By Mary Ann Garber

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Catholic gathering. I want you to type in ‘Called to Glory.’

After he announced the ‘holiest shot,’ the teenagers, colleagues and others in attendance quickly typed in the words then awaited his cue to press the ‘send button on their cell phones.’

‘When I say, ‘We are …’ Bishop Coyne told them, ‘we are going to shout out ‘Called to Glory,’ and you’re going to send it out to all those people out there on the Internet that are watching us, and all the people we love. We are going to spread that greatness to the call to glory. Are you ready? We are … called to glory!’

Sacred Heart parishioner Lydia Stattery of Spencer, Iowa, in the Diocese of Sioux City, receives the Eucharist during the National Catholic Youth Conference closing liturgy on Nov. 19 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

‘It’s just wonderful to be gathered here tonight with all 23,000 of you,’ Bishop Coyne told the gathering at the start of the liturgy, ‘and welcome you on behalf of the entire Catholic community here in St. Charles Borromeo Parish in the Archdiocese of Detroit. She also recalled the opening and closing Masses of the conference participant prays during the closing Mass on Nov. 19 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Thirty deacons and 175 seminarians from many dioceses also participated in the Mass with talented teenage lectors and transitional deacon Jerry Byrd, a member of St. Louis Parish in Batesville who will be ordained on June 2, assisted Bishop Coyne with the Mass and proclaimed the Gospel reading.

African drum beat to call people to prayer with help from Indianapolis. Then he became serious and said, instead of acting on our own self-serving needs and desires in daily life situations.

Our Christian Catholic faith tells us that we need to be gathered at the bottom of the hill looking up to the King of the Hill. Christ the King on the Cross. Bishop Coyne said, ‘He is the King of the Hill, and when we follow that [path] we are placing ourselves in righteousness before God. We are placing ourselves in the call to glory, and we’re working toward salvation. Bishop Coyne said, “It’s about salvation. It’s about living our life with faith so that we are found worthy in the judgment that we just heard from St. Matthew’s Gospel.”

Christians are called to lives of loving service and charitable sacrifice for God, Bishop Coyne said. ‘All those sacrifices that we make, all those gifts that we give, all those things we do out of love for God and neighbor, we bring them to the altar … and we join them to Christ’s sacrifice—Christ, the King of the Hill, on the Cross.’

Ten teenagers from across the country poured into Lucas Oil Stadium. “It was the first time they were all together,” said Scoville, of the archdiocese’s director of youth ministry. “Seeing them in all their colorful hats and shirts, it was just beautiful.”

She also recalled the opening and closing Masses of the conference. And she says she will be forever grateful to the 600 volunteers who often worked extra shifts to make the conference run smoothly—a group that included the seminarians of the archdiocese.

Most of her memories focus on the teenagers who attended the conference. “The youths themselves kept amazing me,” Scoville said. “Their reverence, and the way they were so respectful, patient and joyful. There was one time when the lines for reconciliation were so long—and 20 to 30 people deep. I tried to open another room for reconciliation, but they said they were fine, that they didn’t mind waiting. They even gave some of the volunteers high-fives for helping them.”

Such moments made all the hard work and all the long meetings of the past two years worthwhile.

“Start the at, you don’t think it’s ever going to come together,” she said. “But when you start seeing things falling into place, you know it’s the grace of God that brings it together.”

“The conference truly brought glory to God, and that was the focus. Everyone was connected. It was the Catholic Church at its best.”

For two years, Kay Scoville led the archdiocese’s effort to make the National Catholic Youth Conference a success in Indianapolis a memorable event that would touch the lives and shape the faith of the 23,000 people in attendance.

When the three-day conference ended on Nov. 19, Scoville was among the people who had their own set of special memories.

One of her best memories was the opening session of the conference on Nov. 17 when the youth group from across the country poured into Lucas Oil Stadium.

“It was the first time they were all together,” said Scoville, of the archdiocese’s director of youth ministry. “Seeing them in all their colorful hats and shirts, it was just beautiful.”

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As new Mass translation begins, priest reflects on its preparation

By Sean Gallagher

For two years, Father Patrick Beidelman has called the weekend of June 29-30, 2007, a “new moment” in the life of the Church in central and southern Indiana. It was the weekend on which the first new translation of the Mass in a generation will begin to be used in churches across the archdiocese.

As archdiocesan director of liturgy and Fanum, Father Beidelman has been hard at work preparing Catholics across the archdiocese and beyond to welcome the new words of the Mass.

In dozens of presentations and workshops held throughout the archdiocese, Father Beidelman has spoken about the new Mass translation. In speeches, talks, workshops, and personal group interactions, Father Beidelman has helped prepare our local Church for the reception of the new translation of the new edition of the Roman Missal.

Father Beidelman has come to think that it would be easy to underestimate the impact of the new translation. He says, “It’s at the very heart of our faith and its history as well as in its present theological studies is that I’ve grown in my understanding of the Church. It’s at the very heart of our faith and its history as well as in its present theological studies is that I’ve grown in my understanding of the Church. It’s a time of great enthusiasm, a time of new work.”

The following is an edited version of the interview.

Q. Has leading the archdiocesan preparations for the implementation of the third edition of the Roman Missal helped you grow in your own understanding of the liturgy and of the Mass in particular?

A. “This process has helped me grow in my understanding of the Mass and in the way people experience it. For me, this experience of this ‘new moment’ in the life of the Church, in the life of our community, in the lives of our students with whom I work in formation, from seven to 14. It’s the happy problem of God’s good work being accomplished in the Church. So my time is divided. But it is all connected to good work. And you just put one foot in front of the other and rely on lots of good people around you.”

Q. Will you be glad when the new Mass translation has arrived and, in a sense, what would it be like for the Church to use the new words of the Mass as we’ve been called away to was the University of the Holy Cross in Rome to study liturgy at the graduate level. People might think that such studies are abstract. Did your studies there and the conversations that you had with your professors and fellow students have a discernible effect upon what you’ve been doing in the past year during all of the presentations you’ve been making about the new Mass translation?

A. “Where I rely on my formal theological studies is that I’ve been exposed to a broader range of the Church’s thought, both from its history as well as in its present articulation, of how we pray and worship, and particularly in some of the finer points of what the Church calls us to and why.”

Q. What I’ve tried to do is translate that into the way people speak and think in their everyday lives. It may not be in higher abstractions, theological expression, but rather in what that would look like at a parish in rural Indiana or in the center city of Indianapolis or in a high school Mass.

“You’ve been able to accomplish that, that’s when I’ve been effective in asylum people to prepare to receive the new translation of the Mass. I hope that that’s happened more often than not.

Q. What you’ve been doing over the past two years to help the Church in central and southern Indiana prepare for the implementation of the new translation of the Mass isn’t a typical ministry of a parish priest. But how has this been an important part of the work you’ve been doing, as pastor of the local Church?”

A. “I have had the opportunity to witness people’s great hunger for understanding their faith. And I’ve had the opportunity to witness people’s love for their faith in a variety of settings throughout the archdiocese that have encouraged me and inspired me and given me hope that the Church is alive.”

Q. Do you have any particular hopes for what this significant translation of the third edition of the Roman Missal will do for individual Catholics and parish communities in central and southern Indiana?

A. “We get to pray those new words of the Mass in a generation will begin to be used in churches across the archdiocese. By Sean Gallagher

As archdiocesan director of liturgy and Fanum, Father Beidelman has been busy for two years helping to prepare Catholics across central and southern Indiana for the implementation of the new translation of the Mass that takes place on Nov. 26-27.

Father Patrick Beidelman processes with a Book of the Gospels during a June 29, 2007, Mass at St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis that celebrated the centennial of the dedication of the cathedral. As archdiocesan director of liturgy, Father Beidelman has been busy for two years helping to prepare Catholics across central and southern Indiana for the implementation of the new translation of the Mass that takes place on Nov. 26-27.

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The gift of the Mass

The changes in words we pray at the Mass will begin this weekend. We will start praying an English translation that is more accurate to that of the original Latin version of the Roman Missal. We have already published a considerable amount of material in these changes. This editorial, though, will not be specifically about the changes. Rather, it is an encouragement for you to use the opportunity of the changes to think more deeply about the wonderful gift of the Mass.

When ever one does something frequently, it is easy—perhaps unavoidable—that he or she will fall into a routine. Is it humanly possible to think more deeply about the Mass every time we attend? The Mass every time we attend? As we start praying the new translation, we will have to concentrate on the words and actions of the Mass every time we attend.

As we start praying the new translation, we will have to concentrate on the words and actions of the Mass every time we attend. This means that we must examine our consciences before receiving Communion—the expurgations, mistranslations and rubrics. The Novus Ordo has four Eucharistic Prayers, but only one is used—Eucharistic Prayer No. 1 is primary and the least offensive, but still has some mistranslations of the Mass. Those mistranslations are no accident. Considering the many aberrations of the Mass, the mystery, the Tradition (Doukhobay, 39), co-authored by Mike Aquilina. Catholics of all stripes—Latin Rite, Eastern Rites, traditional, progressive, liberal, conservative—meet Christ at Mass. So do the members of Orthodox Churches. Of course, we also have bread as the Protestant communities do. The Introductory Ritores and the Liturgy of the Word, which Protestant communities have, are important parts of the Mass, and Christ is truly present during these parts of the Mass. But the central act of the Mass occurs when bread and wine are turned into the true body and blood of Christ, which we receive into our bodies at Communion.

These elements retain the appearance of unleavened bread and wine, but their substance is changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. Thus, we believe that Christ is substantially present.

We believe that Christ is fully present under the form of both, and either, the consecrated bread and the consecrated wine. However, the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that the "sign of communion is more complete when given under both kinds, since in that form the sign of the Eucharistic meal appears more clearly" (#1390).

Thus, the Mass, besides being a sacrifice, is also a holy meal. Christ becomes part of our human bodies, just as we hope some day to become part of his divine body throughout eternity in heaven. Therefore, we must receive the Eucharist worthily.

St. Paul warned, "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup" (1 Cor 11:27-29).

This means that we must examine our consciences before receiving Communion to determine our worthiness to receive Christ's body and blood, including our fidelity to the moral teachings of the Church.

As we begin to pray the new translation of the Mass prayers, let us make a resolution to come to Mass prepared to participate more fully in Christ's sacrifice and his holy meal.

