



The

# Criterion

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Founder saddened by closing of Terre Haute pro-life ministry, page 9.

CriterionOnline.com

December 16, 2011

Vol. LII, No. 11 75¢

## Bishops' concerns rise over growing infringements on religious liberty

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Concerns that religious liberty is being eroded by government action and policymaking prompted the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to open a campaign in 2011 to head off what they consider dangers to the rights of people of faith and conscience.

The bishops' concerns deepened as the year progressed, leading to the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty in September.

The 10 bishops on the committee are working to shape public policy and coordinate the Church's response on the issue.

Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport, Conn., was named to chair the committee, and he wasted no time in taking the bishops' concerns to various public forums.

Addressing the bishops on Nov. 14 at their fall general meeting in Baltimore, Bishop Lori said there seems to be a pattern in culture and law to treat religion "as merely a private matter between an individual and one's own God.

"Instead of promoting toleration of differing religious views, some laws, some decisions and some administrative regulations treat religion not as a contributor to our nation's common morality, but as a divisive and disruptive force better kept out of public life," he said.

The issue posed such deep concerns that Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, president of the bishops' conference, pursued a private meeting with President Barack Obama at the White House.

Archbishop Dolan said he came away from the Nov. 8 meeting "a bit more at peace than when I entered" the Oval Office.

Speaking at a news conference after Bishop Lori's address, Archbishop Dolan said the president was "very open to the

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Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan

Photo by John Shaughnessy



Benedictine Sister Mary Nicolette Etienne smiles with joy after her eighth-grade religion students at Holy Name of Jesus School in Beech Grove surprised her on Dec. 7 with a trip to Lourdes, France—the dream trip she has wanted to take ever since she heard the story of the promise that her mother made to God there as a young woman.

## Students' surprise sends special teacher on a dream trip to sacred grotto in France

By John Shaughnessy

BEECH GROVE—The 31 eighth-grade students kept the great surprise a secret for more than two months, knowing it would be the trip of a lifetime for their favorite teacher who was turning 50 on Dec. 7.

Ever since the eighth-grade students at Holy Name of Jesus School in Beech Grove were in the fourth grade, they have had Benedictine Sister Mary Nicolette Etienne as their religion teacher—a teacher who has touched their lives with her laughter, her side hugs and her joyous way of helping them "to know, love and serve God."

They've seen her fashion fondness for turtlenecks, helped her learn to text and

come to know her longtime dream of wanting to visit the sacred grotto in Lourdes, France—because of the special promise that her mother, Kay (Voges) Etienne, once made there as a young woman more than 55 years ago.

Back then, Kay was single as she knelt before the statue of the Blessed Mother and said a prayer that was part promise and part offer to God.

At the time, some people told Kay that she should follow in her older sister's footsteps and become a Benedictine sister. But Kay saw her future as a wife and mother. So at the grotto, she told God that any children she had could serve him in the priesthood or religious life.

A few years later, Kay married

Paul Etienne in 1957. In the next 12 years, they welcomed six children to their family.

Sister Nicolette was the first child in the family to make the religious life her own. Three of her brothers became priests. Father Bernard Etienne and Father Zachary Etienne both serve in the Evansville Diocese, while Bishop Paul D. Etienne, once a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, leads the Diocese of Cheyenne in Wyoming. Two others siblings, Rick and Angela, married and have families.

"Ever since I heard that story from my mother, I've always wanted to go to Lourdes and kneel down and pray in that same spot where my mother knelt down and prayed," Sister Nicolette recalled. "It's

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## Indiana's bishops offer statement on state labor issues

(Editor's note: With the start of the 2012 Indiana General Assembly less than a month away, proposed bills have prompted a public discussion regarding labor unions and workers' rights. Because these topics affect the common good, the Catholic bishops of Indiana issued the following statement, which outlines principles of Church social teaching that can guide deliberations and those people involved. This statement was recently shared with Gov. Mitch Daniels and each member of the state legislature.)



In 2011, a number of new laws were passed in the Indiana State Legislature concerning labor unions. Additional legislation is being proposed concerning workers and labor unions.

These laws and the

proposed new legislation have certainly generated significant debate and emotion within our community. As a Church, we Catholics always seek to promote justice and the common good, and foster goodwill and harmony within our community.

The Catholic Church has a long history of promoting workers' rights and justice in the market place.

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII outlined the basic principles in his encyclical letter "Rerum Novarum."

Among other things, the pope clarified Catholic social teaching on the protection of basic economic and political rights, including the right to a just wage and the right to organize associations or unions to defend just claims. To that end, we offer a brief review of key principles from Catholic social teaching that should be kept in mind.

**The intrinsic dignity of the human person**

The intrinsic dignity of the human

person is the core value of Catholic social teaching. "Men and women, in the concrete circumstances of history, represent the heart and soul of Catholic social thought" ("Centessimus Annus," 11).

The whole of the Church's social doctrine, in fact, develops from the principle that affirms the inviolable dignity of the human person ("Mater et Magistra," 220).

This dignity grounds certain rights including—but not limited to—the right to a just wage ("Laborem Exercens," 19), the right to a working environment that is not harmful to the workers' physical health or to their moral integrity ("Laborem Exercens," 19), and the right to assemble and form associations ("Rerum Novarum," 49ff).

**Rights have limits that are shaped by the rights of others, and by the**

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sensitivities” of the U.S. Catholic Church on issues related to religious freedom. He said the meeting touched on a wide range of topics and that by mutual agreement



with the White House, additional details would not be made public.

The issue also gained the attention of Vatican officials. Eighteen bishops from New England states discussed the Church’s response to government infringements on religious liberty during the first round of “ad limina” visits in early November in visits with several Vatican agencies.

Bishop Lori took the Church’s concerns to Capitol Hill in October, testifying during a hearing by the House Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on the Constitution. He explained that the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence require government “to acknowledge and protect religious liberty as fundamental, no matter the moral and political trends of the moment.”

During 2011, he said, “the bishops of the United States have watched with increasing alarm as this great national legacy of religious liberty, so profoundly in harmony with our own teachings, has been subject to ever more frequent assault and ever more rapid erosion.”

Underlying the bishops’ concerns was a series of government actions:

- Interim rules issued by the Department of Health and Human Services in August that would mandate no-cost coverage of contraception and sterilization

in most private health insurance plans, accompanied by a proposed religious exemption that Catholic and other religious leaders considered too narrowly drawn.

- The denial of grant funding by the Department of Health and Human Services to the bishops’ Migration and Refugee Services to continue providing case management services to foreign-born human trafficking victims because the agency declined to refer for or provide contraceptive service, abortion and sterilization if a client request such services.

- The U.S. Agency for International Development’s requirement that Catholic Relief Services and other contractors include condom distribution in their HIV prevention activities and provide

contraception in a range of international relief and development programs.

- The Department of Justice’s actions to mischaracterize the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which states that marriage is the union of a man and a woman, as an act of bigotry and to actively attack its constitutionality.

