In three short years, he has captivated the hearts of his Catholic family. To his separated brethren, not yet to accept his efforts, his words... Do not conduct a trial of the past, we do not want to prove who was right and who was wrong. All we want to say is, let us come together.

Religion takes back seat to TV
• Role of art classes is stressed by speakers
• Parental failure linked to increase in youthful crime

CYO delegates
• CVO delegates will eat 2,000 pounds of turkey
• Paper urges Hollywood to ‘face moral duties’
• Rosary is recited in 50 languages

African priest hits U.S. racism
• Fined for failing to rear son, 12, in Jewish faith

Greek Orthodox deplore rioting
• Calls sciences of mind ‘handmaids of theology’

John Bosco ‘lives on’ in South America

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indians

Greeks, Catholics, Jews, and the world united in peace

Greek Orthodox deplore rioting
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125,000 persons at ‘peace rally’ in Washington

Hails interfaith talks on nuclear war

‘Speak African’ in Africa,

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Hails interfaith talks on nuclear war

‘Speak African’ in Africa,
Events Calendar

November 4
St. Monica Church, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. 
Charismatic Bilingual Mass, praise and worship, 7:30 p.m. Mass at 8:30 p.m. Information: 317-486-0705.

November 5-4
St. Augustine House for the Aged, 1454 W. 66th St., Indianapolis. 
Christmas banquet, noon–8 p.m. Information: 317-872-6420.

November 5
Archbishop Edward T. O’Malley of the Catholic Conference Assembly Hall, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. 
St. Peter Paul and Catholic Parish. “Trivial Challenge” 7 p.m., 25 per person or 220 per team of eight, includes pizza and snacks. Information: 317-828-4323.

November 5-6
St. John the Baptist Parish, 2574 State Road 1, Gullford. 
Craft show, Sat. 9 a.m.–4 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.–5 p.m., church dinner served on Nov. 6. Information: 317-570-4302.

November 6
St. Mary Church, 317 N. New St., Indianapolis. 
Fifth annual All-City Catholic High School Math Tournament, 10:30 a.m. to Noon. Information: 317-359-5800.

November 6
St. Francis Xavier Parish, Highway 31 and 160, Heavilyville. 
“Fall Smorgasbord,” homemade dumplings, 11-30 a.m. at quilts. Information: 317-286-4419.

November 7
St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, Sexton Hall, 7575 Holliday Drive East, Indianapolis. 
Paknic social, 6 p.m.–4 p.m. Information: 317-258-4173.

November 7
St. Malachy Parish, 9 Green St. campus, Brownstown. 
Christmas bazaar, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., lunch available. Information: 317-920-4515 or jackoem@gmail.com.

St. Martin of Tours Parish, 1720 E. Harrison St., Martinsville. Holiday bazaar, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Information: 765-342-6749.

November 7
St. Mary, 317 N. New St., Indianapolis. 
Dinner served on Nov. 6. Information: 317-570-4302.

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St. Francis Xavier Parish, Highway 31 and 160, Heavilyville. 
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November 8
Ave Maria Guild, Mass for deceased members, 11 a.m., evening. Information: 317-855-5089.

November 8
St. Francis Xavier Parish, Highway 31 and 160, Heavilyville. 
“Fall Smorgasbord,” homemade dumplings, 11-30 a.m. at quilts. Information: 317-286-4419.

November 11
Oldenburg Academy, Oldenburg, Indiana. 
Perspectives of Scripture,” session four of five, Franciscan Father Francis Bryan, presenter, 7 p.m. Information: 317-403-5551.

November 11
St. Mary Church, 317 N. New St., Indianapolis. 
“Caring for Our Home, Planet Earth,” Franciscan Sister Janet Born, presenter, 9:30 a.m. liturgy, free-will offering. Information: 812-933-6437 or center@oldenburgosf.com.

November 12
St. Augustine Home for the Aged, 2345 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. 
November 4 noon–8 p.m. Information: 317-872-6420.

November 12
St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, 3603 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. 
Craft show, Sat. 9 a.m.–4 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.–5 p.m., church dinner served on Nov. 6. Information: 317-570-4302.

November 12
Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. New Jersey St., Indianapolis. 
“Friends of Fatima” program. Information: 317-788-7581 or marcia.johnson@archindy.org.

November 13
Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. New Jersey St., Indianapolis. 
“Friends of Fatima” program. Information: 317-788-7581 or marcia.johnson@archindy.org.

November 14
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. 
“Meal’s Night at the Burg,” 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 317-933-6437 or center@oldenburgosf.com.

November 15
Volunteer recruitment dinner for Black Catholic Congress is Nov. 7. 
The Archdiocese of Indianapolis will host the National Black Catholic Congress XI on July 19-22 at the JW Marriott Hotel in Indianapolis. This historic gathering is expected to draw more than 2,000 Black Catholics from across the U.S., Canada and the Caribbean to celebrate their common faith and set priorities for future ministries in their communities. Taking a leading role in the congress will be Father Kenneth Taylor, pastor of Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis, and director of the archdiocesan Office of Multicultural Ministry. He also serves as vice president of the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus. Many volunteers will be needed to make the congress a success. People interested in volunteering can learn more about the event during a dinner at 6 p.m. on Nov. 7 at the Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis.

For more information, call the archdiocesan Office of Multicultural Ministry at 317-236-1562 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1586, or danielaw@archindy.org.

St. Benedict Seminary Concert will have international flavor 

A free concert by four choirs at St. Benedict Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad will begin at 3 p.m. CST on Nov. 13 at the Church of St. Francis Xavier, 2561 Oldenburg Road, in St. Meinrad. The concert will feature the choirs of: St. Meinrad Archabbey, Benedictine Father Brendan Mross, presenter. Information: 800-581-6905 or mzettler@stmeinrad.edu.

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Rose Honorees

St. Elizabeth/Coleman Pregnancy and Adoption Service’s 25th anniversary Elizabeth Ball was held on Oct. 15 at the Indiana Roof Ballroom in Indianapolis. Rose Honorees recognized at the fundraising dinner dance were, from left, Daron and Denene Stewart, Jessica Limberea, Christy Brink, Claire Black and Kristy Powell. The honorees were chosen for their support of expectant mothers, adoption and the ministry of St. Elizabeth/Colman, Paul Oekons, vice president of business development for Keystone Construction Corp., chaired the event.
Vatican document calls for global authority to regulate markets

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A Vatican document called for the gradual creation of a world political authority with broad powers to regulate financial markets and restructure the “inequalities and distortions of capitalist development.”