--John F. Fish

Letter to the Editor

New Mass translation is long overdue, reader says

A letter in the Nov. 11 issue of The Criterion requires a response. Most Catholics are unaware of the major dissimilarity between the traditional Latin Mass and the Novus Ordo—the expurgations, mistranslations and rubrics. The Novus Ordo has four Eucharistic Prayers, but only one is used—Eucharistic Prayer No. 1 is primary and the least offensive, but still has some mistranslations of the Mass. Those mistranslations are no accident. Considering the many aberrations of the Mass, the explanation should be to give people the correct translation of the official Latin Missal. It is long overdue.

The mission to do so is to have the Mass conform to the official Latin Missal. Some of our reformers do and the Novus Ordo, the very least we should expect is a correct translation of the official Latin Missal. It is long overdue.

The mission to do so is to have the Mass conform to the official Latin Missal. However, the Roman Missal is not any non-English translation—be it German, French, Italian or Spanish. The idea is that, in a modern society, Muslims equally with Catholics by withdrawing support from both. The law professor who filed the proceeding against us had to confess that he is trying to protect the constitution. He focuses much on its attention to the right to equality and the evil of discrimination. Those are very important concerns. But we could treat Muslims equally with Catholics by withdrawing support from both.

The law professor who filed the proceeding against us had to confess that he is trying to protect his place in the law school. He is an example of all of our priests who work diligently, frequently in many different jobs, and who serve the people of God in many unsung ways every day.

Father Beidelman held the attention of 1,400 of us for the 45-minute presentation. He is extremely knowledgeable with his speaking, spoke without notes, and cleared up many other misconceptions that many of us had regarding these changes and the reasons for them.

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David L. Worland
Cathedral High School
Indianapolis

Novus Ordo, the very least we should expect is a correct translation of the official Latin Missal. It is long overdue. The mission to do so is to have the Mass conform to the official Latin Missal. Some of our reformers do—hire chaplains to provide worship space for other faiths. We do not—as Catholic University had grown from 41 to 91 students in 1994. It is hardly a place where [Muslim] students …

Our single-sex residence halls are appealing to me. We do not—as few Catholic universities do—hire chaplains to provide worship space for other faiths. We do not—St. Paul told us we must be "one in the Lord."—mo- ther and son—must do their meditation in Spanish.

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Events Calendar

November 29
Marian University, Ruth Lilly Student Center, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Marian’s Adult Programs (MAP) information meeting. 6 p.m. Information: 317-955-6271 or kwebb@marian.edu

December 2
Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, chapel, 1550 Union St., Indianapolis. Lumen Dei, Mass, 6:30 a.m. breakfast following Mass at Pure Eaternity. Information: thompson99@yahoo.com

December 7
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5535 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Faith of Friends of Fatima Monthly Mass and Social,” 9 a.m. breakfast following Mass. Information: 317-545-7681 or marcia.johnson@archindy.org

December 9-11

December 9
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. “How to Start a Silent Night Traditions Christmas Shopportunity.” Photos with Santa, pick-up for pre-ordered Sprintline cookies, handmade items, Nativity sets, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 317-788-7581 or www.benedictinn.org

December 10
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Finding the Light and Word Within.” Advent retreat, Franciscan Sister Olga Wittkinder, presenter. 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., $45 per person includes continental breakfast and lunch. Information: 812-933-6417 or center@oldenburgscf.com

December 11
Mount St. Francis Retreat Center, Oldenburg. “Faith Remics Retreat.” Registration deadline Nov. 28. Information: 812-945-2000 or bs@archindy.org

December 12
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. “Coffee Talk—Advent: A Walk with Mary and Joseph.” Franciscan Sister Patty Campbell, presenter, 9:30 a.m. liturgy, free-will offering. Information: 812-933-6417 or center@oldenburgscf.com

December 17
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5535 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “A Morning for Moms Day of Reflection—Remember What’s Important.” Rick Wagner, presenter, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., $31 per person, child care available. Information: 317-426-7681, ext. 15 or rwcovyve@archindy.org

VIPS

William and Alene (Kasehcht) Schuman, members of St. Peter Parish in Franklin County, celebrated their 60th anniversary on Oct. 22.

The couple was married on Oct. 20, 1951, at St. Peter Church in Franklin County.

They are the parents of eight children: Dolores Alexander, Wilma Brannan, Lisa Longshore, Michele Shumate, Loretta Bean, Arlene Besseyfield, Diane Yoe and Dan Schuman. They also have 19 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

African Mass to be celebrated on Dec. 4 at St. Rita Church

The archdiocesan African Catholic Ministry will celebrate an African Mass at 3 p.m. on Dec. 4 at St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., in Indianapolis.

Bishop Christopher P. Coyne, apostolic administrator, is scheduled to be the principal celebrant of the Mass. It will feature prayers and readings proclaimed in several African languages and African liturgical music. Those who attend the Mass are encouraged to wear African attire.

A reception in the Father Bernard Sartain Family Center will follow the Mass.

For more information, call Sally Stuval at 317-269-1276. Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa Sister Demetria Smith at 317-545-6375 or send an e-mail to Africancatholic-ministry@yahoo.com.

‘Advent Lessons and Carols’ service is Dec. 2 at cathedral

The archdiocesan Office of Young Adult and College Campus Ministry is sponsoring an “Advent Lessons and Carols” service at 7 p.m. on Dec. 2 at St. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis.

The service will include exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the reading of Scripture passages related to the birth of Christ, and the singing of carols. Catholics of all ages are invited to attend the service then young adult Catholics will go caroling throughout downtown Indianapolis.

For more information on the service, contact Megan Fish at mfish@archindy.org.

For more information about caroling in downtown Indianapolis, contact Matt Foley at m Foley@archindy.org.

For more information aboutwheelchair bowling Call, contact the Northwest Indiana Ability Foundation at 317-944-0417.
Amazing “Before & After” Photo Illustrates Impact of Catholic Outreaches Serving The Poor Overseas

Jim Cavnar looked at the two photographs on this desk and found it hard to believe they were taken of the same boy. One child is gaunt, glassy-eyed and limps in the arms of a caretaker. The other boy is healthy, alert and focused on play.

“...doctors didn’t think he would survive through the week.”

James Cavnar, President of Cross

How could this possibly be the same child — Javier from Honduras? “We see before and after photos like this often, but I never cease to be amazed by them. It makes you marvel at the human body’s ability to rebound from trauma. It makes you realize that even someone who appears to be at death’s door can be rescued and revitalized,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross International Catholic Outreach. “When Javier was brought in to the Prince of Peace Nutrition Center that Cross supports, he was 10 months old and weighed less than 9 pounds. The doctors didn’t think he would survive through the week, but the staff at the center and peace did a marvelous job in nursing him back to health. The before and after pictures were taken only four months apart — you can see the profound difference their care made for yourself.”

As one of America’s leading Catholic relief agencies, Cross International Catholic Outreach is often in the business of creating success stories like this one in developing countries around the globe. Cross achieves this goal by enlisting support from U.S. Catholics who share Cavnar’s concern for the poor and his passion for rescuing children from needless suffering and death. It channels its support through Catholic partners already in place overseas — outreaches like the Prince of Peace Nutrition Center that cared for Javier.

“Prince of Peace is a wonderful organization with a committed staff, but their programs would be paralyzed without a regular stock of food, medicines and other supplies. They couldn’t properly feed or care for the children,” Cavnar explained. “Providing those resources in Cross International Catholic Outreach’s role. Our support helps them obtain the food and other supplies they need to treat children like Javier. It’s all about teamwork. The churches overseas provides the daily services, and Cross and its donors help provide the material resources needed for their outreaches.”

Cavnar is clearly grateful to the American Catholics who have chosen to support the Cross International Catholic Outreach’s work. He emphasizes them often, pointing out that they are the real key to every success story.

“Dramatic turn-arounds like Javier’s are only possible because people step forward and offer a helping hand. The donor is the catalyst or trigger. Their financial support is critical in turning a tragic ‘before’ into a triumphant ‘after’ for a child like Javier. So I don’t take their role lightly. I give the credit where the credit is due — to those who contribute to make success stories like Javier’s possible,” Cavnar said. “In the simplest terms, without the donor there wouldn’t be a ‘before and after’ story at all. Javier wouldn’t have recovered. He wouldn’t have survived.”

According to Cavnar, the scope of work being funded by American Catholics has been growing in recent years. As more and more people learn about Cross International Catholic Outreach in their local parish or through stories in Catholic newspapers, they add their support, allowing Cross to further expand its outreach into new countries, touching more lives.

“With more support from American Catholics, we can take this outreach to whole new levels,” Cavnar said. “When a parish wants to launch a new feeding center, we can partner with them and supply the food. When a poor rural village is facing problems with an unsafe water source, we can dig the well or tap the spring to bring relief. Whether the need is for a clinic to treat the poor or for a school to serve an impoverished community, we can be there to help. Whatever their need, Cross has the potential to turn a tragic situation into something wonderful,” he added. “We offer American Catholics the same opportunity. It’s a chance to do something meaningful and profound in God’s name and for His glory.”

Cross Recognized, Endorsed by Nearly 50 U.S. Catholic Bishops

As Cross International Catholic Outreach (CICO) continues its range of relief work to help the poor overseas, its efforts are being recognized by a growing number of Catholic leaders in the U.S.

“We received a sizeable number of endorsements and letters of support from American Bishops and Archbishops — nearly 50 Catholic leaders at last count,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross International Catholic Outreach. “They’re impressed by the fact that we’ve done outreaches in more than 40 countries and that we undertake a variety of projects; everything from feeding the hungry and housing the homeless to supplying safe water and supporting educational opportunities for the poorest of the poor.”

Archbishop Robert Carlson of St. Louis sent one of the more recent letters of encouragement, writing: “It is my hope that this ministry will continue to flourish and reach as many people as possible. I will inform the priests of the Archdiocese of St. Louis of the important work that Cross International Catholic Outreach does and elicit their prayerful and financial support for the service you provide to the less fortunate around the world.”

Bishop Kevin Vann of Fort Worth was just as enthusiastic about Cross Catholic Outreach and its mission. “I also know that many of the Bishops in Texas think very highly and endorse the work and mission of Cross International Catholic Outreach — as well as do other Bishops whom I know from my days of graduate studies in Rome. Please know of my prayers and support for this vital work...”