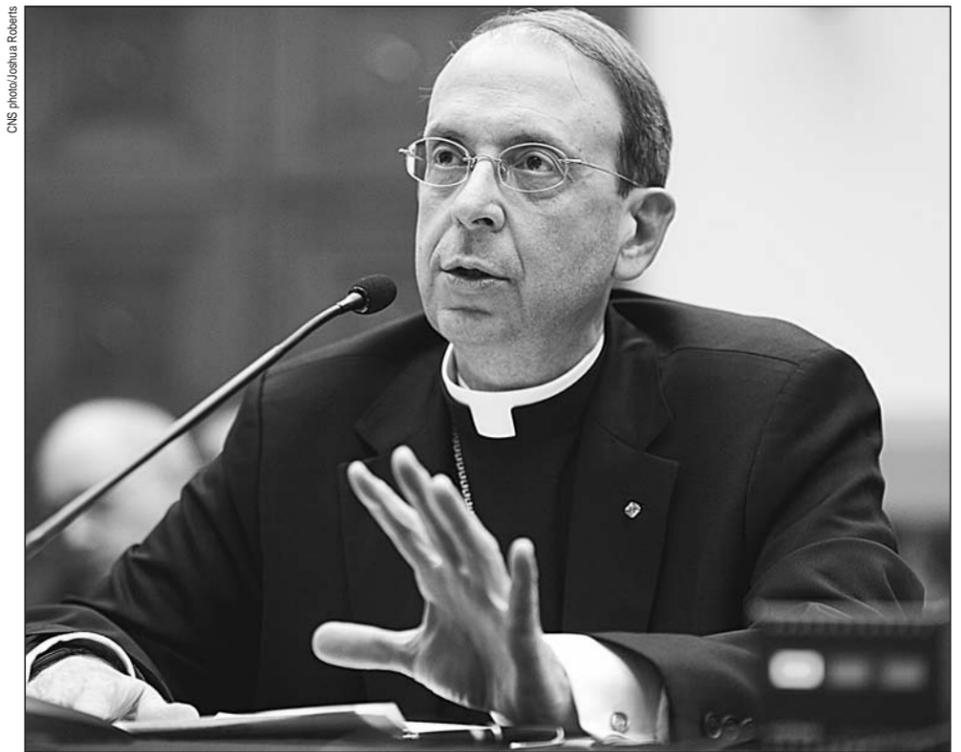
- The Justice Department’s efforts to undermine the “ministerial exception” that exempts religious institutions from some civil laws when it comes to hiring and firing.

- State actions on same-sex marriage that have resulted in Catholic Charities agencies in Illinois being “driven out of the adoption and foster care business” and some county clerks in New York state facing legal action for refusing to participate in same-sex unions.

A White House spokesman said on Nov. 29 that the Obama administration was working to “strike the right balance between expanding coverage of preventive

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

—Bishop William C. Lori



Bishop William C. Lori of Bridgeport, Conn., testifies on the protection of religious liberty before a subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington on Oct. 26. Concerns that religious liberty is being eroded by government action and policymaking prompted the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to open a campaign in 2011 to head off what they consider threats to the rights of people of faith and conscience.

services and respecting religious beliefs” as it decides on a religious exemption in health plans beginning on Jan. 1, 2013.

At least one bishop has said he would be forced to stop offering health insurance to his employees if the HHS mandate remains unchanged. Bishop Robert N. Lynch of St. Petersburg, Fla., said on Nov. 30 during the diocesan Red Mass, “If [government officials] fail to shift in their present positions, then 2,300 employees of the Diocese of St. Petersburg will lose their health care coverage which they have come to treasure and rely upon.”

Bishop Lynch, whose diocese is self-insured, said he “would simply give them what we would have paid for their health care, and tell them they have to look for coverage elsewhere.”

It was not just the bishops who voiced concern about threats to religious liberty.

An unusual coalition of national

Catholic organizations and universities placed full page ads in two Capitol Hill publications in October to protest the Obama administration’s plan to include contraceptives and sterilization among the mandated “preventive services” for women under the new health reform law.

The signers of the ad included Archbishop Dolan, the presidents of the University of Notre Dame and The Catholic University of America, the heads of the Knights of Columbus, Catholic Association of Latino Leaders, Catholic Relief Services, Knights of Peter Claver and its ladies auxiliary, Alliance of Catholic Health Care, U.S. Society of St. Vincent de Paul, National Catholic Bioethics Center, National Council of Catholic Women, Catholic Volunteer Network, National Catholic Partnership on Disability and Catholic Daughters of the Americas. †

# BISHOPS

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**responsibilities that come with the exercise of those rights.**

## The right to a just wage

“Remuneration is the most important means for achieving justice in work relationships” (“*Laborem Exercens*,” 19). Workers must be paid a wage that allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner.

However, the right to a just wage is not absolute and other factors shape the assessment of a just wage—namely, the effective contribution which each individual makes to the economic effort and the financial state of the company for which he or she works (“*Mater et Magistra*,” 71).

## The right of free association

Church teaching supports the right of groups of employees to freely associate and to form unions. “They [unions] are indeed a mouthpiece for the struggle for social justice ... but it is not a struggle ‘against’ others” (“*Laborem Exercens*,” 20).

“The role of unions is not to ‘play politics’ in the sense that the expression is commonly understood today. Unions do not have the character of political parties struggling for power; they should not be subjected to the decision of political parties or have too close links with them” (“*Laborem Exercens*,” 20).

Of particular concern are unions that use their resources to support politicians or political parties that clearly devalue the sanctity of human life or the institution of marriage. The protection of human life, and the integrity of any marriage as the union of one man and one woman, are foundational elements of the

common good.

The Church has a sacred reverence for the dignity of conscience and for the right to act in freedom to make moral decisions (“*Gaudium et Spes*,” 41 and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1782). In keeping with this, any form of coercion on the part of ownership, management or a union is to be condemned.

## Closing thoughts

We offer our teaching and principles. How these are applied is another matter altogether, best discerned within the political and public forums. “The Church’s social doctrine teaches that relations within the world of work must be marked by cooperation: hatred and attempts to eliminate the other are completely unacceptable” (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, #306).

It is our prayer that legislators, owners, managers, workers, unions and associations continue to engage in constructive dialogue that puts the dignity and free will of the human person first, while working cooperatively for the common good.

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 Advertising .....317-236-1454  
 Toll free: .....1-800-382-9836, ext. 1570  
 Circulation: .....317-236-1425  
 Toll free: .....1-800-382-9836, ext. 1425

**Price:** \$22.00 per year, 75 cents per copy

**Postmaster:**  
 Send address changes to *The Criterion*,  
 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

**Web site:** [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com)

**E-mail:** [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

Published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January. Mailing address: 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN. Copyright © 2011 Criterion Press Inc. ISSN 0574-4350.



MEMBER  
CATHOLIC PRESS ASSOCIATION

*The Criterion* (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.

1400 N. Meridian St.  
 Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367  
 317-236-1570  
 800-382-9836 ext. 1570  
[criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org)

Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.  
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# Retiring superintendent's legacy includes improving schools

By John Shaughnessy

The questions are ones that coaches, teachers and others consider when they near the end of a major part of their lives—questions that Ron Costello has thought about as he prepares to retire on Dec. 31 as the superintendent of Catholic schools for the archdiocese.

What will I be remembered for? Did I make a difference?

"It's something you think about after 43 years in education," Costello says as he sits in his office. "You wonder, 'What is your legacy?' Yet, the more I think about it, that really isn't the issue. The real issue is whether you're getting better or worse as a school system."

The evidence indicates that Catholic schools in the archdiocese have improved significantly during Costello's 10 years of leadership:

More than 97 percent of Catholic high school students in the archdiocese graduate and enter college.

Twenty of the 68 Catholic schools in the archdiocese have received national recognition as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education.

Catholic schools are more affordable for more lower-income families through the Indiana voucher program that became law on July 1.

"His 10-year tenure turned our schools around," says Annette "Mickey" Lentz, the chancellor of the archdiocese and the former executive director of the office of Catholic education and faith formation. "Our schools are where

they are today due to his leadership, calm witness and patience. I could always count on him in so many ways."