The document said the current global financial crisis has revealed “selfishness, collective greed and the hoarding of goods on a great scale.” A supranational authority, it said, is needed to place the common good at the center of international economic activity.

The 41-page text was titled, “Toward Reforming the International Financial and Monetary Systems in the Context of Global Public Authority.” Prepared by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, it was released on Oct. 24 in several languages, including a provisional translation in English.

The document cited the teachings of popes over the last 40 years on the need for a universal public authority that would transcend national interests. The current economic crisis, which has seen growing inequality between the rich and poor of the world, underlines the necessity to take concrete steps toward creating such an authority, it said.

One major step, it said, should be reform of the international monetary system in a way that involves developing countries. The document foresaw creation of a “central world bank” that would regulate the flow of monetary exchanges. It said the International Monetary Fund had lost the ability to control the amount of credit risk taken on by the system.

The document also proposed:

• Taxation measures on financial transactions. Revenues could contribute to public funds that make support conditional on “virtuous” behavior aimed at developing the real economy.
• More effective management of financial shadow markets that are largely uncontrolled today.
• Such moves would be designed to make the global economy more responsive to the needs of the person, and less “subordinated to the interests of countries that effectively enjoy a position of economic and financial advantage,” it said.

In making the case for a global authority, the document said the continued model of nationalistic self-interest seemed “anachronistic and surreal” in the age of globalization.

“This should not be afraid to propose new ideas, even if they might destabilize pre-existing balances of power that prevail over the weakest,” it said.

The “new world dynamics,” it said, call for a “gradual, balanced transfer of a part of each nation’s powers to a world authority and to regional authorities.”

“In a world on its way to rapid globalization, the reference to a world authority becomes the only horizon compatible with the new realities of our time and the needs of humankind,” it said. Helping to usher in this new society is a duty for everyone, especially for Christians, it said.

While the Vatican document focused on financial issues, it envisioned a much wider potential role for the global political authority. The agenda also includes peace and security, disarmament and arms control, protection of human rights, and management of migration flows and food security, it said.

Establishing such an authority will be a “dilemma project and will no doubt come at a cost of ‘anguish and suffering’ as countries give up particular powers, the document said. The authority should be set up gradually, on the basis of wide consultation and international agreements, and never imposed by force or coercion, it said.

The authority should operate on the principle of subsidiarity, intervening “only when individual, social or financial actors are intrinsically deficient in capacity, or cannot manage by themselves to do what is required of them,” it said. Countries’ specific identities would be fully respected, it said.

The authority should transcend special interests, and its decisions “should not be the result of the more developed countries’ excessive power over the weaker countries” or the result of lobbying by nations or groups, it said.

“A long road still needs to be traveled before arriving at the creation of a public authority with universal jurisdiction. It would seem logical for the reform process to proceed with the United Nations as its reference,” it said.

At a news conference on Oct. 24, the Vatican spokesman, Rev. Father Federico Lombardi, emphasized that the document was “not an expression of papal infallibility” but instead was “an authoritative note of a Vatican agency,” the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. In that sense, he said, it would not be correct to report that “Pope Benedict says” what is in the document, he said.

The document did make a point of quoting from the teachings of several popes, however, including those of Pope Benedict XVI, who in his 2009 encyclical “Charity in Truth” (“Caritas in Veritate”) said there was “an urgent need of a true world political authority” that could give poorer nations a bigger voice in financial decision-making.

The document also cited Blessed John Paul II’s 1991 warning of the risk of an “idol of the market” in the wake of the failure of European communism. Today has warning “needs to be heeded without delay,” it said.

In fact, it said, the primary cause of the current global crisis has been “an economic liberalization that spurns rules and controls,” and that relies solely on the laws of the market.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, head of the justice and peace council, said the Vatican document could be useful contribution to the G-20 summit in France on Nov. 3-4, which is looking to reform the international monetary system and strengthen financial regulatory measures.

Cardinal Peter Turkson noted that the G-20 includes developing countries and said this represented progress from the time when there was just a G-7, a group of seven industrialized countries that shaped economic policies.

In general, over the last 30 years there was a tendency to define the strategic directions of economic policy “in terms of ‘clubs’ and of smaller and larger groups of more developed countries,” it said. While this approach had some positive aspects, it appeared to leave out the emerging countries, it said. ♦

People are reflected on an electronic board displaying exchange rates in a business district in Tokyo on Oct. 24. The Vatican has issued its call for global financial reform, recommending the creation of a world political authority with broad powers to regulate markets and restructure the ‘inequalities and distortions of capitalist development.”

OurFightAgainstCancer.com/Lung
By John Staughnness

The archdiocese honored six individuals during the Celebrating Catholic School Values Awards Dinner on Oct. 26. In praising the award winners, Bishop Christopher J. Coyne said, “Congratulations on being recognized but, more importantly, thank you for being a witness to others of the goodness of Catholic education can mean in your life, in your families and to society.”

The archdiocese’s Career Achievement Award winners are Eduardo Parada, Msgr. Joseph Riedman, Robert and Ann Funk Steiner, Glenn Tebbe and Dr. Louis Wright.

“It’s the 16th year we’ve gathered together to honor a select number of individuals whose lives and achievements have exemplified Catholic school values to an exceptional degree,” said Harry Plummer, the archdiocese’s executive director of Catholic education and faith formation.

Mr. Parada has never forgotten the example of his mother, who worked as a seamstress to send her six children to Catholic schools, and still found a way to help feed and clothe people in need.

A native of Colobrada, Parada immigrated to the United States and eventually became a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis in 1971. For the past 40 years, he has served as a value because he came to the Hispanic community that has settled in the parish and on the city’s east side.

Eduard Parada has helped the Hispanic parishioners for the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, holy Communion and reconciliation. He also coordinates marriage preparation classes for engaged couples and provides counseling for married couples.

Msgr. Joseph Riedman was honored for his leadership and his dedication as a teacher, counselor and pastor during his 55 years as a priest.

Now retired to his hometown of Cornerstone, Msgr. Riedman was praised for his work as pastor of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, where a building is named in his honor: At Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, where he led the building of a new wing of the school and began plans for a new church, and at Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, where he developed a successful ministry for Hispanics.

Msgr. Riedman was also recognized for his 17 years as a beloved math teacher, counselor and chaplain at Father Thomas Scollen Memorial High School in Indianapolis.