In Archbishop Gregory Aymond’s case, the endorsement came with a personal note of thanks for the role Cross Catholic played in helping families hit hard by Hurricane Katrina.

“I’m happy to acknowledge that Cross International Catholic Outreach was of tremendous help to the Archdiocese of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina,” he said.

Bishop Thomas Rodi of Biloxi had similar praise.

“Your quick response to the needs of the people in south Mississippi in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina will always be remembered and greatly appreciated,” he said. “Thank you for all the good you do, and may God bless you and your ministry...”

In addition to praising the work CICO accomplishes, many of the Bishops and Archbishops are also impressed by the unique collaborative relationship Cross has with the Pontifical Council Cor Unum in Rome. This allows the charity to participate in the mercy ministries of the Holy Father himself. In his praise of CICO, Archbishop Dennis Schnurr of Cincinnati underscored this unique connection.

“Cross International Catholic Outreach’s close collaboration with the Pontifical Council Cor Unum is a source of encouragement,” the Archbishop said. “The Holy See has unique knowledge of local situations throughout the world through its papal representatives in nearly two hundred countries and through its communications with Bishops and others who care for the poor and needy in every corner of the world.”

Readers interested in supporting Cross International Catholic Outreach, can use the brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to: Cross International Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC00814, PO Box 63, Akron, OH 44309-0063.

Our collaboration with Cor Unum allows us to fund outreaches in virtually any area of the world, and we have used that method in special cases — to help the victims of natural disasters, for example,” he said. “It only represents a small part of our overall ministry, but it can be a very important benefit in those special cases.”
U.S. Catholics “Spark A Miracle” — Ultimately Blessing Families On Other Side Of The Globe

In the stifling heat of a Mozambique summer dawn, the shrill cry of a hungry baby startles the young man from his dreamless sleep. It is still dark outside the flimsy hut, and his body screams for more sleep. But there are hungry children who will soon awaken, and he needs to prepare what little food is available. Suppressing the momentary temptation to escape from the overwhelming responsibility of this new day, he takes the baby a rusty cup half-filled with the last of the milk.

He still grieves the loss of the baby’s mother, and wishes she were here to help him. It isn’t a selfish wish. At age 14, Camal Tila only wants what any young teenager in Mozambique would crave—a less overwhelming responsibility. As the sun rises and the villagers stir, he takes the baby a bowlful of稀饭, and it’s a world-changing accomplishment. He is just one of several creative solutions that Reencontro has championed in his country to keep the number of orphans under control.

Camal Tila, whose own father, mother and three younger siblings all died of AIDS within the last six years, now cares for 12 younger siblings and children into existing families within their own villages or districts. As Cavnar explains, “keeping orphans in their own culture and in the homes of relatives or family friends is really the best option, and most Christian ministries are committed to that strategy. That’s why we give a priority to supporting organizations that integrate orphaned children into existing families within their own villages or districts.”

Describing the support provided by Cross as “help” is an understatement. When the ministry first encountered Reencontro, it served 600 to 700 children. The support from Cross has allowed the group to expand its capacity significantly in a few short years—it now is a lifeline to more than 7,000 children like Camal. For this, Cavnar again credits the many American Catholics who make up the Cross family of benefactors.

“You could say that Cross International Catholic Outreach is one of God’s funnels. He pours resources through us to help the poorest and neediest people on earth. The orphan crisis in Africa staggers our imagination and at times almost defies belief. But we remember that this is God’s work and we are simply His channel. Seeing things this way also helps us to keep the correct perspective on our work. Helping just one orphan family may not seem like a world-changing accomplishment, but we know Camal Tila and his brother and sisters. We know that the help they received changed their world forever, and we can celebrate that human triumph.”

Ultimately, the goals of Cross International are to further expand its outreach to AIDS orphans through partnering ministries and to avoid putting these children in institutions if at all possible. As Cavnar explains, “keeping orphans in their own culture and in the homes of relatives or family friends is really the best option, and most Christian ministries are committed to that strategy. That’s why we give a priority to supporting organizations that integrate orphaned children into existing families within their own villages or districts.”

The problem is that most poor African families are already struggling under the weight of poverty and find it difficult to add one more mouth to feed, let alone two or three. If they hesitate to accept another child, it isn’t because they are unwilling—they are simply unable to make ends meet on their already limited resources. One director of a program in Zambia described how ministries found a solution: “We have made the care of orphans a partnership in which we all share the responsibility and burden. We assure the families that if they will provide basic shelter, we will provide what they can’t give the children: the extra food, the access to health care, and have a bigger impact in the lives of the poor.”

“How to Help:

Your help is needed for Cross International Catholic Outreach to bring Christ’s mercy to the poorest of the poor. Use the enclosed postage-paid brochure to mail your gift or send it to: Cross International Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC00814, 490 White Pond Drive, PO Box 63, Akron, OH 44309-0063.

Camal (at right) is just one of thousands of orphans who have been helped by Cross. The orphan housing program is particularly effective—it allows entire families of orphans to stay together.

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“I hope every American Catholic who has supported us in this outreach will join me today in celebrating Camal’s new home and the hope it represents for that family of orphans. I hope they will see it for what it was—an act of God’s mercy made possible by God’s faithful people. And I hope they will see it as one significant step in a greater, more wide-reaching plan,” he added.

“We celebrate one victory, knowing that scores of other children have yet to be helped. And we can do that because we have no doubt that God will touch other hearts to respond generously, answering the prayers of other children like Camal. There is no more compassionate body of believers than the Catholic Church, and I am confident my Catholic brothers and sisters in the U.S. will continue to respond where the needs are greatest. Jesus came to save the whole world, one lost soul at a time. He is our example, so we will never lose heart.”
Teenagers celebrate their faith during opening session of NCYC

By John Shaughnessy

As soon as the doors opened, three teenage girls rushed toward the floor of Lucas Oil Stadium, wanting to reach front-row seats for the event they had been waiting for months to happen.

Maggie Johnson, Alexis Black, and Rachel Kennedy nudged past other youths who had arrived 90 minutes early for the opening session of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on the evening of Nov. 17. The three friends raced past seats that soon would be filled with 23,000 other youths, many of them proudly wearing a wonderfully crazy assortment of headwear that included white, feathery halos, flashing pink, green and blue glow-in-the-dark headbands, and hats that showcased the heads of cows, sharks, frogs, chickens and horses.

Finally, the three girls from Illinois—wearing headwear that looked like a Chicago-style pepperoni pizza—took the front-row seats for an event that would be part rock concert, part church revival, and all a strong reminder or revelation that the youths of the Catholic Church thrive for and respond to a lively, intense and heartfelt faith experience that matches their love of God, and their longing to be part of a community that draws them even closer to him.

“I am hoping to get a deeper experience with God and feel the connection,” said Alexis, 16, a member of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Naperville, Ill., in the Archdiocese of Chicago, along with Maggie and Rachel.

“I want to get to know my faith more,” noted Maggie, who is 16.

“I am hoping to make new friends and get deeper in my religion,” Rachel, 15, added.

Knowing that longing in Catholic teenagers, emcee and entertainer ValLimar Jansen used the opening night two-hour session to tap into the youths’ desire to sing, dance, sway, clap, chant, laugh, reflect and celebrate their faith together in moments that ranged from the silly to the serious.

“We are all members of what I call the love tribe,” Jansen exclaimed in a voice that radiated with joy, humor and warmth throughout the evening. “Because they will know we are Christians by our love.”

The evening’s motivation talk came from Bob McCarty, executive director of the National Catholic Federation for Youth Ministry. Calling the youths “a wonderful sign of the presence of God” and “a hopeful sign for the Catholic Church,” McCarty also challenged the teenagers to embrace the conference’s theme, “Called to Glory.”

“When you’re feeling overwhelmed, when you’re feeling lost, when you’re feeling confused, ‘Come to me,’ Jesus said,” McCarty declared.

It all flowed toward the evening’s most memorable scene—when Jansen led the 23,000 youths in a powerful moment of celebration that had them dancing, clapping and singing “Yes, Lord! Yes, Lord!”

She then closed with a plea to the teenagers to “make a connection with Christ” during the weekend, and share “the love of Christ” with each other. From their front row seats, the youth animators perform during the Thursday night opening session of the National Catholic Youth Conference at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 17.

Speaker encourages youths to read Scripture for guidance and support

By Mary Ann Garber

Never forget, Mark Hart told 23,000 National Catholic Youth Conference participants, that God created you, loves you and seeks a closer relationship with you.

“Prayer is your relationship with God,” Hart emphasized in his keynote address to teenagers on Nov. 18 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

This morning, we have been proclaiming the word of God, seeking Christ, he said.

“In the Book of James, there is a beautiful little verse… It changed my life when I first read it. It says, ‘Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.’”

The executive vice president of Life Teen International, husband and father of three daughters from Phoenix reminded the teenagers that they should be proud to share their Catholic faith with others.

“Faith moves you forward,” he said. “Faith gets God’s attention.”

And faith reminds you that sin doesn’t have power over you, Hart said, if you follow God’s commandments.

The Bible is “God’s love story for us,” he said. “It records everything God did, everything God said.”

The Book of Genesis also recounts how Adam and Eve disobeyed God then hid from him in the Garden of Eden, Hart said, but the Lord searched for them in “the world’s first game of hide and seek” to draw near to them again.

“A shepherd searches for his lost sheep,” Hart said. “A father searches for his lost son. When you get into your faith,” Hart said, “you’ll find that he is standing at the door of your heart, calling you.”

When you “get into your faith,” Hart said, “you’ll feel the way it makes you feel. … Jesus is your Savior.”

“Sin separates us, it divides us, from God,” he said, but “the Lord searches for us.”

For example, Jesus said, “It is by the name of Jesus Christ that you will be saved. … He is the Savior of the world. Until we wrap our heads around that, we’re never going to have the kind of intimate relationship with God that he wants to have with us…”

You can’t outrun God. No sin is too great. No sin is too large.

Turn around and run back to God, he said, who has “a bigger Kleenex” available through the sacrament of reconciliation.

“God knows that nothing else in this world will satisfy you or bring you the joy or the peace that you desperately desire except him,” he said.

“Blessed John Paul II, my hero, reminded us that it is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness. He is the only one who is going to satisfy the deepest, most ardent desires of your heart.”