Then there is the personal legacy of Costello, a U.S. Marines veteran of the Vietnam War and a soft-spoken man who is known by his staff for his caring while leading a school system of more than 22,000 students—the third largest school system in Indiana.

"For nine years, I've worked with him and for him," says Brenda Pfarr, executive assistant for the archdiocesan office of Catholic education. "For every evening meeting during that time, he has never failed to help me clean up and put things away. Then he would walk me to my car. Not everyone will do that for you."

Costello's emphasis on an education driven by achievement and a life marked by values led him to the archdiocese in 2001 after 33 years as a teacher, counselor, assistant principal and assistant superintendent in public schools.

His arrival came at a time when Lilly Endowment Inc. provided \$10 million to the archdiocese to focus on school improvements, including student performance and professional development of staff members.

"It was the first time I ever got a check for \$10 million," Costello says with a laugh.

The archdiocese raised another \$8 million for the effort, which helped to lead to the Blue Ribbon School of Excellence awards and increased student scores on standardized tests—success that drew national attention.

"He made us a leader across the

nation in all education, not just Catholic education," says Kathy Mears, assistant superintendent of Catholic schools in the areas of curriculum and learning resources. "We were using student achievement data to make decisions well ahead of anyone else. As a result, our student achievement has grown dramatically."

Still, Costello kept insisting there was room for continued improvement, colleagues say.

"Ron never seems to be completely happy with high student achievement data," says Harry Plummer, executive director of the office of Catholic education. "He is always pushing for measuring how student achievement can be made even higher, and working with schools to develop the learning strategies necessary to make this happen. He has had a very positive influence on our schools."

Even as Costello nears retirement, he is still aware of the main challenges for Catholic schools in the future—to keep building on their academic success, to continue to maintain their Catholic identity, and to help make Catholic education more affordable for families through an emphasis on finances, development and enrollment.

"Our biggest struggle is how we can continue to make our schools more affordable for kids," says the father of four grown children who all attended St. Lawrence School and Bishop Chatard High School, both in Indianapolis. "The biggest difference is the voucher system. It's foreseeable that half of our kids could benefit from the voucher



During his 10 years as the superintendent of Catholic schools in the archdiocese, Ron Costello has stressed a combination of academic excellence and values-based education. Here, Costello, who will retire on Dec. 31, poses for a photo with four students at Holy Name of Jesus School in Beech Grove. They include Dolan Monroe, left, Brad Meade, Zach Taylor and Gabriel Lopez. The photo was taken at the school after a Dec. 7 ceremony honoring Benedictine Sister Mary Nicolette Etienne, a religion teacher.

system in the future. Our enrollment grew 612 students this year. That's not happening anywhere in the country."

Still, Costello insists that the Church and parishes have to continue to make a financial commitment to Catholic schools—especially in the areas of technology and facilities—to keep them competitive and successful.

"My wife, Cindy, taught in Catholic schools. Our kids went to Catholic schools," Costello says. "We know from the values perspective how important Catholic schools are. Catholic schools not only do a wonderful job in terms of religious education, we also do a wonderful job of teaching academics. Our kids perform exceedingly well in

reading, writing, math and science. We prepare them well for high school and college, which prepares them for life."

Costello is proud to be part of that legacy of Catholic schools. His colleagues are proud of the contributions he has made as an educator and as a person.

"When I think of the contribution that Ron Costello has made to education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, I'm reminded that Ron served his country in Vietnam, served his family as a faithful husband and father, and served his faith as a leader in Catholic education," says Rob Rash, assistant superintendent of Catholic schools in the areas of administrative school personnel and licensure. "He's a real stand-up guy." †

## Pope says late cardinal should inspire use of mass media to spread Gospel

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI said he hoped the legacy of the late Cardinal John P. Foley would inspire others to make the Gospel known through mass media.

In a telegram to Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia on Dec. 12, the pope expressed his sadness and condolences for the death of Cardinal Foley, who died on Dec. 11 in Darby, Pa., after a battle with leukemia. The College of Cardinals now has 192 members, 109 of whom are under age 80 and eligible to vote.

"I recall with gratitude the late cardinal's years of priestly ministry in his beloved Archdiocese of Philadelphia, his distinguished service to the Holy See as president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications and most recently his labors on behalf of the Christian communities of the Holy Land" as grand master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, the pope wrote.

The pope prayed that the cardinal's "lifelong commitment to the Church's presence in the media will inspire others to take up this apostolate so essential to the proclamation of the Gospel and the progress of the new evangelization."

Archbishop Claudio Celli, who succeeded the U.S. cardinal as president of the communications council, said Cardinal Foley "stressed the positive potential of the

media in informing, instructing and inspiring others, as a key component of the Church's mission and pastoral outreach in spreading the Gospel."

The cardinal combined his journalistic training, professionalism, a friendly and approachable manner with his wisdom, humor and "passion to share the good news of God's infinite love for every person," the archbishop said.

Cardinal Foley promoted dialogue within the Church about communication, culture and media, and called on professionals to seek the highest standards in their work, he said.

Msgr. Paul Tighe, secretary of the communications council, said Cardinal Foley was deeply committed to "helping people who maybe weren't so close to the Church to understand better the Church that he loved so much.

"His great sensitivity was finding a language, and a way of speaking, a way of helping them to understand the Church and to maybe overcome the little misunderstandings that could often color their attitude toward the Church," he told Catholic News Service.

Although Msgr. Tighe never worked directly with the cardinal, he said "his was one of the friendliest and most encouraging faces and presence around the Vatican.

"The thing that always struck me was while people had enormous respect for him, they had an even greater affection," he said.

Cardinal Foley was a caring listener who took the time to send personalized and thoughtful notes and gifts, the Irish monsignor said.

"As he was leaving Rome, he went out of his way to give me a gift of something he had which was a signed letter by the Irish patriot Michael Collins," who was killed during the Irish Civil War in 1922.

"It was the attentiveness to say, 'I know that you would like this' that made the man," he said.

John F. Fink, editor emeritus of *The Criterion*, knew Cardinal Foley from their time together in the Catholic press.

"I first got to know him in 1970 when he was named editor of the *Catholic Standard and Times* of Philadelphia, and worked closely with him in the Catholic Press Association," he said. "After his appointment as president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications in 1984, I traveled extensively with him to World Congresses of the Catholic Press and met frequently with him in Rome during my years as president of the International Federation of Catholic Press Associations."

Fink also remembers the late cardinal as a man of great humor.

"No companion for dinner was more fun than John. He

was renowned for his puns, and the stories he told about some of his colleagues in the Vatican were hilarious, often told with an Italian accent. He also enjoyed his own jokes."

Marjorie Weeke, who met Cardinal Foley when he worked as a reporter covering the Second Vatican Council from 1963 to 1965, recalled when Blessed John Paul II named him president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications in 1984.

She said he was both surprised and excited to head the office because "he was such a media person, and right away he called some of the [news] bureaus and asked if he could be helpful to them."

Weeke, who worked at the council from 1971 to 2001, said the cardinal was always trying to make the Church more accessible and understandable to the media.

Whenever a papal document came out, he would write up a summary of what it said and meant so "it would be easy for the press to read. It was helpful, that's why the journalists liked him so much, and he was always available for interviews for anybody," she said.

Under the cardinal's tutelage, the council, which dealt with television and photo journalists' access to the Vatican, gradually chipped away at Vatican reticence to allowing audiovisual journalists anywhere near the pope for fear their presence would be a disturbance, she said.