Robert and Ann (Funk) Steiner have made a tremendous impact on Catholic education in the New Albany Deanery and the archdiocese in two primary areas—improving access to a Catholic education for children with special needs and providing better opportunities for students whose passions are in the performing arts.

When their youngest son, Tommy, was born with Down syndrome, Ann Steiner spent years attending workshops and writing grants to faciliate his education. Tommy and other children with special needs attended Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in New Albany and Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville.

Bishop Coyne led the capital campaign committee at Providence High School that raised more than $5.4 million for the school and Paula Robobosos Performing Arts Center.

Tommie is now honored for his 40 years of service by the Church in different roles, including his current position as executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference—a role in which he serves as “the public policy voice of the five bishops of Indiana.”

He was a key player in the Indiana legislature’s passage this year of the school voucher program, an initiative that offers financial assistance to families of certain incomes to help select a school of their choice for their children. Tebbe has also promoted the Church’s position on helping the poor and immigrants.

A former principal of St. Mary School in Greensburg, Tebbe has also served as a member of the Greensburg City Council for 17 years, helping to bring a Honda Motor Co. factory to the city—a move that has led to about 2,000 jobs in southeast Indiana.

For Dr. Louis Wright, Catholic schools served as a refuge and a source of hope as he grew up in the tough streets of Chicago. They provided the faith and persistence he needed to follow his dream of becoming a medical doctor.

Ever since, Wright has been offering that combination of faith, hope and help to his patients and fellow parishioners at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.

Known for his acceptance of cultural and racial diversity, Wright served as president of his parish as a youth leader, lector, parish council member, altar server coordinator and administrative assistant of holy Communion.

He also puts his faith to work in his medical career, especially helping the thousands of geriatric patients and starting the sickle cell unit at Community Hospital East in Indianapolis for seriously ill patients who suffer from that disease.

In his speech, which he titled “Everything I Ever Needed to Know About School Reform, I Learned in Catholic Schools,” Bennett focused on four main points—great teachers and great principals make a difference, choice of schools provides the best opportunity for families and children, the importance of resolve, and the value of prayer.

He recalled his second-grade teacher, who “instilled in me a love of reading that has never left me.” He remembered a history teacher at Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville, who gave him a piece of advice that he remembered with him: “You have a lot of talents. The greatest sin you can commit is not using the potential of them.”

Turning to the importance of school choice, Bennett said, “Regardless of where a child goes to school or a school of the color of a child’s skin, regardless of how much money their parents have, regardless of how dysfunctional their home life is, our job is to give them the best education we can. And that includes letting them go to a school and having the state fund the education that meets their needs and allows them to be successful.”

Bennett concluded his speech by sharing a Franciscan prayer that ended with this blessing: “May God bless you with enough people to believe that you can make a difference in this world so that you’re able, with God’s grace, to do what others believe can’t be done.”

“For too many years, we heard that educational choice was not available and not an option in this state,” Bennett noted. “But through always remembering that you provide great teachers and leaders, by always remembering that choice is the best opportunity for families and children, through resolve and through the power of prayer, we made a difference in 2011.”

Source: Archdiocese of Indianapolis, 2011 Catholic Education Awards Dinner
WASHINGTON (CNS)—The U.S. bishops’ fall general assembly in Baltimore will be shorter than usual, and focus primarily on what will be new workings of the Church on larger societal issues.

The Nov. 14-16 meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, originally scheduled to last until Nov. 17, will include a discussion on religious liberty that could touch on a wide range of topics. But the main business of the gathering will be liturgical, financial and organizational matters.

Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, elected to head the USCCB for a three-year term last November, will open the meeting with his first presidential address. If tradition holds, the talk will present a “state of the Church” message, and a look at the challenges Archbishop Dolan foresees for the coming year.

It could also be the first USCCB meeting for Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, recently appointed as the new apostolic nuncio to the United States, who has said he hoped to arrive in the U.S. in time for the assembly.

Looking back on one of their biggest challenges of the past 18 months, the bishops will vote on whether to make their former Task Force on Health Care into a permanent Subcommittee on Healthcare Issues under the Committee on Doctrine.

The subcommittee would address such issues as “guidance on the bishops’ Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services,” non-Catholic hospitals in Catholic health care systems, and, for-profit Catholic health care.

Archbishop Dolan said the bishops had discussed a biennial report on Catholic health care facilities, conscience protection and religious directives, but a voice vote decided against the recommendation.

They also will vote on whether to make their letter, if any, for the fiscal year and that they have been financial statements of the diocese and the management and support yearly voluntary financial reporting by each bishop to administer the material resources of the diocese, or in a separate ritual text.

The U.S. bishops had hoped to include the rites for blessing oils and chasums in the new translation of the Roman Missal, which comes first Sunday in Advent. But the Vatican said the rites should be included in a revised edition of the Roman Pontifical, the liturgical rites celebrated by bishops, or in a separate ritual text.

If they are approved, the bishops are hoping for quick confirmation by the Vatican. The liturgy can be printed and distributed for use during Holy Week, the week of April 1 in 2012.

Also on the bishops’ agenda are a variety of reports on issues of interest within and outside the conference. They include:

• An update by Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington on the process of incorporating Anglican groups into the U.S. Catholic Church under Pope Benedict XVI’s rescript apostolic constitution “Anglicanorum coetibus.”

• A report by Bishop Kevin J. Farrell of Dallas, chairman of the Committee on National Collections, on new guidelines for administering USCCB collections in dioceses.

• Information from Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities, on the work of Project Rachel, a program that provides help to pregnant women who are considering abortion.

• A presentation evaluating the USCCB reorganization, as well as reports on the conference’s priority plan and the priority plan for the Vatican.

• A report by the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth and its Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage, on the work of Project Rachel, a program that provides help to pregnant women who are considering abortion.

The bishops also will vote on the 2012 conference budget and elect a new secretary-elect, chairman-elect of five committees, board members of Catholic Relief Services and a chairman for the Committee on International Justice and Peace.

Accusation that Catholic University mistreats Muslim students ‘without foundation’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The president of The Catholic University of America has disputed a complaint filed with the District of Columbia’s Office of Human Rights over the ability of Muslim students to engage in worship at the university.

“The charge is completely without foundation,” said President John Garvey in a statement sent to all students, faculty and staff Oct. 29.