When you “get into your faith,” Hart said, “you’ll see the way it makes you feel… Jesus is your Savior. It’s by the name of Jesus Christ that you will be saved.”

Hart said, “It’s by the name of Jesus Christ that you will be saved.” He is the Savior of the world. Until we wrap our heads around that, we’re never going to have the kind of intimate relationship with God that he wants to have with us. … It’s by faith—”it can be a prayer of desperation, it can be a prayer of—”

“… the cross changes shoulders.”

Catholics should take great pride in the word of God, he said, because “it was our Church that compiled this book of holy Scripture,—73 books written over 1,600 years by 45 authors—4,000 promises in this book made to you.”

God draws near to us in the Eucharist, reconciliation and the other sacraments, Hart said. “The God of the universe loves you so much that he would rather die than risk spending eternity without you.”

Speaker encourages youths to read Scripture for guidance and support
NCYC participants encouraged to connect with Christ

By Sean Gallagher

The 23,000 National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) participants who gathered at Lucas Oil Stadium on the evening of Nov. 18, were encouraged to connect with Christ, each other and their own identity.

That encouragement happened from the very start when the attendees made their way into the stadium, and were met by smiling youths holding up signs that read, “Free hugs.” Many took up their offer.

“Trying to raise her voice over the loud music that echoed in the stadium, teenager Pickett Lee of Jefferson City, Mo., gave a simple explanation for why she was offering free hugs—‘Because God is love,’” said Sophia Eis, a youth from Adel, Iowa, gave her own thoughtful answer.

“It increases fellowship and it shows everybody that there is somebody out there who really loves you,” she said.

The three speakers for the evening expanded upon the theme during their presentations.

Christina Lamas-Lujan, San Gabriel regional coordinator of the Office for Religious Education for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, told listeners how a young woman from Nigeria named Patricia taught her how to connect with Christ.

Lamas-Lujan met her during a 2008 Catholic Relief Services trip to Nigeria. Three months later, Patricia visited Lamas-Lujan in Los Angeles.

“When she was at my house, she taught all of us who interacted with her that Christ is present in every single moment of our lives,” Lamas-Lujan said. “When we are desperately in need of Christ, Christ is there. In our joys, Christ is there. When we have nothing, Christ is there.

“My brothers and sisters, my question to you is, ‘Have you seen the connection?’ Are you connected to Christ? Singer, songwriter and speaker Joia Farmer of Wyoming told the young people to make connections with Christ, each other and themselves.

She shared the story of her daughter, Ava, whom she and her husband, Brad, adopted from an orphanage in China.

“Ava’s birth mother left her on a bench in front of the orphanage when she was a week old. Soon thereafter, an old man walking past noticed the baby and took her into the orphanage.

“You might think that her mother abandoned her,” Farmer said. “I have a different way of seeing abandoned. Some people see it as bad. But in that instance, her mother was my hero.”

Contemplating that action taken by Ava’s birth mother led Farmer to realize that she, too, knows what it means to be abandoned and adopted.

“I felt like an orphan at times,” she said. “I felt that I was not connecting with Christ. I was not connecting with God. I felt that he had abandoned me.”

Farmer noted that Christ on the Cross knew what it was like to be abandoned by his friends—but not by his mother.

“He gave up to her,” Farmer said. “And that is a moment worth noting. We are all orphans. We have all been adopted.

“Of, in the [fact, the] before Jesus died, he said, ‘I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.’ That is a moment of your weakness.”

“Your brothers and sisters, he comes to you. In your time of need, in your time of sorrow, when you think that he’s not there, that he’s abandoned you, he is in that moment, that moment of your weakness.”

Farmer explained that we connect to God when we do his will and give loving service to other people.

“My brothers and sisters, love is a verb,” she said. “It is an action. It is a verb. It is something other people see it as good. It is something that holds you. That is why you were making a line—

“Your brothers and sisters, my question to you is, ‘Have you time for Jesus?’ Do you have time for him? You have time for 10,000 friends all around the world, but when do you have time for Jesus? When I reached that place, I cried for two days,” said Bishop Zarama, an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

“I didn’t eat because the food was awful. But, at the end of the third day, through the intercession of Mary, I made my first confession in six years.

“Because God is love.”

“Where is Jesus in all of the friends?” he asked. “Does he have a space in your life? Do you have time for him? You have time for 10,000 friends all around the world, but when do you have time for Jesus? That is the challenge. Connect with Jesus.”

The final speaker, Bishop Luis Rafael Zarama, was born and raised in Colombia before emigrating to the U.S.

He told participants that, as a youth, he resisted his mother’s call to participate in a retreat. He had even prayed that the bus he was traveling on to attend it would break down so that he could go back home.

“When I reached that place, I cried for two days,” said Bishop Zarama, an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

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Referring to the friends that many young people have on the Internet social media website Facebook, Bishop Zarama encouraged them to consider the quality of their friendship with Christ.

“Where is Jesus in all of the friends?” he asked. “Does he have a space in your life? Do you have time for him? You have time for 10,000 friends all around the world, but when do you have time for Jesus?”

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Farmer explained that we connect to God when we do his will and give loving service to other people.

“My brothers and sisters, love is a verb,” she said. “It is an action. It is loving other people in our lives whom we can’t stand or maybe we’ve been hurt by or who need us. That is an action. It is a verb.”

The 23,000 attendees at the conference, including volunteers and chaplains, cheered in response.

“And why were you making a line for confession?” Bishop Zarama asked. “For one simple reason. When you make a confession, you see and have that experience of connection with [Christ]. It’s how you experience love, the love that forgives you, the love that holds you. That is why you were making a line—

“It’s really quite impressive. ‘Because God is love.’ — By Sean Gallagher

Youth conference attendees make sacrament of reconciliation a priority

By Sean Gallagher

While Lucas Oil Stadium and the many conference rooms and exhibit halls in the Indiana Convention Center were buzzing with laughing, singing and cheering during the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), there were some moments in which the only sounds that could be heard were quiet whispers.

Young people enjoy music as they prepare for the Nov. 18 evening session at the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis.

The youths were not the only ones impressed by the line of NCYC participants waiting to go to confession.

“So was Bishop Luis Rafael Zarama, an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

“I was amazed to see the long lines waiting for confession,” Bishop Zarama said during Friday night’s general session at Lucas Oil Stadium.

The 23,000 attendees at the conference, including volunteers and chaplains, cheered in response.

“The group included Logan Patrick, 18, of Des Moines, Iowa.

“It’s really quite impressive,” he said. “It’s great to see so many Catholics get together to have their sins forgiven before the Eucharist on Saturday.”

Madison Beegley, Janna Schulte and Alexandra Pacek are three friends from Russell, Kan., population 4,280, who attended NCYC. They were impressed by the lines of people waiting to go to confession and then showing everyone, by wearing their sticker, that they had been forgiven.

“Nobody is being forced to do it,” Madison said. “Kids are doing it all on their own without being told that they have to. It shows how strong our faith is, and how it’s going to continue.”

Janna was in part moved by the sheer numbers of Catholics her own age—more than 20,000—approximately five times the population of her hometown, at the conference who practiced their faith, including going to confession, so openly.

“In our town, there’s not a lot of Catholics that are around our age,” Janna said. “To see so many people go to confession and going to adoration is a great experience.”

“Everyone is open about it [faith here],” Alexandra said. “No one’s going to get made fun of for praying. Hopefully, that will travel back with us when we go home. Maybe we can say a prayer before we eat lunch in our cafeteria or something like that.”

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The Criterion Friday, November 25, 2011
National Catholic Youth Conference emcee ValLimar Jansen, left, talks with conference participant Brogen Rechich from the Diocese of LaCrosse, Wis., about her brother’s miraculous recovery following a hunting accident during the Friday morning general session on Nov. 18 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

National Catholic Youth Conference participants, from left, Isaac Owen, Tommy Gunderson, Andrew Eilert and Steven Gunderson from St. John the Baptist Parish in Beloit, Kan., in the Diocese of Salina, Kan., pray during the closing Mass on Nov. 19 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Sydney Speka of the Diocese of Dubuque, Iowa, from left, and Janelle and Kim Gengler of the Diocese of Salina, Kan., enjoy the music during the opening night general session of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 17 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Christ the King parishioner and North Central High School senior Annie Quigley of Indianapolis sings during the Friday morning general session of the National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 18 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Bishop Chatard High School freshman Charlie Wood from St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis welcomes National Catholic Youth Conference participants in the opening night general session on Nov. 17 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

Demarco Paschall, left, from the Diocese of Lansing, Mich., tries to use a fishing pole to stand up a bottle on Nov. 18. ... booth set up by Salesian sisters, brothers and priests in the Victory Park area of the National Catholic Youth Conference.

Right, a member of the Felician Sisters speaks about her order on Nov. 17 with Ellarose Stewart of Port Orange, Fla., in the National Catholic Youth Conference’s “Vocations Village” at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Dozens of religious communities from around the country spoke about their charism and ministries with thousands of youths during the three days of the conference.

Above, with multicolored lights flashing, 23,083 National Catholic Youth Conference participants fill the floor and lower seats of Lucas Oil Stadium on Nov. 13 at the start of the conference’s Friday night general session.

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Bishop Simon Bruté College seminarians, from left, Andy Hirsch of Holy Cross Parish in Fort Branch, Ind., in the Diocese of Evansville, Cody Sandenborcher of Sacred Heart Parish in Ethridge, Ky., in the Diocese of Springfield, IL, Luke Hoelter of St. Philip Parish in Mount Vernon, Ind., in the Diocese of Evansville, and Patrick Hammans of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis pray during the archdiocesan Mass on Nov. 17 at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis at the start of the three-day National Catholic Youth Conference last week.

Below, Jean-Rene Tardie of Shreveport, La., talks with Bishop Paul D. Etienne of Cheyenne, Wyo., previously a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, on Nov. 18 in the National Catholic Youth Conference’s thematic park at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. Bishop Etienne, previously a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, was one of 29 bishops attending the conference.

Kevin Suso, left, hands a box batch of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies to a volunteer at the Indiana Convention Center on Nov. 17. A member of St. Christopher Parish in Gary, Calif., Kevin, 16, joined in the community service project that eventually delivered the cookies to women in prison.