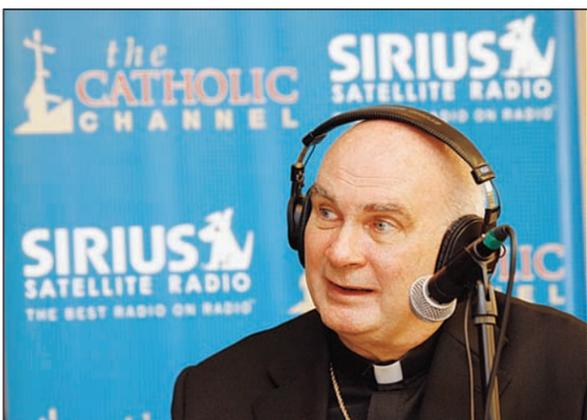
Yet "little by little we expanded to get media closer to the pope," and now they are stationed on special platforms or areas off to the side or positioned at a short distance in front of the pope, she said.

The council liked to "push the system," and the cardinal did it in "a very friendly way. He'd always go back again with another reason why" something needed to be done or changed, she said.

One thing that made Cardinal Foley so special, she said, was that despite his career climb, "he was always a priest"—a vocation he loved very much. Even though he didn't have time to do the kind of pastoral work he was used to doing back in the United States, he still did confirmations, celebrated Mass, blessed marriages or heard confessions as often as he could.

"People felt they could talk personally to him," and he was able to touch people's hearts even over the air when they heard him doing commentary during the pope's Christmas midnight Mass, she said.

Weeke recalled one man in Australia wrote to Cardinal Foley telling him he was the reason for his conversion to Catholicism after hearing his Christmas broadcast, which often generated fan mail praising his warm, up-close-and-personal style of commentary. †



U.S. Cardinal John P. Foley, a dean of the Catholic press in the United States, died on Dec. 11 in Darby, Pa., after a battle with leukemia. He was 76. Cardinal Foley spent more than two decades leading the Church's social communications council and later worked for the Church in the Middle East. He is pictured on air with Sirius Satellite Radio during the 2007 Catholic Media Convention in New York.



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## Editorial

# 'Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship' outlines Catholics' political responsibility

In 2007, the bishops of the United States adopted a statement titled "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," which serves as a summary of "the continuing teaching of [the] bishops' conference," and a source of "guidance for Catholics in the exercise of their rights and duties as participants in our democracy." The statement does not tell people how to vote, but it underlies the importance of voting with a well-formed conscience.

In a new introduction to the bishops' 2007 statement, New York Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, current president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), says the statement "does not offer a voters' guide, scorecard of issues or direction on how to vote. It applies Catholic moral principles to a range of important issues, and warns against misguided appeals to 'conscience' to ignore fundamental moral claims, to reduce Catholic moral concerns to one or two matters or to justify choices simply to advance partisan, ideological or personal interests."

Archbishop Dolan continues by pointing out that "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" "does not offer a quantitative listing of issues for equal consideration, but outlines and makes important distinctions among moral issues, acknowledging that some involve the clear obligation to oppose intrinsic evils, which can never be justified, and that others require action to pursue justice and promote the common good."

In short, the bishops' statement reminds Catholics—and all people of good will—that in today's complex and murky political-economic-cultural climate, a well-formed conscience is more important than ever.

How does one form his or her conscience? We must first understand the issues. Not just the surface "spin," but in depth. We must know what candidates stand for, what policies and laws they are proposing, and how the various proposed initiatives will benefit—or detract from—the common good.

Secondly, we must understand the teaching of the Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals. Here again, we must go beneath the surface. We must form our consciences in the light of authentic Catholic teaching, and we must bring fundamental moral principles to the debate so that we can make informed decisions about candidates and issues.

Finally, we must participate in the political process—first and foremost by exercising our right to vote, but also by being active participants, not passive spectators, in the political process.

As faithful citizens, we have a right and a responsibility to make our voices heard—to let candidates and elected officials know that we will hold them accountable for what they say, and most importantly, for what they do or fail to do as public servants. In whatever ways are appropriate to each of us, we must



New York Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, celebrates Mass on Nov. 14 during the bishops' annual fall general assembly in Baltimore.

be engaged in the process of electing and holding accountable those who govern—or hope to govern—in our name.

Archbishop Dolan's new introduction to "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" identifies a series of issues that he says represent "current and fundamental problems, some involving opposition to intrinsic evils and others raising serious moral questions." These are issues that require our special attention as we seek to form our consciences, engage in the political process, and make our voices heard.

First, the bishops call attention to the continuing destruction of unborn children through abortion and other threats to human life and dignity.

Second, we are asked to reflect on renewed efforts to force Catholics engaged in ministries—health care, education and social services—to violate their consciences or stop serving those in need.

Third, the bishops note the growing threats against marriage.

Fourth, they ask us to consider the devastating effects of the current economic crises—here at home and throughout the world.

Fifth, the American bishops once again call attention to our nation's broken immigration system and to the urgent need for reforms that promote true respect for law, protect the human rights and dignity of immigrants and their families.

Finally, we are reminded of the horrors of war, terrorism and violence wherever they occur, but particularly in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East.

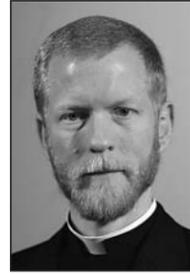
As faithful citizens, Catholics are called to become informed, engaged and outspoken citizens who know their faith, who can bring fundamental moral principles to the debate, and who are not afraid to exercise their political power for the sake of the common good.

As Archbishop Dolan writes, "This kind of political responsibility is a requirement of our faith and our duty as citizens."

—Daniel Conway

## Making Sense Out of Bioethics/Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

### Unconditional parental love



Once, I met a woman who had worked for years in fashion and modeling. Not surprisingly, she was strikingly attractive. She was accompanied by her teenage daughter who, by contrast, was rather unremarkable to look at, maybe even a "plain Jane."

After spending time with them, I began to sense that the mother, whose life had largely revolved around her appearance, seemed to look down on her daughter, perhaps unconsciously, because of her average appearance. Her daughter seemed aware of this lack of maternal acceptance, and seemed troubled and uncomfortable as she tried to compensate and please her mom in other ways.

The girl's situation was a strong reminder to me of how important it is for every child to experience unconditional acceptance from their parents if they are to grow and mature in a healthy way. Unconditional love profoundly and beautifully molds us as human beings.

A growing number of parents in our society, however, no longer seem to hold to this key notion of unconditionally accepting their own children.

If parents are told by doctors that their children might be born with physical or mental disabilities, many parents today will reject them and even yield to the temptation to end their lives through direct abortion.

I was recently discussing the Special Olympics with the father of a boy who has Down syndrome, and he remarked that when he takes his son to the local chapter, there seem to be less new children participating each year. He wondered if this could be due to the expanded targeting of Down syndrome children through prenatal testing and abortion.

Most unborn children diagnosed with Down syndrome, in fact, are never allowed to be born. Data from the United Kingdom indicate that between 1989 and 2006 approximately 92 percent of women chose to terminate a pregnancy with a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome, while in the U.S., several published studies suggest the figure may be somewhere between 87 percent and 98 percent. A great many Down syndrome children, indeed, never see the light of day.

In the face of these harsh data, the importance of explicitly repudiating the eugenic mindset that has taken hold in our society cannot be overstated. No child is perfect, but every child is precious. We need to act as a people "set apart" in our attitude to the begetting of children who may be disabled. Historically, Catholics have always stood apart in this way.

Practically, this means overturning our culturally conditioned attitudes toward "imperfect" children, and accepting every child

without preconditions. We must push back against the almost ubiquitous pressure that counsels us to ensure that our children are born without defects.