Garvey is an international law professor at George Washington University, also in Washington, filed the complaint against Catholic University in early October.

Banzhaf also had filed a complaint in the same year that Catholic University decided to return to same-sex dormitories in place of coeducational ones.

No action on either complaint had been announced by Oct. 31 by the city’s human rights office.

Garvey assailed Banzhaf in his statement.

“Banzhaf has created the perception that it is our Muslim students themselves who are offended by the symbols of Catholicism on our campus, and that they object to the absence of worship space set aside specifically for their use,” Garvey said.

The fact that is no Muslim student at Catholic University has registered a complaint with the university about their religious freedom on campus. And today we learned from an article in The Washington Post that Mr. Banzhaf himself has not received any responses from our Muslim students.

Garvey added, “I regret very much that our Muslim students have been used as pawns in a manufactured controversy.”

One claim in the Banzhaf complaint is that Catholic University is denying Muslim students the same benefits that students of other religious orientations are able to enjoy since there is no formal Muslim association sponsored by Catholic University, but its law school has an association for Jewish students.

The university has an association for Arab students, who may or may not be Muslim.

Wassim Al Salwa, a Muslim student who recently started the Arab American Association, told The Tower, Catholic University’s student newspaper, “The community here is very respectful of other religious, and I feel free to openly practice it.”

There are 122 Muslim students at Catholic University, up from 56 students in 2007, according to Garvey.

“Our Catholic teaching instructs us to embrace our fellow human beings of all faith traditions,” he said.

“They enrich us with their presence, and help to promote interreligious and intercultural understanding.”

Banzhaf’s complaint is a non-issue, according to Indiana Hooper, communications director for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

“Muslims can pray anywhere, practically, from a bus station to a classroom to a cubicle at work,” Hooper said.

“Particularly at a Catholic institution, you would assume there would be certain common symbols in the liturgy.”

CAIR’s website has a link to its statement to the Catholic News Agency.

Hooper added that such issues, including starting a Muslim student group, could be resolved through dialogue instead of legal action.

American Muslims have very good relations with the Catholic community,” he said.

Banzhaf has filed successful discrimination complaints over the past 20 years, ranging from nonmoskkes’ rights to discrimination at a university where higher prices are charged by dry cleaners for women’s shirts. 
Bishop addresses House panel on ‘grave threats to religious liberty’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Recent “grave threats to religious liberty” serve as “grim validations” of the U.S. bishops’ decision last June to create a special committee to address those issues, Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport, Conn., told a House subcommittee on Oct. 26.

Bishop Lori, appointed in late September to chair the bishops’ new Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, said the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence require government “to acknowledge and protect religious liberty as fundamental, no matter the moral and political trends of the moment.”

But in recent days, he said, “the bishops of the United States have watched with increasing alarm as this great national legacy of religious liberty, so profoundly in harmony with our own teachings, has been subject to ever more frequent assault and ever more rapid erosion.”

In written testimony before the House Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on the Constitution, Bishop Lori called for “corrective action by Congress” to address six areas of particular concern:

• Regulations issued by the Department of Health and Human Services in August that would mandate coverage of contraception and sterilization in most private health insurance plans.
• A new requirement by HHS that would require the bishops’ Migration and Refugee Services to agree to provide the “full range” of reproductive services, including abortion and contraception, to human trafficking victims and unaccompanied refugee minors.
• The U.S. Agency for International Development’s requirement that Catholic Relief Services to provide “full range” of reproductive services, including abortion and contraception, to human trafficking victims and unaccompanied refugee minors.
• The Department of Justice’s actions to exempt religious institutions from some civil laws when it comes to hiring and firing.
• State actions on same-sex marriage that have resulted in Catholic Charities agencies “being driven out of the adoption and foster care business,” and some county clerks in New York state facing legal action for refusing to participate in same-sex unions.
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• A new requirement by HHS that would require the bishops’ Migration and Refugee Services to agree to provide the “full range” of reproductive services, including abortion and contraception, to human trafficking victims and unaccompanied refugee minors.

“In light of ever-changing discrimination laws and harassment policies, religious people often face a troublesome choice—deny deeply held religious beliefs or receive punishment from state or local officials,” he said.

Rev. Lynn disagreed with the other witnesses, however, saying that “the most imminent and egregious threats to religious freedom today are those that are suffered by members of minority faiths and nonbelievers in this country.”

“In one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world,” he said, “adherents to less popular faiths and nonbelievers … face religious coercion and overt religious employment discrimination.”

What the other witnesses “see as threats can easily be characterized as attempts to obtain sweeping exemptions that harm the rights of innocent third parties; attempts to seek privileges reserved for religious entities even though they are engaged in commerce, acting as a traditional business or serving as a government provider of services; and attempts to obtain religious exemptions even when such exemptions could deny others their fundamental rights, health or even life,” Rev. Lynn said.

The bill said he found it “troubling” when opposition to same-sex marriage “is portrayed as bigotry,” and when some try to draw a “parallel between racial discrimination and [opposition to] same-gender marriage.”

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Look beyond worries to the reality of God active in our midst

By Fr. Dale Launderville, O.S.B.

For the crowds that flocked to Jesus in Galilee and Judea, he spoke a message of hope and healed them of many infirmities. The core of his message was that the kingdom of God is near. By his own example and words, Jesus challenged his hearers to look beyond their own capacities and resources to the reality of God active in their midst. Jesus was like the prophets in Israel in the first millennium B.C., who had consistently countered the tendencies of the people to trust in the works of their own hands or alternatively to despair of God’s help in their time of need.

Like John the Baptist before him, Jesus emphasized the fact that God was about to intervene on behalf of his people. There was an urgency in his call to turn back to God, and not to trust in material things or in the authorities or wealthy people who had troops, money or knowledge at their disposal.

Jesus challenged his audience to focus first about accepting God’s love for them, and then all of their worries about important practical concerns such as food and clothing would be put into their proper perspective and not allowed to become all-consuming. Jesus gave an answer to the human tendency to worry about food and clothing with the absolute certainty, “Do not worry about your life and what you will eat, or about your body and what you will wear” (Lk 12:22).

Instead, he urges his disciples and the crowds to recognize the care that God offers them. “Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom” (Lk 12:32).

The people who followed Jesus were not only the poor, but also people with possessions. He exhorts them, “Sell your belongings and give alms” (Lk 12:33). Those who would be Jesus’ closest disciples gave up their former way of life to find their security and need for survival in the Jesus’ community of disciples.