Photo by Mary Ann Garber

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Photo by Mary Ann Garber
Eucharistic process leads teens to deeper faith

By John Shaughnessy

In a soft voice touched with reverence, 17-year-old Nick Richard from Indianapolis recalled one of the most poignant moments of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 17-19.

It was a moment that revealed the depth of faith that many young Catholics share, a moment that showed the hope and the promise of the Catholic Church now and for the future.

The moment occurred as Nicole walked toward the Indiana Convention Center in the late afternoon of Nov. 17 with her group of 34 teenagers and adults from Holy Cross Parish in Orlando, Fla.

Across the street, the heavy wooden doors of St. John the Evangelist Church suddenly opened and a eucharistic procession of about 2,000 people mostly teenagers from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis flowed down Capitol Avenue and toward the main entrance of the convention center, stopping traffic at rush hour in the heart of the city.

Seeing the Eucharist on display in a new 3-foot-high monstrance made in Poland, Nicole and the others in her group knelt on the sidewalk as the procession passed on a cold, windy and gray day.

“It was so beautiful to see in such a busy city how quiet and reverent it was,” Nicole recalled later. “Even if you weren’t Catholic or you don’t have religion, it would have showed you how faith can change people, how faith can change the world.”

Moved by the scene, the group from Holy Cross Parish joined the end of the procession, adding their voices to the people who repeatedly and softly sang the refrain from the hymn, “Oh Come, Let Us Adore Him,” where charity and love are, “God is there.”

As the procession weaved its way through the crowded halls of the convention center toward a chapel that had been created in one of the ballrooms, teenagers and adults lined the road, most standing quietly, others bending to kneel, some wiping away tears.

“With everyone singing the same chant, it just felt like we were all one,” said Justus Schremmer, 17, a member of St. Mary Par in Russell, Kan. “There was that feeling of oneness. It was the feeling of being part of something bigger.”

That same feeling had marked the Archdiocese of Indianapolis’ opening Mass of the conference, just before the eucharistic procession. St. John Church overflowed with about 4,000 worshippers as the sacred choir of Marian University in Indianapolis set the mood for the Mass with these lyrics from the entrance song, “The spirit of God is deep within us.”

Calling upon that spirit, Bishop Christopher J. Coyne used his homily to encourage the archdiocese’s contingent to show their hospitality to the 23,000 people who came to the conference from across the country.

“It’s a moment for us to be hosts, to be people of great, warm hospitality who invite people to get to know us, who invite people to get to know our city, who invite people to get to know our faith,” Bishop Coyne said.

Thirty minutes later, that spirit and faith touched more lives as the eucharistic procession flowed from the church into the street and through the convention center.

“I had never done anything like that,” said an awed Briana Killian, 16, a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. “It’s just pure amazement to me.”

Briana Killian, 16, a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. "It's just pure amazement to me."

Patin shared how he received the electronic device as a Christmas gift last year from his 19-year-old daughter, Megan. He also shared how he received a stern lecture from her when he was so intimidated by the device that he first decided to use it as a paperweight and then as a doorstop.

“She said, ‘Excuse me, do you know how much I sacrificed for you to have this because I know what you love? Do you know how hard it was for me to give up certain things so that you could have this? Do you know what you can do with this? You can listen to music, you can do videos, you can download applications, you can have e-mails, you can download games and play ticked-off birds or whatever it’s called.’ ”

“I looked at her and said, ‘Yeah, Meg, I got it, but there’s so much in there. I don’t know how to run it all. I’m not going to use half the applications that are there. Meg, it’s just all right. Let it go.’ She said, ‘Yeah, you can use it for a doorstop, but you know that’s not what it was made for, and you’re insulting me.’ ”

After mentioning how “it’s something when your daughter dresses you down,” Patin made the connection for the audience between his fear and uncertainty in using the electronic device and many people’s fear and uncertainty in sharing their faith.

Everybody in here is an iPod, but some of us are playing like we’re a doorstop, and some of us are playing like we’re a paperweight because we’re scared to take the chance to really be what we were made to be,” Patin told the audience. “St. Catherine of Siena said, ‘I’m who you are called to be, and we will set the world ablaze!’ ”

Patin said he understands how people get caught up in comparisons to others, leaving them with the feeling that they’re not the right person to share their faith.

But your playlist is not supposed to be like the person next to you,” he said. “Because I guarantee you, there are some of us here who are like, ‘Share Christ? Not me. I’m too shy. I’m too short.’

He paused and then challenged everyone, “Be who we were called to be.”

“You’re going to hit places I ain’t ever going to be able to hit—the mall, Facebook, your friends, your school,” he continued. “I’m asking you as a teenager who’s struggling and trying to find Christ and working at staying connected to learn to use your style, your playlist.

We share Christ by giving our care and our gifts and our talents to others. Do you understand that you’re the hands and the feet of Christ? Are you willing to make room to let him in, and let him use you so you can leave this place and be his presence out there?”

Holding the iPod touch, Patin shared one more thought.

“I got to play it. I ain’t a doorstop.”

The ‘parable of the iPod touch’ applies to faith sharing

By John Shaughnessy

Before he shared “the parable of the iPod touch” to make a point about faith, Mike Patin used a touch of humor to connect with the 23,000 teenagers at the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis.

Patin recalled a moment from trying to teach the Catholic faith to small children at his Louisiana parish—a point about faith, Mike Patin used a touch of humor to make.

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T-shirt messages vividly express Catholic faith

By John Shaughnessy

Teenagers often make fashion and social statements with the T-shirts they wear.

At the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis on Nov. 17-19, T-shirts that captured thoughts about the Catholic faith were naturally among the most popular souvenirs for the 23,000 teenagers who attended.

Here are six of the Catholic “messages” that were displayed on T-shirts at the conference.

“He died for me. I live for him.”

“Cool to be Catholic.”

“Catholicism is not a spectator sport.”

“DORK—Disciple of the Risen King.”

“God has assigned as a duty to every man … the dignity of every woman”—Pope John Paul II

“Catholic Church. Refreshing our faith since 33 A.D.”

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“Catholic Church. Refreshing our faith since 33 A.D.”
Bishops enjoy seeing vibrancy of youths’ faith at conference

By Mary Ann Garber

As they picked up pens, the bishops smiled at the teenagers waiting in line for their autographs on special trading cards in Victory Park, the theme park at the National Catholic Youth Conference, on Nov. 18 in Indianapolis. During the three-day conference, 29 bishops participated in liturgies, general assemblies, roundtable discussions and autograph sessions. “It’s really an awesome experience to see so many of our young people gathered in faith,” said Bishop Kevin C. Rhodes of the diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in northern Indiana. “It’s kind of like a mini-World Youth Day.” Bishop Rhodes said. “I was with our young people in Madrid [last August], and this kind of brings back memories of that. It’s always uplifting to see their joy in the faith, and also to see their prayer together. I just came from a holy hour with many of the young people, and it was so prayerful, so intense in a way, with all of us worshipping Jesus.” Bishop Paul D. Etienne of Cheyenne, Wyo., a native of Tell City and former priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, said 30 teenagers from his diocese participated in the national conference. “It’s wonderful to see so many people come together, especially so many young people at the opening session last night and again this morning,” Bishop Etienne said, “and to see their energy and to see the content of the faith being discussed in the presentations. It’s good that it’s not just about entertainment. It really is about learning our faith in Christ and witnessing to Christ. To see our young people excited about that excites me as a bishop.” “It’s good to see everybody enjoying themselves and to see so many of the Indianapolis people that are volunteers and the crew behind the scenes that make all this possible,” he said of friends from his home archdiocese. “I think our young people in general have a greater awareness of the role of the bishop in terms of being a spiritual father and being that person of Christ in the midst of the diocese,” Bishop Etienne said. “I’ve sensed that energy and that love, if you will. It’s very heartening.” Bishop Earl A. Boyea from the Diocese of Lansing, Mich., paused from signing his trading cards to reflect on the meaning of the national youth gathering. “I think it’s just great that we can help these young people attach themselves to Christ and find out how much Christ is attached to them,” Bishop Boyea said. “I really think that’s the key.” Archbishop Roger L. Schwitz from the Archdiocese of Anchorage, Alaska said spending time with Catholic teenagers and young adults is “a great support for my own faith.” He did this in part during the conference in the bishops’ roundtable discussions with Catholic teenagers from across the country. “The discussion I had this morning … was wonderful,” Archbishop Schwitz said, “talking to them about their struggles in their faith and asking me questions about how they can be stronger in their faith. It’s wonderful to see how they can make so much of a difference. It’s our job as this kind of youth to be their support.” Bishop Charles C. Thompson of Evansville, Ind., left, gives a signed trading card of himself to Catherine Nguyen of New Orleans on Nov. 18 in the National Catholic Youth Conference’s thematic park at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis. “It’s good to see everybody enjoying themselves and to see so many of the Indianapolis people that are volunteers and the crew behind the scenes that make all this possible,” he said of friends from his home archdiocese. “I think our young people in general have a greater awareness of the role of the bishop in terms of being a spiritual father and being that person of Christ in the midst of the diocese,” Bishop Etienne said. “I’ve sensed that energy and that love, if you will. It’s very heartening.” Bishop Earl A. 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Thompson of Evansville, Ind., left, gives a signed trading card of himself to Catherine Nguyen of New Orleans on Nov. 18 in the National Catholic Youth Conference’s thematic park at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

Teens answer the call to service at NCYC by helping people in need

By John Shaughnessy

Kevin Souza put freshly baked chocolate chip cookies into small bags, knowing they would be part of a delivery to women in prison. “We saw that they needed help, and they put us to work,” said Kevin, 16, a member of St. Christopher Parish in Galt, Calif. “The soldiers are doing so much for us,” said Rachel, 17, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Napa, Calif., along with Megan and Kendall. “We’re doing this for a women’s prison.” Rachel Schmidt used scissors to trim an image of the Blessed Mother and the baby Jesus, part of an effort to send Christmas cards to American soldiers serving overseas during the holidays. “The soldiers are doing so much for us,” said Rachel, 17, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Urbandale, Iowa. “Who knows what kind of Christmas they’ll have under fire while I’m at home with my family, unwrapping presents. They deserve something good from us.” “Drinking water is an important staple for every community,” said Elyse, 17, a member of St. Apollinaris Parish in Napa, Calif., along with Megan and Kendall. “The whole point of this conference is to give back while we learn about our faith.” “We’ve just been offered so much in my life, and sometimes I take things for granted,” said Kendall, 15. “Small things can make so much of a difference. It’s our job as this generation of Catholics to do what we can to help others.”
State high court says backers of Proposition 8 have standing to appeal ruling

Advent services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Advent. The following is a list of services that have been reported to The Criterion.