Bioethicist Luke Gormally argues it this way. "In part, these pressures are the natural temptation to avoid the burdens of care for the handicapped. . . . In part, however, they are the pressures of cultural attitudes, assimilated by many Christians, toward the child.

"For many, it has become merely quaint to think of each child as a unique gift of God," he continues. "Children are more like planned acquisitions in our culture, acquisitions which should fit into our expectations about how our lives should go, about the ease and enjoyments that should characterize our lifestyle. A child who might threaten our ease may, if he or she is viewed as an acquisition, be thought of as a replaceable acquisition. And, indeed, genetic counselors will tell parents, 'you can terminate this pregnancy and try again for a 'normal child.'"

A husband and wife "are called to" give themselves to each other completely and unreservedly, and to accept each other unconditionally in the marital embrace.

Every child of theirs, whether entering the world with a handicap or not, is an expression and fruit of themselves and their acceptance of each other.

To reject their own progeny because of a disability is to reject each other on some level. To deny life to their own flesh and blood is also to reject an infinite gift from the Giver of gifts, and to arrogate to themselves a ruthless power over life.

Meanwhile, the unconditional acceptance of a child as a gift of God flows from the true and unconditional acceptance of each other as husband and wife, even with all their spousal faults and defects.

As Gormally concludes, "Truly unreserved self-giving carries with it a commitment to unreserved acceptance of the fruit of that self-giving. The dignity of the child is only adequately recognized in the acceptance and cherishing of him just as he is."

We do well continually to realign our thinking so we can come to see how our children, whether "perfect" or not, are treasures and never possessions. They are gifts, and never acquisitions. They are blessings to be safeguarded and nurtured in the embrace of unconditional parental acceptance.

(Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale University and did post-doctoral work at Harvard University. He is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as the director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See [www.ncbcenter.org](http://www.ncbcenter.org).) †

## Letter to the Editor

### At what cost—literally—is new translation of Roman Missal?

I have just finished reading the article quoting Father Jonathan Meyer in the Dec. 2 issue of *The Criterion* regarding the new English translation of the *Roman Missal*.

I, like many of my Catholic friends, am adapting easily to the changes but I, also like many of my Catholic friends, am questioning the timing of this change and the money it is costing to put into practice.

Why is it necessary? I cannot help but ask: Is this really a necessary change, especially in today's economy when money is tight for everyone? Is this change really going to make a change in my faith?

At my parish, we started out with paper instructions to follow but, as you might guess, they did not last long so they were replaced by a more durable product. What can this be costing?

I am a retired person, living mostly on Social Security and some small investments, so I have some idea of everyday expenses. I

also know that our parishes and schools are in trouble financially.

We, as Catholics, are asked to reach deep into our pockets each and every year to contribute from our "treasures" to support our parishes and the archbishop's annual appeal.

We are asked to take a name tag from the Christmas tree in our church and bring a gift for that person. We are asked to contribute to the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the HOOP ministry, the Christmas decorations—it goes on and on.

I truly want to help as much as I can, but I cannot understand the spending of thousands of dollars to change a few words in the *Roman Missal* when there is so much need out there.

In the big picture, does it really matter what words we say—as long as we are practicing our faith and attending and participating in the Mass? Does it really matter if we say "And also with you" or "And with your spirit?"

Should we not be putting our "treasures" to work in helping the poor, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, etc., rather than worrying about a few words in a missal?

Marie E. Adams  
Greenwood

# A century of faith comes to an end at St. Leonard of Port Maurice Parish

By Mary Ann Garber

A century of sharing faith and fellowship came to an end on Nov. 19 at St. Leonard of Port Maurice Church in West Terre Haute.

Exactly 100 years to the day after St. Leonard parishioners celebrated Mass at their first church in western Vigo County, the Terre Haute Deanery parish at 126 N. Eighth St. was closed by the archdiocese due to declining membership and future parish staffing challenges.

Parishioners from about 35 households are in the process of transferring their memberships to nearby St. Mary-of-the-Woods Parish, the designated receiving community six miles away, or to another Terre Haute area parish of their choice.

"It has been 'the' Catholic presence in the West Terre Haute community," said Providence Sister Joan Slobig, parish life coordinator of St. Leonard and St. Mary-of-the-Woods parishes for seven years.

"The first Mass in the original church was celebrated on Nov. 19, 1911," she said. "The final liturgy [was] 100 years to the day so that's rather poignant."

St. Leonard Parish was closed after a lengthy discernment process as part of the implementation of the Terre Haute Deanery strategic plan.

"The parish actually began as a house church in the home of the Gropp family in 1910," Sister Joan explained. "The parishioners in the West Terre Haute area immediately began to work toward the building of the church, which was

originally on the second floor of the school building. The current church was built in 1959. It took that many years for them to have a free-standing building for the church."

In recent years, the weekend Mass was celebrated at 4 p.m. on Saturdays.

"Parishioners have been challenged to make a decision and be registered in a new parish by Ash Wednesday," Sister Joan said, "so that gives them some time to discern and to check out the other

parishes in the deanery and make a decision."

Vigo County is the poorest county in the state, she said, and West Terre Haute has a large number of impoverished families and individuals.

"I think the thing that is wonderful [about St. Leonard Parish] is that, through the years since 1994, the parish has supported the Providence Food Pantry that is housed in the [former] school building," Sister Joan said. "The number of families that have been served through the pantry is phenomenal. The parish has made a huge commitment through the years to make sure that the hungry people in the area are fed. That's something that [the people] hope to be able to continue."

In a July 13 letter, Archbishop [now emeritus] Daniel M. Buechlein noted that "much prayerful work, research and reflection" by the Terre Haute Deanery Pastoral Leadership Team and Deanery Planning Team went into creating the strategic plan for future parish staffing.



Sr. Joan Slobig, S.P.



Parishioners at St. Leonard of Port Maurice Parish in West Terre Haute attended Mass at their church for the last time on Nov. 19.

"The decision to close St. Leonard of Port Maurice Parish was agonizing," the archbishop wrote, and was the result of "many hours [spent] in collection of data and input from the people of the deanery, reviewing resources—current and projected—as well as in prayerful contemplation before making the recommendation for [the] closing of your parish and the three other parishes."

St. Joseph Parish in Universal, Holy Rosary Parish in Seelyville and St. Ann Parish in Terre Haute will be closed in 2012.

"These closings are necessary to best use the Church's resources and to achieve vibrant ministries in the Terre Haute Deanery," the archbishop wrote. "... I thank you for your commitment to serving those most in need. We are going to continue to serve the less fortunate, and we will enhance these services."

In a Nov. 19 letter to St. Leonard parishioners, Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, apostolic administrator, wrote that "the closing of your parish brings some pain and sorrow, and I thank you for the dignified manner in which you have carried out this difficult task. ... We are reminded that our true home is found in God and is not contained by any walls."

Closing rituals focused on remembering all those who received the sacraments at the church, Sister Joan said. After the final Mass, the Eucharist was transferred to St. Mary-of-the-Woods Church.

"There is a sense of the sacredness of the place and gratitude for the 100 years of ministry that the parish has offered to the Catholic population of West Terre Haute," she said, "and also a celebration of the giftedness of the people. Their church building is closing, but their membership in the faith community is moving. That

doesn't end."

She said a wonderful homecoming Mass on Nov. 5 and emotional final liturgy on Nov. 19 gave parishioners time to pay tribute to their faith community.

"It [was] kind of bittersweet," Sister Joan said, "of sadness and gratitude at the same time for all that the community has meant to the people. The quality of the faith and fidelity of the Catholic presence in the West Terre Haute community are admirable, and the people are very proud of that."