But the large crowds that had families, property and jobs could not focus as readily upon God’s activity among them because of pressing practical concerns. They were very aware of their vulnerability.

In Galilee, the land was fertile. Agriculture was reliable. In Judea, the soil on the steep hillsides was thin, yet allowed vines and olive trees to flourish as well as the herding of sheep.

Those who worked the land and those who worked in crafts or in positions associated with the government or with the temple and synagogue needed the produce of the land in order to have enough to eat and trade for other goods both within and outside the country. In the midst of these exchanges of goods between laborers and managers and traders, imbalances of distribution typically arose. The prophets repeatedly condemned the gap between the rich and the poor.

When the people possessed valuable commodities, they could use these resources as a power to shape their worldview and influence others to pay attention to their power. But the Jewish people were taxed by the Romans, probably not any more than other peoples in the Roman Empire of the time, and were also expected to pay tithes to the temple establishment. Those who held property and those who collected taxes typically tried to maximize their profits.

In addition, following the dictates of the Torah not only required the people to give offerings to God via the priests and Levites, but also placed expectations upon families and clans to look out for one another, especially the widow, orphan and immigrant in their midst (Ex 22:20-23).

For those who suffered crop failures or illness, the family members and neighbors were obliged by divine law to reach out and assist them (Lv 25:35-37). Nevertheless, Jesus challenges them to shift their priorities to trust that God is caring for them, and so to have more time to be attentive to the ways that God is present to them.

Worrying about matters that need not be worried about is wasteful, Jesus emphasized,mortifying everyone to embrace the fact that their basic needs are already taken care of, and that things will work out if they trust in God. When Jesus preaches the nearness of God’s kingdom, he invites his audience to see themselves as members of God’s household and not simply as members of a particular family or clan.

The credibility of the disciples’ witness rises and falls, depending upon their level of trust in God. The challenge of turning away from relying on one’s own efforts and resources never goes away.

When a disciple gives up property and occupation, and follows Jesus as he moves from place to place, such a disciple imitates Jesus’ radical example of claiming that he is living in God’s household and under God’s protection.

The larger purpose of such an example is to proclaim to any who would turn to God that they, too, are invited into God’s household and under his care.

(Benedictine Father Dale Launderville is a Scripture scholar at St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minn.)

Seek the lasting treasure of loving God and your neighbor in your life of faith

By Fr. Lawrence E. Mick

We recently observed the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on New York’s World Trade Center, the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., and an attempted attack on the U.S. Capitol that ended in a field in Pennsylvania. More than one commentator noted that Americans said that their lives would never be the same after those tragic events.

Many people in the fall of 2001 also spoke about how the terrible events of Sept. 11 caused them to reevaluate their lives and their priorities. Many vowed to spend more time with their families, and insisted that they would no longer devote so much of their lives to chasing after wealth and possessions.

But, in fact, this renewed perspective on what’s really most important in life that emerged in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks is hardly in evidence today. We seem quickly to forget that what we own does not really bring us happiness or ensure our sense of security.

Jesus tried to teach us that fundamental truth more than once in his preaching. In Luke (Lk 12:16-21), he responds with a parable when asked to intervene in an inheritance dispute. He tells of a rich man who has such a great treasure that he ran out of space to store his grain.

The man tears down his barns and builds larger ones to store all his grain and oxen. “Feeling quite secure, he says that he can now eat, drink and be merry” (Lk 12:18). Feeling quite secure, he says that he can now eat, drink and be merry.

But God said to him, “You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you, and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?” (Lk 12:20)

Jesus concludes by noting that this is the way things are “for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God” (Lk 12:21).

This teaching could sound like a threat, but that does not seem to be Jesus’ aim. After this parable, he speaks about the birds of the air and the flowers of the field for which God provides, and Jesus encourages his hearers to trust in God, too.

He tells them not to worry or be afraid, but to seek the kingdom of God. He reminds them that “where your treasure is, there also will you heart be” (Lk 12:34).

Where our heart is does indeed determine how happy we are. If we set our hearts on accumulating possessions, we will find limited happiness, no matter how much we amass.

If we set our hearts on loving God and loving others, then our lives will be transformed and we will find a deep happiness in this life as well as eternal happiness after our deaths.

Isn’t it this what many people realized after 9/11—that happiness is a matter of relationships we nurture, not the things we own?

Family and friends make our lives rich, and focusing on those relationships is the key to true happiness.

(Father Lawrence E. Mick is a priest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, liturgist and freelance writer.)


Volunteers serve breakfast to the needy at a shelter in Mount Clemens, Mich. on Jan. 17. Loving God and our neighbor brings a lasting happiness.

A boy and girl kneel in prayer at a Catholic church in the Santo Suarez neighborhood of Havana. The message above them reads: “In silence, listen to God. Pray, converse, contemplate ... and go on to serve a brother.”
Biblical readings: The Book of Daniel

Excerpts from the first 12 chapters of the Book of Daniel are read in the Office of Readings next week, the 32nd Week of Ordinary Time. Chapters 13 and 14 were added to the Lectionary as optional texts. They have some nice stories about Daniel that you will enjoy.

If you read this column about the Maccabees last week, you’ll remember the situation of the Jews when the Book of Daniel was put together in 165 B.C. Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid king, had gained control of Jerusalem and was persecuting the Jews and outlawed their practice. That is what precipitated the armistice restored by Maccabees.

However, there was another group that advocated nonviolent resistance to their oppression. We know little about them, but they were the same people who put the book together after the desecration of the Temple, but before the death of Antiochus. Instead of writing about his present time, the scribe placed Daniel and his three associates in Babylon during the Exile (587–538 B.C.), where they served a succession of three kings in the Babylonian or Persian empires—Babbechnezar, Belshazzar, and Cyrus.

The first six chapters tell stories about Daniel the St. The second six chapters present Daniel’s visions. The stories might have originated during the Exile, but passed down through the centuries, while the visions were written by the unknown scribe who published the book. Daniel was wounded but lived. Daniel set himself up as a model for youth. The stories, about heroic young Jews who were willing to die for their faith, taught readers that God would protect them for the Jews the way to survive in a treacherous Gentile world—whether in sixth-century B.C. Babylon or second-century Jerusalem. In the stories, Daniel is able to interpret dreams for Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar and thus distinguish himself. We also have the stories of Daniel in the lions’ den, and his three associates in the fiery furnace.