Batesville Deanery
Nov. 29, 7 p.m. at St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg
Dec. 4, 1 p.m. for Immaculate Conception, Millhousen; St. Dennis, Jennings County; and St. Maurice, Napoleon, at St. Maurice, Napoleon
Dec. 5, 7 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora
Dec. 7, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, Shelbyville
Dec. 7, 4:45-5:30 p.m. and 6:30-7 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County
Dec. 13, 6:45 p.m. for St. Anne, Hamburg; St. John the Evangelist, Enochsburg; and St. Maurice, St. Maurice, at St. Maurice, St. Maurice
Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County
Dec. 14, 4:5-5:30 p.m. and 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Rock, Franklin County
Dec. 14, 7 p.m. for St. Charles, Milan; St. Pius, North Vernon; and St. Joseph, Jennings County, at St. Joseph, Jennings County

Dec. 4, 7 p.m. for St. Peter, and Paul Cathedral and St. Mary at St. Mary

Indianapolis North Deanery
Dec. 11, 2 p.m. deanery service at St. Luke the Evangelist
Dec. 13, 7 p.m. service at St. Luke the Evangelist
Dec. 14, 7 p.m. service at St. Luke the Evangelist

Indianapolis South Deanery
Nov. 29, 7 p.m. at St. Mark the Evangelist
Nov. 30-Dec. 21, 6-6:30 p.m. at St. Barnabas
Dec. 11, 3 p.m. for Good Shepherd
Dec. 12, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Jesus
Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m. at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at St. Jude
Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Peter
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood
Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at Ann

Indianapolis West Deanery
Nov. 30, 7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville
Dec. 1, 7 p.m. at St. Malachy, Brownsburg
Dec. 6, 6 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at St. Monica
Dec. 13, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas More, Mooresville
Dec. 14, 7 p.m. at St. Michael the Archangel
Dec. 15, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph
Dec. 15, 6:30 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield

New Albany Deanery
Nov. 29, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Jeffersonville, and St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, at St. Augustine, Jeffersonville
Nov. 30, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, Corydon
Dec. 4, 4 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
Dec. 5, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, Sellersburg
Dec. 11, 4 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany

Our Lady of the Advent Retreat House
where your spirit and body are fed

Let your clunker earn cash for SVdP

The donation of your used vehicle—even if it doesn’t run—can be turned into money to provide basic necessities to the needy in our Central and Southern Indiana communities, particularly within the donor’s neighborhood. The donation process is easy. Call 800-323-0384 or go to www.svdpindy.org to arrange the donation of your vehicle.

Advent resources are available on archdiocesan Web site

During the season of Advent, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will have a special Web page at www.archindy.org/advent.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House

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Advent, a season of joyful expectation before Christmas, begins on Nov. 27 this year. The Advent wreath, with a candle marking each week of the season, is a traditional symbol of the liturgical year. This Advent wreath was on display at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis in 2007.

State high court says backers of Proposition 8 have standing to appeal ruling

San Francisco (CNS) -- The faith-based groups that sponsored Proposition 8, the state’s 2008 voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage, have the right to appeal a federal judge’s 2010 ruling that the ban is unconstitutional, the state’s high court said.

The California Supreme Court issued an unanimous opinion on Nov. 17.

Catholics are among the backers of Prop 8 who appealed to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals the ruling that it discriminates on the basis of sexual orientation and gender. As the circuit court took up the issue, its judges needed to resolve a question: can the backers of the proposition have the legal right to defend it in court when two elected officials, the former governor and the former attorney general refused to do so?

The appellate judges put the case on hold and asked the California Supreme Court to decide the matter. Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye wrote for the court, said that it’s essential to the integrity of the initiative process...that there be someone to assert the state’s interests in an initiative’s validity on behalf of the people when the public officials who normally assert that interest decline to do so.

That was a victory for ProtectMarriage.com as a proponent of Prop 8 against the governor and the attorney general who said they would not appeal the lower court decision.

The California court said the Supreme Court’s refusal to hear Prop 8 was constitutional—although it is expected that the U.S. Supreme Court will have the final word.

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Advent reminds us that we are part of God’s enduring family

By David Gibson

I remember how the words leapt off the page when Pope Benedict XVI, early in January 2006, characterized the Church as “a gathering of friends” who are each other’s “committed” companions. He said this in a homily for the baptism of 10 infants in the Vatican’s Sistine Chapel. Departing from his prepared text, the theologian-pope proceeded to describe the bonds among the Church’s members in both the strongest and weakest of terms. “Through baptism, each child is inserted into a gathering of friends who never abandon him in life or in death because these companions are God’s family,” Pope Benedict said.

“This group of friends, this family of God, into which the child is now admitted, will always accompany him. Even on days of suffering and in life’s dark nights, it will give him consolation, comfort and life.”

Pope Benedict’s words that day foreshadowed his first encyclical, titled “God Is Love,” released just 17 days later. It, too, emphasized the strength of the bonds within the Church community. The pope suggested that these bonds should prompt the Church and her people to serve the well-being of all. “The Church is God’s family in the world. In this family, no one ought to go without the necessities of life;” the encyclical said (25).

But the care extended within “God’s family” also should reach beyond the frontiers of the Church, the pope made clear in his encyclical. He explained that “the parable of the good Samaritan remains as a standard which imposes universal love toward the needy, ... whoever they may be.”

Still, without intending to detract “from this commandment of universal love,” Pope Benedict insisted that “the Church also has a specific responsibility. Within the ecclesial family, no member should suffer through being in need.”

In the encyclical, Pope Benedict recalled the portrayal of the early Christian community drawn by the Acts of the Apostles (#20). The early Christians accepted responsibility for each other’s well-being, sharing their possessions and dividing them “among all according to each one’s need” (Acts 2:44-46).

We are told in the Acts of the Apostles that the very early Christians devoted themselves to the teaching of the Apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. ... All who believed were together and had all things in common” (Acts 2:42).

The “element of communion” encompassed by that description of early Christian life was discussed by the pope in the encyclical. This element “consists in the fact that believers have all things in common and that among them, there is no longer any distinction between rich and poor,” the pope noted.

He said, “As the Church grew, this radical form of material communion could not, in fact, be preserved. But its essential core remained: Within the community of believers, there can never be room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life” (#20).

Is the love that Pope Benedict describes still possible in our world?

It is, he stressed, and he said that “we are able to practice it because we are created in the image of God.”

Pointing to the encyclical’s purpose, Pope Benedict said, “To experience love, and in this way to cause the light of God to enter into the world—this is the invitation I would like to extend” (#9).

It is important to recognize the possibility of love and the value of the bonds among human beings in these times of economic difficulty, Cardinal Adam J. Maida suggested in a late 2008 pastoral letter titled “Christ Our Hope.” The cardinal retired in 2009 as Detroit’s archbishop.

“We grow and thrive by being in relationships and by being in families, and in communities of faith and service,” Cardinal Maida wrote. “We are all at our best when we are part of a healthy flow of giving and receiving in respectful relationships.”

In uncertain times, people may feel they “have little power over the circumstances” surrounding them, Cardinal Maida observed. “But the love of God is at our disposal: it gives us the power to hear God’s word, and to use our time and talents to express generosity and creativity in our solidarity with our brothers and sisters,” many of whom suffer profoundly.

The cardinal spoke of charity as “a lifelong calling that comes from being baptized daughters and sons of God. … We all need to receive, and we all need to give.”

Furthermore, he pointed out that together with Christmas, the Advent season provides “countless opportunities for charity”—charity that might take the form of “something as simple as a smile, a ‘thank you’ to the grocery bagger, taking a tag from the Giving Tree or helping the homeless.”

Charity, said Cardinal Maida, “is a way of giving in which the other is always affirmed and strengthened, embodied and dignified.” He added that, “in Christian charity, we strive to see the face of Christ in the other, and we want the person receiving our charity to see Christ’s face in us.”

(Catholic News Service served on Catholic News Service’s editorial staff for 37 years.)

Mystery binds together God’s almighty power and our freedom

By Fr. Lawrence E. Mick

As we begin the season of Advent, we read from the final section of the Book of Isaiah. Scholars tell us that this portion of the book was likely not written by Isaiah, but by a later author who was a disciple of Isaiah.

This author asks an unusual question: “Why do you let us wander, Lord, from your ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear you not?” (Is 63:17).

It almost sounds as though the prophet is blaming God for the people’s sinfulness and hardness of heart! The late raises a fundamental question that has puzzled believers for centuries: What is the relationship between God’s almighty power and our free will?

There is no question that God can do whatever he wants to do as long as it is not self-contradictory. (God cannot create a square circle, for example.)

But God could force us to do the right thing if that was the way he wanted us to work.

Instead of maintaining that kind of control, however, God has given us free will. We are able to choose to follow his will or to turn away from him.

Looking around our world, we might think that God made a bad choice. Human beings so often use their free will to do evil.

But if we did not have free will, we could not really love God or one another. A love that is forced is no real love at all.

In ages past, many people had a very direct view of God’s control of the universe:

If a storm came up, God sent it.

If a person died, God took him or her.

If there was a drought, God was punishing people. If the rains came, God relented.

We frequently see such views in the Bible today, however, we are much more aware of natural processes that cause weather changes and disease and death. While we still believe that God is in charge of the universe, we recognize that God normally works through these natural processes rather than by direct intervention.

At the same time, the words of Isaiah remind us that we are dependent on God’s grace. We do not have the power to create a relationship with God on our own. It is possible only because God offers us the grace to enter into a loving friendship.

God does not harden our hearts, but it is the grace of God that softens their hearts.

God does let us wander from his way, but he also constantly seeks to bring us back.

During Advent, the refrain of one responsorial psalm says “Lord.... let us see your face and we shall be saved” (Ps 17:15).

As such, Advent reminds us that God has come to share our human life in Jesus. When we see God’s face in Jesus, we are drawn to God and turn away from sin.