Father Bernard Head, sacramental minister and priest moderator of St. Leonard and St. Mary-of-the-Woods parishes since 2002, said St. Leonard Parish will live on in its people.

"The closing of the parish means not just a building being shut down," Father Head said. "It means combining this congregation with another one. Hopefully, that will mean enriching that other congregation by bringing our gifts, our dedication to Christ, our talents, our efforts and our experience to them, and in return sharing their gifts."

Longtime St. Leonard parishioner Joe Anderson, a Terre Haute attorney who attended the former St. Leonard School, said the parish always had great priests and the Providence sisters that taught at the school were wonderful.

"It was like going to a prep school," Anderson said. "... It is just wonderful what the Sisters of Providence have done there."

Throughout the years, Anderson said, "the parish has been good for the whole community."

Julie Bowers, animator for the Terre Haute Deanery strategic plan, said St. Leonard parishioners are "a wonderful example of a group of very dedicated people walking this path very gracefully." †

## Vatican congregation approves miracle needed for Blessed Marianne Cope's canonization

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (CNS)—The path to sainthood for Blessed Marianne Cope of Molokai has been cleared after a Vatican congregation on Dec. 6 confirmed a second miracle attributed to her intercession.



Blessed Marianne Cope

The final step for her canonization is approval by Pope Benedict XVI.

The Vatican decision was announced on Dec. 6 by the sister's religious community, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities in Syracuse, N.Y., and by Honolulu Bishop Clarence R. Silva.

Mother Marianne, who worked as a teacher and hospital administrator in New York, spent the last 30 years of her life ministering on the Hawaiian island of Molokai to those with

leprosy. She died on the island in 1918 at age 80.

The Dec. 6 ruling by the Vatican Congregation for Saints' Causes confirmed recent decisions by a medical board and a group of theologians declaring that a second miracle could be attributed to Mother Marianne's intercession.

The first miracle required for her beatification was the medically unexplainable recovery of a New York girl who recovered from near death from multiple organ failure after prayers were said to Mother Marianne. The miracle was approved in 2004 by a medical board and a group of theologians. At the end of the year, Pope John Paul II affirmed the case. She was beatified in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on May 14, 2005.

The only known detail about the second miracle is that a woman's healing was declared inexplicable since doctors had expected her to die and were amazed at her survival. The Sisters of St. Francis will not disclose details of the second miracle until after the pope's proclamation of Mother Marianne's sainthood.

The announcement confirming the second miracle could be

attributed to Mother Marianne's intercession was "too good to be true," said Sister Patricia Burkard, general minister of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities.

She told Catholic News Service on Dec. 7 that in the 24 hours since receiving the news, she not only rejoiced with fellow sisters but gave countless interviews about Mother Marianne.

For the religious community, the news also was bittersweet because Sister of St. Francis Mary Laurence Hanley, director of Mother Marianne's cause, died on Dec. 2 at age 86 at the sisters' regional house in Syracuse.

The funeral for Sister Laurence was on Dec. 7. Sister Patricia called it a "wonderful coincidence" so near to the announcement of Mother Marianne because Sister Laurence's "life's work was fulfilled."

Sister Laurence began working on Mother Marianne's cause in the summer of 1974 as a part-time project while teaching. In 1977, she began full-time work on the cause, which she saw from its beginnings until now.

Sister Laurence worked with "great zest" nearly until the time of her death, said Sister Patricia, noting that just two months ago Sister Laurence's health declined rapidly and only recently she was diagnosed with inoperable brain cancer.

"My work is finished now," Sister Laurence said in the summer as she put together the last pieces of Mother Marianne's cause.

Sister Patricia said the sisters find comfort in knowing Sister Laurence is with Mother Marianne, and they "probably have much to rejoice in that meeting of one another."

Sister Patricia said the sisters see Mother Marianne as a "guide for our own dedication and ministry," and they also know they share her with many in Hawaii "where she is beloved."

She said the nuns view her as "an ordinary person ... who knew what was hers to do and did it."

This past May, Sister Patricia brought a small box holding the reliquary of bone fragments of Mother Marianne's remains to Hawaii and stopped at all the islands to allow people to venerate the relics, which are on permanent display in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace in Honolulu.

Honolulu's Bishop Silva said in his statement that the Vatican announcement caused particular joy in Hawaii because of Mother Marianne's work there, but also because her "example of selfless love can soon be an inspiration to all the world. She was a woman who brought hope and joy to people who had good reason to lose hope and to lament their condition in life."

"At this time when so many people are losing hope because of our economy and the increased unrest throughout the world, Blessed Marianne inspires us to work simply for the good of others and to allow God to work miracles through the simple things we do. We look forward to honoring this holy woman in our celebrations."

Mother Marianne, as the head of her religious community in Syracuse, led the first group of Franciscan sisters to the Hawaiian Islands in 1883 to establish a system of nursing care for leprosy patients. Of 50 religious superiors in the United States, Canada and Europe who were asked for help she was the only one to accept the challenge.

Once in Hawaii, she relinquished her leadership position in Syracuse to lead her mission for 35 years, five in Honolulu and the remainder on Molokai.

When she died, a Honolulu newspaper wrote: "Seldom has the opportunity come to a woman to devote every hour of 30 years to the mothering of people isolated by law from the rest of the world. She risked her own life in all that time, faced everything with unflinching courage and smiled sweetly through it all." †

## Events Calendar

### December 16

Most Holy Name of Jesus School, 21 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Christmas program**, 7 p.m. Information: 317-784-9078.

Our Lady of Grace Monastery, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Catholic Charismatic Renewal**, praise and worship, 7 p.m., Mass, 7:30 p.m., Father Dan Wilder, celebrant. Information: 317-846-0705.

### December 17

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

Women's Med Center, 1201 N. Arlington, Indianapolis. **Empty**

**Manger**, 2 p.m. Information: 812-342-9550.

Oldenburg Academy, 1 Twister Circle, Oldenburg. **"Winter Theatre Camp,"** students in second-eighth grades, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., \$15 per student, bring sack lunch or purchase box lunch \$5, reservation deadline Dec. 8. Information: 812-934-4440, ext. 240, or [slamping@oldenburgacademy.org](mailto:slamping@oldenburgacademy.org).

### December 18

Richmond Catholic

Community, 701 N. "A" St., Richmond. **Charismatic prayer group**, 7 p.m. Information: [dicksoncorp@parallax.ws](mailto:dicksoncorp@parallax.ws).

### December 21

Calvary Cemetery, Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Christmas Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439 or [www.catholiccemeteries.cc](http://www.catholiccemeteries.cc).

### December 23

Paoli Peaks, 2798 W. County Road 25 S., Paoli. **New Albany Deanery ski trip for families**,

young adult and youths, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$25 per person. Information: 812-945-2000 or [leah@nadyouth.org](mailto:leah@nadyouth.org).

### January 4

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced, new members welcome, 6:30 p.m. Information: 317-370-1189.

### January 8

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat

House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Discalced Carmelites Secular Order meeting**, noon. Information: 317-545-7681.

### January 12

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Abba, Father Chapter, Catholics United for the Faith," Catholicism: Viewing and Discussion**, 6-8:30 p.m., free-will donation. Information: 317-236-1569 or [parthur@archindy.org](mailto:parthur@archindy.org). †

## Retreats and Programs

### December 18

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. **"Youth Night at the 'Burg,"** 6:30-8 p.m. Information: 812-933-6437 or [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com).

### December 31

Michaela Farm, Oldenburg. **"Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count,"** 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Oldenburg Franciscan Center, lunch, \$7 per person. Information: 812-933-6437 or [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com).

### December 31

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E.