The second half of the book is apocalyptic, a type of literature that enjoyed its greatest popularity from 200 B.C. to 100 A.D.

Recently, I attended a funeral, a 50th anniversary celebration, and a wedding within a three-and-a-half week time frame. My sister quipped, “That’s just part of life.”

Two of those gatherings were cheerful, and the other was marked with sadness. I don’t know what the sentiment of the occasion, the gathering always culminates in a meal. Whether we are celebrating or grieving, we will find that most of life’s important events involve a meal in some capacity. Money and fame are not exemptions from this ritual.

The idea of a meal is an integral part of our culture. As I mentioned before, because our bodies need to be nourished, but because uniting in spirit enriches our souls. We gather together with family members and friends to celebrate Thanksgiving and all the blessings for which we are grateful. But no family gathering is perfect.

Sometimes we drag our feet to the Thanksgiving table because we don’t want to hear about Uncle John’s newest Lamboybug or Cousin Jane’s latest Nobel Prize.

Money and fame are not exemptions from life’s struggles. Although we all claim their victories, there are plenty of defeats they simply don’t wish to disclose. The best things we can do is try to understand that.

I remember being my son’s age at Thanksgiving. At 7 my goal was to eat my turkey and vegetables so I could be dismissed and pour over toy advertisements spilling out of the thickest sections of the catalog.

As I become older, however, I linger at the table. I marvel at how my niece has grown since this time last year, and how much she is starting to resemble her mother in looks and mannerisms. I get to live vicariously through my young niece and her Old New York, and literally run with the bulls in Pamplona, Spain. What a blessing happens when friends and family unite and share a meal. The ordinary becomes sacred. We recognize that we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

The opportunity to gather around food presents itself a lot during the holidays. Thanksgiving is for nativity carols and New Year’s Eve soirees. Invitations trickle in throughout the weeks ahead.

But a priest recently reminded me in his homily that the most important invitation to any seasonal celebration we receive is a standing invitation from God himself. He invites us to come to the table.

We are all invited to his table, where we shake off our sins and receive his grace. Our souls are nourished, our spirits are renewed and we go back out into the world, knowing that we are loved. All we have to do is show up.

(Shirley Vogler Meister is a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, a regular columnist for The Criterion.)

Class reunions are memorable and blessed events

As many readers know, attending most reunions are wonderful, whether family, business, school or Church-related. I say “many” because I know of people who have regular problems skipped such events.

Recently, my brother, Paul, and I happily attended his 60th class reunion since he graduated from Cathedral High School in our hometown of Belleview, Ill.

The Class of 1951 began its celebration with a Friday night party. In high school, that was one was called The Dutch Girl, but is now known as Fischer’s in St. Belleville. Enjoying the late night party with Paul, his fellow graduates and their wives. The event began with a 4 p.m. Mass at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Belleville. The celebrant was Bishop Stanley Schlarmann, who enrolled at St. Henry’s Seminary after the Cathedral Grade School eighth-grade class graduation. Most male grade school graduates went on to Cathedral High School.

In 1951, there were 62 graduates. Twentynine of our classmates are now deceased. Only 19 of the men could attend the recent reunion, and most of them brought their spouses. Others were unable to attend for health reasons or, like a curmudgeon, just didn’t want to go to the party.

In some circumstances, there are even fellow students like one in Paul’s high school class who said, “I didn’t like anyone in school anyway.” Why would I go back?”

Most of us know that planning a school reunion is an easy task. Those who do that should be gratefully congratulated. My husband is a photographer, and began to photograph school reunions throughout the 1980’s and 1900’s in Indiana and nationwide.

Of course, he has special equipment that allowed him to get his formal classroom’s group picture. To be in the photo himself, he asks someone else to push the camera button at the appropriate time.

This photo was taken in an outdoor setting, and I was asked to be the button-pusher.

Afterward, Paul asked me to carry a tripod back into the dining room and I did.

One of the wives ran up to me and asked, “Why are you doing that? One of these strong men should be carrying that inside.”

I held that it wasn’t heavy and let her lift the tripod to see for herself, but that didn’t matter. She still scooted the most important thing was that the tripod is made of carbon fiber, which is very lightweight.

My hope in sharing this column with readers is that those who have not yet gone to a class reunion should accept the invitation the next time they get a chance.

Every reunion that Paul or I have attended, including my own Academy of Notre Dame reunion in 1983, are wonderful, memorable and blessed experiences.

I wish the same for you at this special time to catch up on news with old friends.

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

Providing pathways out of poverty

During November, Catholics in the archdiocese are given a wonderful opportunity to provide a few pennies out of their pockets to help the pathway out of poverty for many struggling Hoosiers.

Most of our parishes will take up a second collection for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) this month. I hope that you will be generous. Many suffering Hoosiers are counting on us.

CCHD is not the same as the name implies—a campaign to develop in people the capacity to move out of poverty.

As you can imagine, the pathways out of poverty are many and varied. Therefore, the programs that are funded by the campaign are as well and vary with the goal of the poor helping themselves out of poverty by breaking down some of the barriers that keep them from success.

CCHD is the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ official anti-poverty campaign. The archdiocese participates through our parish’s second collection in November, of which 50 percent is kept locally, and 50 percent is sent to the national office and distributed as national grants.

Last year, we had more money come back to our archdiocese in the form of national grants than we sent to the national office, meaning that in total, more than 50 percent of our diocesan collection went toward anti-poverty programs in our own diocese.

CCHD funding is rarely just one of the many funding streams given to organizations that seek to empower the poor. CCHD funds 200 local Catholic Charities’ programs that are owned and operated by our archdiocese, and that are directed by lay leaders, whereas CCHD-funded programs are typically focused on leadership development, empowerment and advocacy.

Although not all programs funded by CCHD are Catholic, they are required to open their doors to the values of the Catholic Church. And we don’t fund programs “because they” are Catholic. We fund them “because they work.”

CCHD has taken some criticism for funding non-Catholic agencies over the years. In fact, of course, carries with it some risk.

I can assure you that in the archdiocese we work diligently ensure that grants are used for their intended purpose, and that our Catholic values and principles are held to the highest standards. At the same time, it is an honor for us as Catholics to partner in this way with other organizations with a like-minded mission. This is one very real way that we get to develop unity in the body of Christ.

One newly funded group in Indianapolis is called IndyCAN, whose mission is to bring together churches of various faith traditions to demonstrate to the most vulnerable of people the impact of systemic inequality, and to improve conditions for the most vulnerable in our society.