(Father Lawrence E. Mick is a priest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.)
Thanksgiving can honor the dodgiest things

Thanksgiving is a uniquely American holiday. Our foreparents may have declared it a national holiday, and we’ve been celebrating it ever since. Surely we’re not the only people in the world to be thankful. In the Bible, God is good for all our blessings, but I’m proud of the many people who recognize the importance of commemorating it.

Giving thanks means many things to many people. Some folks are grateful for good health or a job. Others are grateful for relationships. Some thank God because they have more money than anyone could imagine, a home so lavish that it might appear in an issue of Architectural Digest or membership in an exclusive country club. And some are grateful that they are not a race or a powerful nation. What’s meaningful to one person may mean nothing to another.

If you live long enough, you learn to be grateful for the dodgiest things, those things that you might think of as failures when you are young. For example, I’ve always been grateful for having had children with disabilities. Naturally, it was hard at first, when we went through all the stages of grief, including denial, anger, depression, and, finally, acceptance.

But with the grief came more blessings than I can count. One was the realization that “bad” things happen to good people, to us, like things we did not cause and over which we have no control. It was a reminder that we’re not in charge of the universe despite all our noble intentions, cleverness or diligence. It taught us how we deal with events without whining about “Why?” or the future of our loved ones. It taught us that our children profited from their brothers’ disabilities as well.

Instead of complaining because they had to help the boys, or sometimes give up what they wanted because their brothers’ needs came first, they felt responsible and empathetic. They learned how to be good parents.

Even the neighbor kids learned compassion and that no two families are different from themselves, and all of us enjoyed their sweetness and humor.

Then there was the year when our house caught on fire from lightning while we were away, and the roof was burned off. We had to move to an apartment while we rebuilt, which gave us appreciation of our home. It also revealed the goodness of friends and fellow parishioners, some of them who had never met us, who came to help us without hesitation, discovering the kindness of strangers over and over again.

Another potential disappointment became blessing when a priest married a German and moved to Hamburger. She has lived there for more than 30 years, providing us along the way with two wonderful grandchildren, three “grats,” and a raft of German and European friends whom we have come to love. It’s given us a great excuse to travel around Europe, to experience other cultures, and to understand world politics.

The dings of aging have provided us with greater appreciation for things we formerly took for granted—things like seeing and hearing and unlimited energy. We discovered a tasty meal that we had never had before, and to really enjoy a good night’s sleep. We can rest and reflect and be silent without feeling an urgent need for action.

Instead, we can make life a constant prayer of gratitude for whatever life brings.

Thanksgiving is indeed a major American holiday, but it’s also something we can experience every day of the year.

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

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Want faith-filled children? Take them to Mass

Thanksgiving is a quintessential American holiday. Its roots go back to the first days on this land of some of our first settlers. And when we hear a holiday temper a typically American attitude—to take prizes, take ourselves up by our bootstraps.

To do otherwise would encourage us to give thanks for the help we have received from other people, and, especially, from God. Thanksgiving can also be a quintessential quintessential for devout American families, which means “thanksgiving,” is at the heart of our faith.

But this year, we have special reason to value this day on which families and friends gather to share a meal and give thanks.

It is because on this weekend after Thanksgiving, the Church across this country will be using a new translation of the prayers we pray at Mass.

I have, along with my pastor and religious educators have been encouraging us to see this moment as a chance to grow in our love and understanding of the Eucharist. That is good advice for us individuals and as parish communities. But it is also a great opportunity for families as well.

How many of us like to watch the experts fight or in its catachetical efforts surrounding the implementation of the new Mass translation, it will always rest in the good faith laid within the life of our families. There are all kinds of ways that parents can bring Mass to life for their children and teach them their prayers and helping them learn Church doctrine to foster in them a desire to do good and avoid evil. But regular attendance at Sunday Mass is a key step in the teaching process. When children go to Mass with their parents, they receive grace to nurture all other aspects of their lives.

And a good portion of that grace comes through children simply seeing their parents’ actions. Children are young enough that they make sacrifices to do so. I saw my own parents do that in a specific way. One Christmas, I was a young boy, and it made such an impression on me that I still remember it vividly to this day.

It happened when my family and I attended a wedding of a cousin in northern Indiana. The reception went well on into a Saturday night. It would have been easy for my parents to choose to sleep in the next morning and skip Mass. Instead, they made sure that we got up early so we could all go to Sunday Mass. We made sure to choose to sleep in the next morning and skip Mass. We made sure to choose to sleep in the next morning and skip Mass.

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The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Nov. 27, 2011
• Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b, 64:2-7
• Corinthians 13:1-9
• Mark 13:33-37

This weekend, the Church begins the season of Advent. It also begins the use of biblical readings from Year B of its three-year cycle. Advent marks the start of a new liturgical year. Each liturgical year is carefully planned so that the seasons, and the major feasts, guide us into worship into a closer relationship with God in Christ.

Finally, and important for everyone, this is the weekend when the Church begins to use the new English translation of the Roman Missal.

The first reading is from the third section of Isaiah, composed when the Jews were in a quite difficult situation. Years before, the exiles had been allowed to return to the Holy Land from Babylon, but this return brought the exiles home to a place that was far from paradise. God was miserable for them there.

The prophet called for faith in God, not only as the Almighty Lord, but also as true to the covenant, to the belief that God would protect the Chosen People.

The prophet appeals to God, in the name of the people, for relief, but without the assurance that the people are being treated unfairly, at least in terms of God’s care for them.

The prophet makes clear that sin has led the people away from God, and this estrangement has produced their woes.

The prophet makes clear that sin has led the people away from God, and this estrangement has produced their woes.

The people will not protect the Chosen People.

The prophet makes clear that sin has led the people away from God, and this estrangement has produced their woes.

The only permanent reality is God. If we are with God, we need not fear what lays ahead in life.

Reflection

The new translation of the Roman Missal means much more than semantics and translating Latin into English.

True, it is an attempt to conform the English version of the Missal to the Latin edition. It also provides an opportunity to ponder what the words of the Missal, of Catholic worship, say to us. In turn, this study prompts the question of how religion means to each of us. Are we good Catholics?

St. Mark’s Gospel greatly assists us. Nothing else is as permanent, or as important, as the reality of God.

Advent is an opportunity to achieve union with God, to realize God’s love for us.

The very busy nature of the season merely serves to remind us to sharpen our focus. If we respond to this opportunity, then Christmas becomes not just a national holiday and religious commemoration, but also the moment when we truly bring God into our lives, having prepared ourselves for this wondrous encounter:

The Chalice

I noticed it at 4 years old.

The glint and shine of the precious metal

Gold or silver

Its unusual shape

Its unique design

The way it stood refined

A top the white altar linen

Like a piece of fine china

Used only for the most special of occasions

For the most special of guests.

I watched how it was lifted up and moved about

With such ceremonious intent

With devotion, reverence and prayerfulness

Awaiting its sacred purpose.

At 4 years old

I didn’t understand the water and the wine

The depth of sacrifice

The Precious Blood it becomes

The meal we share together

(Cathy Lamperski Dearing is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. This historic chalice and chalice were used during the celebration of the eucharistic liturgy during the National Catholic Youth Conference closing Mass on Nov. 19 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.)

Church forbids Catholics to join Freemasonry, which is a religion

Are Catholics allowed to join the Masons? I know that a pope a long time ago said no, but is that still in force?

If Catholics aren’t allowed to join, why is this so?

(Colonal Heights, Va.)

A visitor to your first question comes from quoting the declaration issued in 1983 by the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF): “The Church’s negative judgment in regard to Masonic associations remains unchanged since their principles have always been considered irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church, and, therefore, membership in Freemasonry forbidden. The faithful who enroll in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and must not receive the sacraments.”

That declaration of the CDF was signed by its then-precipal Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger ten years after Pope John Paul II.

It was approved and ordered to be published by Pope John Paul II, and it remains in force.

What prompted the CDF to issue the statement requires a bit of history.

For the two-and-a-half centuries prior, at least seven popes had consistently prohibited Catholics from joining the Masons.

Canon #2335 of the Church’s 1917 Code of Canon Law stated: “Those who join a Masonic sect or other societies of the same sort, which plot against the Church or against legitimate civil authority, are excommunicated.”

In 1974, Cardinal Franjo Seper, then-precipal of the doctrinal congregation, in a letter to Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia, concluded that “Canon #2335 regards only those Catholics who join associations which plot against the Church.”

Cardinal Seper evidently meant that, if a particular Masonic society did not plot against the Church, while membership for Catholics was still forbidden, a Catholic who did join would not thereby excommunicated.

But understandably, some dioceses in the United States misinterpreted the Scozzarelli letter to mean that membership in the Masons could now be permitted. As a result, a number of American Catholic men did join the organization.

In 1983, when the new—and current—Code of Canon Law was published, no mention was made of the Masons by name. The offenses punishable by excommunication were reduced from 37 to seven—thus fostering again the misunderstanding that Catholics were now allowed to join the Masons.

This necessitated the publication by the doctrinal congregation, later in 1983, of the quite specific prohibition against joining, which I quoted above.

The CDF statement of Nov. 27, 2011, replaced canon #2335 of the 1917 codification. It states: “A person who joins an association which plots against the Church is banished with a just penalty; however, a person who promotes or directs an association of this kind is to be punished with an interdict.”

Why the prohibition?

The reason is that Freemasonry is, at its heart, not a social club but a religion. It is a religion of rationalism, which, as Pope Leo XIII stated in his 1884 encyclical “Humanum Genus,” has as its fundamental doctrine “that human nature and human reason ought in all things to be服从 the absolute dictates of reason.” It cannot acknowledge any special spiritual claims by Jesus since this would violate the basis of Freemasonry.

The awkwardness of this prohibition comes from the fact that more than 3 million American men are Masons, and that the majority of Americans—including many Masons themselves—probably view Masonry as chiefly a social and philanthropic fraternity.

Certainly, the impetus of the Second Vatican Council has been to collaborate with all people of good will on projects that are worthy.

But this does not override the fact that a Catholic who joins the Masons and who takes the time to examine its core beliefs will discover that he has joined another, very different religion.

Masonry’s fundamental tenets are simply incompatible with Catholic faith and practice, which explains why the U.S. bishops’ committee felt compelled to compose in 1983 letter that “the position of the Church remains what it has been for many years: Catholics in the United States and elsewhere may not be Freemasons.”