56th St., Indianapolis. **"Exploring the Gifts of the Holy Spirit," New Year's Eve Retreat**, Msgr. Paul Koetter and Father Eric Johnson, presenters, \$128 per person or \$246 married couple. Information: 317-545-7681 or [marcia.johnson@archindy.org](mailto:marcia.johnson@archindy.org).

Michaela Farm, Oldenburg. **"Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count,"** 7:30-1 p.m., lunch, Oldenburg Franciscan Center, \$7 per person. Information: 812-933-6437 or [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com).

### January 6-7

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Women's Discovery Week-end**, Kathy Davis Shanks,

Benedictine Sisters Mary Luke Jones, Joan Marie Massura and Sharon Bierman, presenters. Information: 317-788-7581 or [www.benedictinn.org](http://www.benedictinn.org).

### January 13-15

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Tobit Marriage Preparation Weekend Retreat."** Information: 317-545-7681 or [marcia.johnson@archindy.org](mailto:marcia.johnson@archindy.org).

### January 14-15

Mount St. Francis Retreat Center, 101 St. Anthony Drive, Mount St. Francis. **"On the Journey," New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministries retreat for high school juniors and seniors**, 9:30 a.m.,

\$85 per person. Information: 812-945-2000 or [leah@nadyouth.org](mailto:leah@nadyouth.org).

### January 22

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Pre-Cana Conference," marriage preparation program**. Information: 317-545-7681 or [marcia.johnson@archindy.org](mailto:marcia.johnson@archindy.org).

### January 23

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **"Come Away and Rest Awhile," silent reflection day**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$30 per person includes continental breakfast and lunch. Information: 317-545-7681 or [marcia.johnson@archindy.org](mailto:marcia.johnson@archindy.org). †

## Advent penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes throughout December

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

Dec. 20, 7 p.m. for St. Nicholas, Ripley County, and St. Anthony of Padua, Morris, at St. Anthony of Padua, Morris  
Dec. 22, 7 p.m. at St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bright

### Bloomington Deanery

Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville  
Dec. 21, 7 p.m. at St. Jude, Spencer

### Indianapolis East Deanery

Dec. 20, 7 p.m. for SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and St. Mary at St. Mary

### Indianapolis South Deanery

Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood  
Dec. 20, 7 p.m. at St. Ann

### New Albany Deanery

Dec. 18, 1 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight  
Dec. 18, 3 p.m. at Holy Family, New Albany  
Dec. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville

### Seymour Deanery

Dec. 19, 7 p.m. for St. Ann, Jennings County; St. Mary, North Vernon; and St. Joseph, Jennings County, at St. Joseph, Jennings County  
Dec. 21, 6 p.m. at St. Patrick, Salem  
Dec. 22, 6 p.m. at American Martyrs, Scottsburg

### Tell City Deanery

Dec. 21, 6:30 p.m. at St. Augustine, Leopold †

## 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](http://www.archindy.org/advent).

The page contains various Advent resources, including links to the daily readings, past reflections from Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buechlein, penance service schedules, images of past *Criterion* Christmas supplement covers and links of interest to other Advent Web sites. †

## St. Nicholas



Kyland Hamm, a 6-year-old member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, poses with "St. Nicholas" during a visit of the saintly bishop to the parish on Dec. 3, three days before his feast day. St. Nicholas handed out chocolate coins to the children of the parish. Advent and Christmas carols were sang during his visit, which concluded with a tree lighting ceremony at the Bloomington Deanery faith community.

## Details announced for St. Francis de Sales School Reunion

The organizers of the reunion of students of the former St. Francis de Sales School in Indianapolis have announced details about the upcoming event.

It will take place from noon to 5 p.m. on June 23, 2012, at the Knights of Columbus Council #5290, 4332 N. German Church Rd. in Indianapolis.

Participants are encouraged to make a \$20 donation to defray the cost of the reunion.

For more information, please call Jeff Heninnger at 317-446-5087. Donations can be mailed to St. Francis de Sales All School Reunion, P.O. Box 193, Fortville, IN 46040. †



## Lessons and carols

Elizabeth Welch, left, a music teacher at Lumen Christi Catholic School in Indianapolis, directs the school's fifth and sixth graders in playing chimes during an Advent lessons and carols service on Dec. 6 at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis.

# Economic hardship hits nearly all, from individuals to nations

WASHINGTON (CNS)—It's not new, but it's still news. The economy remains in a funk. Not just in the United States, but it has spread to many nations around the world.

Although the "Great Recession," which officially started in December 2007, was declared over in June 2009, U.S. unemployment numbers were staying stubbornly around 9 percent.



WASHINGTON LETTER

In December, the figure dipped to 8.6 percent, the lowest it has been since the second full month of Barack Obama's presidency, but that was because nearly three times as many people quit looking for work as found jobs.

The number of poor Americans has grown to roughly 49 million, or close to one in six overall.

New Jersey's Catholic bishops, in a Nov. 21 statement, called on Americans to "address the critical needs of the poor who live among us. ... We cannot ignore children who go to bed hungry, parents who are jobless, families who are homeless, the sick who suffer without medical care, or the elderly who live in infested or unsafe housing."

Most leading economic indicators show little change. And working Americans—in terms of "consumer confidence"—still seem wary over the prospect of losing their job or the possibility of a second recession.

Deficit cutting might not have been all the rage in 2011, but efforts to cut deficits spurred lots of rage from various segments of the population.

When new Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker tried to force through a "budget repair" bill to solve a projected \$117 million budget deficit, some Democratic state senators fled the state to delay the vote, which ultimately went Walker's way. Thousands of Wisconsinites rallied outside, and inside, the state Capitol in Madison for weeks to protest the move, and a recall-Walker petition drive was under way.

In the early days of the protests over the bill, which hiked state workers' health care and pension contributions while limiting their bargaining rights, Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI said, "Hard times do not nullify the moral obligation each of us has to respect the

legitimate rights of workers."

Nationally, the usually routine request by the president for Congress to increase the nation's debt ceiling met with stiff resistance by the new Republican majority in the House. Initial rounds of cuts earlier in 2011 brought only temporary relief—along with continued sniping at one another from both sides of the aisle. Only a last-minute deal brokered in early August averted a possible U.S. default on its debt obligation.

The deal included the formation of a bipartisan, joint House-Senate deficit reduction commission dubbed the "supercommittee." However, it failed to reach agreement on a longer-lasting solution to curb deficit spending, thus triggering automatic cuts in 2012.

One aspect of the supercommittee's work was revenues—taxes, to be precise.

"We really need tax reform," said Sister Marge Clark, a domestic-issues lobbyist for Network, the Catholic social justice lobby. "There's a big difference between Network's view and a lot of other people," added the Sister of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, "in that tax reform has to be revenue-positive because we simply don't have enough money" to pay the nation's bills.

"All kinds of tax reform is needed. The whole structure has become convoluted, it's become topsy-turvy," Sister Marge said. "I think the tax code has grown the way an awful lot of other legislation has grown. They pass some things, and realize that it doesn't work or it doesn't do these things [originally touted], and they put a patch on it.

"Then there's another little piece where it becomes obvious that it's not working, so they do it again."

But she is not optimistic about substantive change happening soon. "Probably not before the lame-duck [session following the 2012 presidential election], if you want to be really blunt," Sister Marge said. "I seriously doubt anything will happen before the lame-duck session."

In the midst of the ongoing financial struggles, the Occupy movement sprang up in much the same way as the tea party movement arose two years before—with a sense of unease with and distrust of those who manipulate the levers of power. Initially conceived as Occupy Wall Street with its chant "Banks got bailed out, we got sold out," the movement spread to cities across the United States.