Father Todd Goodson, pastor of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and an IndyCAN member, explained how IndyCAN is doing a great job for Marion County. They are bringing churches together in a common mission—to reduce cultural poverty—which is about bringing to about a more profound respect for the dignity of all people.

On IndyCAN’s behalf, I do think both locally and nationally, log on to www.archindy.org/cchd.

(David Siler is executive director of the Archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities and Family Ministries. He can be reached at dsiler@archindy.org.)
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Nov. 6, 2011

• Matthew 25:1-13
• 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
• Wisdom 6:12-16

The Sunday Readings

The Book of Wisdom supplies the first reading for this weekend. The title of the book teaches a lesson. As centuries passed, foreign influences virtually overwhelmed the Holy Land and times were perilously hard. Understandably, many Jews left their ancestral homeland in search of better lives with their families. They emigrated, but went to places where paganism prevailed in the culture.

In these new places, devoted Jews found themselves required to explain and defend their ancient belief in the One God of Israel. This book, among others, arose from this need. The title simply makes the point that acceptance of the God of Israel is the wise choice, the logical choice, not a leap into fantasy. An interesting literary technique in this book is that wisdom is personified.

Wisdom is described as if this human attribute were a person, moving through the world and being available to humans. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians provides the second reading. The fact that this epistle was sent so long ago in itself testifies to the presence of a Christian community in Thessalonica, now the city of Saloniki in modern Greece. Already, the Church had moved beyond its geographic origins and was becoming present in Europe, not only in Asia.

Paul makes several important theological points in this reading. The first point is to express the Christian thought that life endures after earthly death. Such a concept was not Hebrew in origin, at least not in its purest forms. It was an idea in Greek philosophy, but the Christian contribution to this idea was that eternal life was intimately connected with the reality of an individual person’s acceptance of, or rejection of, God in a person’s earthly existence.

Sacred Scripture stresses the divide between Christ and each Christian. No theme is more favored by Paul. It is fundamental. Christians lives forever. He overcame death. He rose. Christians who earnestly and truly accept the Lord live in this victory over death. They, too, are destined to live forever. So Matthew’s Gospel is the source of the third reading. It is the familiar parable of the bridegroom, and the foolish and wise virgins. Some Scripture commentators raise an interesting suggestion that maybe the virgins—wise or otherwise—actually are symbols of disciples. While not Apostles, women were among the Lord’s disciples. Jesus, of course, extolled virginity among his followers.

An overriding concern for early Christians was the second coming of Jesus. Would the Savior come again to Earth and vindicate the persecuted Christians? Would the Savior ever come? The parable teaches that indeed Christ will come again. He will reign. Present times are passing. The end of all things and all time will be characterized by the total triumph of the Risen Lord.

Reflection

Millions of people have turned from sin to virtue in the last moments of their earthly life. For this reason, the Church lavishly allows a priest to absolve a person from almost anything at the hour of his or her death. It is never too late to repent, nor is it ever too late for the Church, in God’s name, to extend mercy. Still, living in disobedience to God, waiting for some wonderful last-minute conversion, is not the way to prepare for death. It bespeaks anything but commitment in faith and love. So the Church, through Matthew, tells us this weekend to be prepared by living each day as a disciple.

Life for us can be daunting. Will hardships, disappointments, hurts and limitations never cease? Yes, they will end. Paul is clear about this fact. If we are faithful to Jesus, the weary toils and pains of earthly life will be overwhelmingly overshadowed by the glory of heaven. Being with God is the only thing worthwhile. It alone makes life worth living. It makes death not a terror, but an entrance into eternal glory.

A second point is the link between Christ and each Christian. The church is described as if it were the Bride of Christ; each Christian is described as if he or she were a member of her bridal party. We have been called to be a community of God’s bride. The life of the Church is the life of each Christian. Alternative translations are given. There is a great temptation to select the word that we like. Most translations have a phrase that mentions “the Church.” It is a good idea to read a number of translations to see what is most appropriate to several circumstances.

Go Ask Your Father

Fr. Francis Hoffman

Religious art in churches should include images of Jesus, Mary and saints

Q

It is acceptable for a large, framed picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe to be on display at the left side of the altar, a statue of St. Patrick on the right side of the altar and a statue of the Blessed Mother in a corner of the vestibule?

The statue of the Holy Family is not present inside the church. Our church has a large attendance of Hispanic members.

A

I have asked our priest, liturgy council and parish council about trying to change the location of the statues, but to no avail.

The feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Hispanic parishioners adored the whole corner of the church with the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe with many flowers. We suggested later that the church is not to have flowers for decorations, only the Advent wreath.

The church plans to decorate the altar for the Our Lady of Guadalupe. As was noted, the Hispanic parishioners adored the whole corner of the church with the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe with many flowers.

A

As for flowers during Advent, the GIRM explains that, “Moderation should be observed in the decoration of the altar. During Advent, the floral decoration of the altar should be marked by a moderation suited to the character of this season without expressing prematurely the full joy of the Nativity of the Lord.”

“During Lent, it is forbidden for the altar to be decorated with flowers. Lector Sunday [the Fourth Sunday of Lent], solemnities and feasts are exceptions. Floral arrangements should always be done with moderation and placed around the altar rather than on its mensa (#305).

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There should usually be only one image of any given Saint. Generally speaking, in the church, pictures of saints in the church:

- Should be displayed for veneration by the faithful in sacred places.
- Should be present in the church.
- Should be placed as symbols of the dignity of the images” (#318).

My Journey to God

Twelve Seed Packs

At the age of twenty
a man buys a dozen seed packages.
I'll plant, he thinks,
when there's time to do the work.

He binds them with string
and shelves them in his garage
beside the sprayer he used only once.
Fifty years pass.

The papers fade into yellows
the shoptight colors slow colors
down and the corners are darkened by dust.
Periods of moisture and dryness

extreme lows and record highs
combine to steal from the contents
a percentage of germination
until one or two maybe three dormant seeds

(Joseph Foster is a member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis.)