(ProQuests may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at pkdod Doyle@gmail.com and 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.)
An elderly woman prays near a grave at a cemetery in the village of Ivenets, southwest of Minsk, Belarus, on Nov. 1. Catholics in Belarus marked All Saints Day by praying near graves at the burial site.

Prayers on All Saints Day

Baltimore (CNS)—A new ordinariate—functionally similar to a diocese—will be created on Jan. 1 to bring Anglicans into the Catholic Church in the U.S., announced Washington Cardinal Donald Wuerl during the annual meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on Nov. 15.

Cardinal Wuerl also said 67 Anglican priests have submitted their documents seeking ordination in the Catholic Church, and 35 of those have received initial approval from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

That means they can move to the second step of approval, which includes a criminal background check, psychological evaluation, and instruction from the bishops from the church where he lives and from his Anglican ecclesiastical authority, he said.

“I remain convinced that this ordinariate will be a true expression of the Catholic Church because of your engagement in the steps leading up to the acceptance of the candidates for ordination, and for your involvement in the catachetical formation of the members of the congregation seeking membership in the ordinariate,” he said. “Your involvement is one of the guarantees of the well-being of the ordinariate as it is established and begins to receive both clergy and converts.”

The U.S. ordinariate will be the second one created under “Anglicanorum Coetibus,” the name of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham was established for England and Wales in January 2012 by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the Anglican Archbishop of Westminster, and his coadjutor Bishop Michael Trench. The new ordinariate is based in Washington, D.C.

Cardinal Wuerl told reporters after the meeting with the bishops that Anglican parishes and communities with about 2,000 members have so far asked to become part of the Catholic Church through the process established in 2009 in which Pope Benedict XVI issued an apostolic constitution, “Anglicanorum Coetibus.”

Cardinal Wuerl was named by the Vatican to head an ad hoc committee for the constitution’s implementation.

The constitution authorizes the creation of an ordinariate to bring in Anglicans—or Episcopalians as they are known in the United States—so they can leave their faith community and join the Catholic Church, but retain certain elements of the Anglican liturgy and traditions.

The process was established to accommodate whole congregations who wish to join the Catholic Church after they have become disaffected with the Anglican Church over recent changes, such as the ordination of women, the ordination of openly gay priests, and blessing of same-sex marriages and partnerships.

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COTONOU, Benin (CNS)—On a three-day visit to Benin, Pope Benedict XVI urged African Catholics to witness the hope of the Gospel in their daily lives, and make the Church a model of reconciliation for the entire continent.

In a particular way, the Church must be “close to the cry of the poor, the weak, the outcast,” the pope said at a Mass on Nov. 20 for more than 50,000 people filled Cotonou Stadium.

“I would like to greet with affection all those persons who are suffering, those who are sick, those affected by AIDS or by other illnesses, to all those forgotten by society. Have courage! The pope is close to you in his thoughts and prayers,” he said.

The 84-year-old pontiff delivered his homily in French, English and Portuguese, adding a few words in Fon, the local indigenous language. He occasionally wiped his brow as temperatures rose during the morning liturgy.

The pope stressed the urgency of evangelizing and said the Church must make a special effort to reach those “whose faith is weak,” and who think selfish satisfaction and easy gain is the goal of human life.

“The Church in Benin has received much from her missionizers. It needs a population of nearly 3 million Catholics out of a total population of nearly 9 million. He came to Africa to unveil a document, “Africans Manus” (“The Commitment of Africa”), that outlined pastoral strategies and urged Catholics to become ‘Apostles of reconciliation, justice and peace’ across the troubled continent.

At every one of his public events, Africans—including many pilgrims who came from neighboring countries—gave the pontiff a lively welcome, blending song, dance and prayer in a spirit of religious celebration. The smiling pope clearly appreciated the reception.

The pope’s message was aimed beyond the borders of Benin, a small West African country with a population of nearly 3 million Catholics out of a total population of nearly 9 million. He came to Africa to unveil a document, “Africans Manus” (“The Commitment of Africa”), that outlined pastoral strategies and urged Catholics to become ‘Apostles of reconciliation, justice and peace’ across the troubled continent.

One of the most animated encounters saw the pope surrounded by several hundred schoolchildren, who accompanied him in a rhythmic procession and cheered him inside a parish church. In a talk, the pope told the children to ask their parents to pray with them.

“Sometimes you may even have to push them a little. But do not hesitate to do so. God is that important!” he said.

Later, he pulled a rosary from his pocket and asked the young people to learn how to pray it. Each child was given a rosary.

On Nov. 19, the pope traveled to the coastal city of Ouidah, a former slave trading post on the Atlantic, to sign his follow-up document to the 2009 Synod of Bishops for Africa. The 138-page text said the Church should lead the way in promoting respect for human dignity and life at every stage, fighting against economic imbalance and environmental degradation, providing health care to those with AIDS and other diseases, educating the young and reconciling human hearts in places of ethnic tension.

In a brief talk before the signing, the pope said that in the face of Africa’s problems, “a Church reconciled within herself and among all her members can become a prophetic sign of reconciliation in society,” and help guide the struggle against “every form of slavery” in the modern world.

Ouidah is known as a center of voodoo practices in West Africa, and in a meeting with Catholic faithful there the pope underlined the need to reject customs incompatible with Christianity.

Understood correctly, he said, the Christian faith “liberates from occultism and vanquishes evil spirits, for it is moved by the power of the Holy Trinity itself.”

He also encouraged lay Catholics to defend the institution of the family “built according to the design of God” and the Christian understanding of marriage.

Parents should transform family life through the power of prayer and by transmitting values to their children by their own example, he said.

In a Ouidah church, Pope Benedict prayed at the tomb of Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, who worked for many years with the future pope in the Roman Curia. The pope said that over the years, the two men had met many times, engaged in deep discussions and prayed together.

Addressing diplomats, civil authorities and religious representatives on Nov. 19 in Cotonou, the pope said Africa’s challenges reflect wider issues common to all humanity, including scandals and injustice, corruption and greed, and “too much violence which leads to misery and death.”

He urged world leaders to put the common good at the center of their policies.

“We should listen to religious people—and not their self-appointed defenders—in deciding what accommodations are necessary. In today’s struggles to protect religious liberty, this little vignette is a reminder that people of all faiths are on the same side. (John Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington.)”

“From this place, I launch an appeal to all political and economic leaders of African countries and the rest of the world. Do not deprive your peoples of hope! Do not cut them off from the future by mutilating their present!” he said.

The pope also cautioned the international community against viewing Africa solely as a place of problems and failures. Often, this perspective is fueled by prejudices, he said.

“It is tempting to point to what does not work. It is easy to assume the judgmental tone of the moralizer of or the expert who imposes his conclusions and proposes, at the end of the day, few useful solutions,” he said.

He warned of the related risk of seeing Africa only through the prism of vast resources that can be easily exploited.

Relations between Christians and Muslims in Benin are generally good, and representatives of Islam were among those present at the Cotonou concert. The pope emphasized that “everyone of good sense” understands the need for interreligious dialogue today and rejects the attempt to justify religious violence.

“Aggression is an outdated relational form which appeals to superficial and ignoble instincts. To use the revealed
Indianapolis wasn’t the destination for just the 23,000 youth and chaperones who participated in the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) from Nov. 17-19. Also coming here were representatives of 76 religious orders to staff booths in the conference’s Vocations Village and thematic park known as “Victory Park.”

During the three days of the conference, thousands of teenagers went from booth to booth learning about the religious communities, their ministries and having fun along the way. “I like to go around and see what all the different orders are about,” said Ellarose Stewart, 17, of Port Orange, Fla. “I’ve never known much about them all. And now I can explore them.”

Sister Bridget Smith was one of the members of the order who staffed their booth in Indianapolis this year. She professed her final vows last year. “That was the opportunity that I got to learn about Mother Clelia,” said Sister Angela in a Nov. 19 telephone interview with The Criterion. “And I only got literature. It wasn’t like someone sat down and told me about her. Yes, I started to realize that I didn’t need to be afraid of a vocation. And I found a community where I really felt was calling me.” I’m very happy here.”

Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz of Anchorage, Alaska was pleased with the number of orders represented in Vocations Village and the many teenagers learning about them. “It’s a unique experience for young people. I think it’s a real revelation for many young people,” Archbishop Schwietz said. “It’s certainly a big opportunity for young people who have been working hard to create a positive atmosphere for vocations within the parishes and within families.”

Handing out literature and having conversations with priests and religious brothers and sisters is one way to nurture vocations. Praying for them is another.

That happened during NCYC in a holy hour of eucharistic adoration for vocations on Nov. 18. “The Lord has created each and every one of us a destiny, a purpose,” said Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City in a homily during the holy hour. “(If we) want to be saints, become the unique saints that God calls each one of us to be along whichever path the Lord has prepared for us, utilizing our unique gifts and talents and opportunities—all of those things which shape and form our lives—and placing them at the service of the Lord.”

Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz of Anchorage, right, plays Wii baseball with Madeleine Kelly of Louisville, Ky., on Nov. 18. In the National Catholic Youth Conference’s Vocations Village at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

Fun and faith draw Catholic teens to Victory Park at youth conference.

By Sean Gallagher

One of the most popular places during the National Catholic Youth Conference was Victory Park, a theme park inside the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis that featured everything from games and free gifts to college information and a coffee-house setting for music.

There are five of the most popular activities that teenagers enjoyed during the conference on Nov. 19:

Posing with the pope—The opportunity to get a picture taken with Pope Benedict XVI was just too irresistible for many teenagers, including Brenden Popson and Sam Murphy of Our Lady of the Lake Parish in St. Louis. “I had to wing it because I was standing on a stage when his picture was being taken,” Brenden said. “My wife and I were crying.”

Getting silly with the Salesians—Hoping to win a yo-yo, beach ball or flying disc, teenagers flocked to a carnival-like area staffed by Salesian priests and sisters. Prizes were earned for such achievements as bouncing a marble into a thimble, knocking down milk bottles with bean bags, throwing metal rings onto a bottle’s neck, and knocking over soda cans by shooting rubber bands.

Being a kid—The fun continued in the play area of Victory Park where teenagers jumped in a moon bounce, competed in a human foosball game, jousted with large soda cans by shooting rubber bands. Chalking it up to the power of music—More than 45 singers and bands performed in a coffee house setting and settings for music.

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