Daily Readings

Monday, Nov. 7
Psalm 1:1-7
Psalms 139:1-10
Lk 17:1-6

Tuesday, Nov. 8
Wisdom 2:23-3:9
Psalms 34:2-3, 16-19
Lk 17:7-10

Wednesday, Nov. 9
The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome
Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12
Psalms 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9
1 Corinthians 3:9-11, 16-17
John 2:13-22

Thursday, Nov. 10
Leo the Great, pope and doctor of the Church
Wisdom 7:22b-8:1
Psalms 119:80-81, 130, 135, 175
Lk 17:20-25

Friday, Nov. 11
Martin of Tours, bishop
Wisdom 1:1-9
Psalms 19:2-3
Lk 17:26-37

Saturday, Nov. 12
Josaphat, bishop and martyr
Wisdom 4:16-17, 19-20
Psalms 105:2-3, 36-37, 42-43
Lk 18:1-8

Sunday, Nov. 13
The third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31
Psalms 128:1-5
Matthew 25:1-10 or 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6
Matthew 25:14-15, 19-21
**The ‘FBI’: Fatima/Benedict Inn**

**Lessons from Carols**

A Special Advent Evening of Reflection

with

Fr. Peter Marshall

November 29, 2011

Join us at the Benedict Inn for this special annual event, part of our ‘FBI’ Series in conjunction with the Benedict Inn. Fr. Peter Marshall, associate pastor of St. Pius X Parish, will lead us in reflecting on carols and how we can uncover the deeper meaning of word and song.

5:15 pm Evening with the Sisters of Our Lady of Grace 6:00 pm Dinner followed by the program 

To register, call the Benedict Inn at (317) 788-7581.

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**Vatican skyline**

Clouds tinged with orange and red hues float above St. Peter’s Basilica during sunset in Rome on Oct. 20.
Father Gerald Burkert celebrates 50 years of priestly ministry

(Editor’s note: Three archdiocesan priests celebrated their 50-year jubilees in 2011. This week, we feature Father Gerald Burkert.)

By Sean Gallagher

BEECH GROVE—When considering how the ends of his vocation to the priesthood may have been planted, retired Father Gerald Burkert recalled an incident in the first grade at the Good Shepherd School in Indianapolis.

“My first-grade [teacher], Sister Mary Bode, said what we called a straw Mass,” said Father Burkert. “She [even] had priestly vestments. I guess I was the tallest one in the class, and they let me sit in front. So I ended up being the celebrant. I guess that got me thinking about it.”

After finishing the eighth grade at Sacred Heart, Father Burkert became an archdiocesan seminarian in 1949 and began his formation as a high school freshman at St. Meinrad Seminary in St. Meinrad.

He was ordained 50 years ago, and celebrated his golden jubilee with gatherings of family members, friends and former parishioners at St. Paul Hermitage in Beech Grove, where he currently resides and serves as chaplain, and at Holy Family Parish in New Albany, where he ministered as pastor from 1998-1996.

“I never thought that I’d live that long,” said Father Burkert regarding the golden anniversaries of his ordination and jubilee. “It was kind of a surprise, rather quickly, though. You’re celebrating people’s 50th wedding anniversaries. I never thought about my own. And, all of a sudden, it’s there.”

Father Burkert was ordained a year before the establishment of the Second Vatican Council. So the early years of his life and ministry as a priest were marked by adjusting to the reforms that happened during and after the council.

During much of that time, Father Burkert served as assistant pastor of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis, ministering with the pastor at the time, Father William Morley.

“When the changes came about [after the Second Vatican Council], we spent time preparing the people,” Father Burkert said. “He gave me a lot of understanding of how to handle a parish.”

After spending two years as assistant pastor of St. Mary Parish in New Albany, Father Burkert returned to St. Jude Parish and served as co-pastor with Father Morley from 1971-83.

In all, he ministered alongside Father Morley, who died in 1985, for 19 years.

“I liked Father Morley,” Father Burkert said. “We got along well together. We had stereo sermons. He’d be at one podium and I’d be at the other, and we’d go back and forth.”

After serving as co-pastor of St. Jude Parish, Father Burkert returned to New Albany as pastor of Holy Family Parish. His last assignment before he retired in 2007 was as pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove.

In all of these parishes, he helped lead the parishioners in making physical improvements to their facilities.

“It made you feel humble because people were doing it,” Father Burkert said. “They didn’t have to, but they were doing it for the parish, not for us [priests]. In every parish I’ve been at, the people have been very kind and generous with their time and their talent!”

While leading parishioners in projects like adding on to the rectory was important, Father Burkert, celebrating the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and reconciliation, was “essential to him in his parish ministry.”

“The sacrament of reconciliation is very rewarding,” he said. “It’s very humbling. The people know who you are. You know who they are. And they still go to confession. It shows the strong faith that they have in the priesthood and in Christ.”

When taking a break from parish ministry, Father Burkert loved to travel. He often vacationed with a priest friend, the late Father Patrick Commons. One of his favorite destinations, with its beautiful mountain views, was Glacier National Park in Montana.

“Sitting up there on the mountain and looking down, I’d think, ‘Man, this must be God looking down on his creation down below,’” Father Burkert said. “It’s a beautiful park. I’ve been there several times.

After retiring in 2007, he hoped to do more traveling. But just months after stepping down as Holy Name’s pastor, Father Burkert suffered a stroke while alone at his apartment in Indianapolis.

“I must have been laying on the floor for three or four days before they found me,” he said. “I’m as fortunate as can be.”

Father Burkert recovered from the stroke, but soon moved to St. Paul Hermitage retirement and nursing home. As its chaplain, he regularly celebrates Mass at its chapel and ministers to fellow residents.

Because of the ongoing effects of the stroke, Father Burkert isn’t able to drive to parishes on weekends to provide sacramental assistance.

“My main regret is that I can’t go out and help [priests],” he said. “The guys are having a really tough time.”

After living and ministering as a priest for 50 years, Father Burkert’s advice to men considering a possible priestly vocation is clear and to the point.

“Keep praying,” he said. “That’s the main thing—pray. And if you’re still thinking about it, try [being a seminarian]. You won’t know unless you try it.”

Fr. Gerald Burkert
Age: 76
Parents: John and Ruth (Kuchler) Burkert
Home parish: Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Indianapolis
Seminary: Saint Meinrad Seminary in St. Meinrad
Ordained: May 7, 1961
Favorite Bible passage: Parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32)
Favorite prayer or devotion: Rosary
Favorite saint: St. Paul (“With everything that he had to go through, it was a tough life. And with all that he did against the church at the beginning, yet the mercy of God was there.”)
Favorite author: Tom Clancy
Favorite pastime: Traveling
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