In line with Occupy's "we are the 99 percent" slogan, congressional Democrats want to pay for an extension of the payroll tax cut with a surtax on the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans.

"The payroll tax cut, we've estimated, created about a million jobs over the last year," said David Cooper, an economic analyst with the Economic Policy Institute, which also estimates that another 500,000 jobs are threatened if unemployment benefits aren't extended.

"Losing those is going to seriously hurt the economy," he added.

The news was not much better across the ocean. The European Union has been trying to plug leaks in its member nations' deficit dikes for months. Greece was the first nation to rail against EU-mandated budget cuts. Ireland, Italy and Belgium have all undertaken austerity measures, with the specter of financial implosion threatening to pull the euro zone in its undertow. England, a prime trading partner with EU nations, faced its first nationwide strike in a generation on Nov. 30 as workers protested an austerity program that included cuts to retirement pensions.

In October, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace issued an 18-page document, "Toward Reforming the International Financial and Monetary Systems in the Context of Global Public Authority," which called for the gradual creation of a world political authority with broad powers to regulate financial markets, and rein in the "inequalities and distortions of capitalist development" to counter the "selfishness, collective greed and the hoarding of goods on a great scale" discovered in the global financial crisis.

The document also called for taxes on financial transactions, with revenues contributing to the creation of a "world reserve fund" to support the economies of countries hit by crisis. Some U.S. Democrats have called for a financial transactions tax, although its chances for passage are slim in a divided Congress.

Noting that U.S. income inequality has grown in the past 30 years, Cooper said, "I can't speak specifically to the Catholic Church's influence in this discussion, but anyone who is trying to highlight the issues of extreme poverty that we're seeing, the growth in child poverty, the inequality issues like the Occupy movement that's sprung up—all of those issues have come to the front of the public line, and that's a good thing." †

## Christmas TV MASS for Shut-Ins

This beautiful 30-minute Mass will be produced from the Crypt Church at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.



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# GIFT

continued from page 1

always been my dream.”

## A secret plan called ‘Operation Lourdes’

Wanting to make her dream come true, her eighth-grade students started in September to put in motion the secret plan they called “Operation Lourdes.”

Part of the plan included donating their allowances and money from baby-sitting and other jobs to the fund. They also enlisted the help of the school’s principal, Gina Fleming, other teachers and staff members as they started a letter-writing campaign to people whose lives have been touched by Sister Nicolette.

The response was tremendous. The secret was kept. And on the morning of Dec. 7, in a school convocation that started with Fleming praising the “incomparable goodness” of the Blessed Mother, the spotlight shifted to a celebration of the 50th birthday of Sister Nicolette.

First, the cheers came, followed by the singing of “Happy Birthday” and a video presentation in which students and staff members shared 50 reasons why Sister Nicolette is so special to the Holy Name community.

*Because when she laughs, we laugh.  
Because she changes your life with her wisdom.  
Because she makes delicious chili.  
Because she’s proud of her family and their religious faith.*

*Because she parties like a Catholic!*

Then a few eighth-grade students rolled a suitcase toward her. Seconds later, they presented her with a sign telling her that she has two round-trip plane tickets for her journey to Lourdes in June. The last gift was an oversized check for \$3,650 to help pay for expenses during the trip.

The moment left Sister Nicolette surprised, stunned and in tears.

“I don’t think there are words that could express how I feel right now,” she told the crowd in the school gymnasium that was filled with students, teachers, parents, friends, educators from other schools, and administrators in the archdiocese’s Office of Catholic Education. “It’s not very often that I’m moved to tears, but I am today. This is just a dream come true.”

## ‘They’re going to love this story’

While the surprise overwhelmed Sister Nicolette, keeping the secret thrilled the eighth-grade students. The only things that compared with the smiles they beamed after pulling off the surprise were the smiles that lit up their faces when they talked about Sister Nicolette.

“She’s such a great role model,” Zach Taylor said.

“Everybody should want to be like her.”

“She makes our school lively,” said McKenzie Beeson.

“She’s always happy. She brings everyone up.”

“Without Sister here, I don’t think I’d be able to grow as

Photo by John Shaughnessy



The eighth-grade students at Holy Name of Jesus School in Beech Grove hold the check they gave to their religion teacher, Benedictine Sister Mary Nicolette Etienne, on Dec. 7 to cover her expenses for a trip to Lourdes, France. The students contributed money from jobs and launched a letter-writing campaign to raise funds for the trip.

much in my faith,” Brad Meade said. “She’s been a huge part of my faith and why I converted to Catholicism. She’s always inspiring people to know, love and serve God.”

It’s the way a teacher can influence a student’s life, just as a parent can shape a child’s.

“I wish my mom and dad were here. They’re going to love this story,” Sister Nicolette said about her parents, who are members of St. Paul Parish in Tell City. “And to think it all started with my mom in Lourdes.”

One remarkable part of the story is that Sister Nicolette’s mother didn’t tell her daughter about her trip to Lourdes and her promise to God until Sister Nicolette was 24, right as she was leaving to enter the Benedictine community at Our Lady of Grace Monastery, which is just down the road from Holy Name School.

“She started telling me about her trip to Lourdes, and Mary appearing to Bernadette,” Sister Nicolette recalled. “She said, ‘I wasn’t going to be a nun. I wanted to get married and have kids.’ Growing up, Mom and Dad never pressured us to do anything except to be decent in our behavior and stay faithful to the Church. Their whole life

has been centered around God and God’s call for them as parents.”

Her own call has led her to be a religious sister and a teacher—a teacher who prays the rosary every Thursday with her eighth-grade students, a teacher who was touched by their gesture of love for her.

“I always hope and pray that my kids learn their theology and also learn to walk the talk of their faith—to know, love and serve God,” she said. “But it’s not because of me. It’s because of parents, teachers and their pastor at Holy Name.”

She will pray for all of them, her religious community and her family when she travels to Lourdes.

“I will definitely ask for special blessings for my eighth-graders, special blessings for vocations to my Benedictine community in Beech Grove, and special blessings for my parents and my family,” she said.

“We’re such a tight-knit family, and we’ve all been blessed in so many beautiful ways. I think it all goes back to Mom’s prayer, and how awesome God and Mary are in our lives.” †

## New missal translation introduced in 2011 is also an evangelization tool

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl doesn’t have a problem with the fact that there will be some missteps and some wrong words

spoken during the first weeks of using the new English translation of the

Roman Missal at Mass.

“We are going to have to live with the fact that not every celebration is going to be perfect,” the archbishop of Washington said during a Dec. 6 teleconference. “But that can be inviting to some people who are afraid they are going to do the wrong thing. They might say, ‘That’s the same struggle I’m having.’”

Cardinal Wuerl, who co-wrote *The Mass: The Glory, the Mystery, the Tradition* with Mike Aquilina, joined in a panel discussion about the impact of the new translation, which went into use in the United States on Nov. 26-27, the first weekend of Advent.

As 2011 drew to a close, American Catholics were greeting the new missal translation with a mostly positive response and finding some unexpected spiritual benefits in the need to pay closer attention to the words spoken at Mass—at least for a while.

Father Dan Barron, an Oblate of the Virgin Mary who is director of spiritual formation at John Paul the Great Catholic University in San Diego and editor of *Magnifikid!*, a weekly worship aid for children, said he has been “amazed to see that 18-, 19-year-old students are talking about the liturgy.”

“What brilliant youth minister could have been able to get young people talking about the missal?” he asked. “I

give thanks to God for this great moment that I can be a part of.”

Father Barron said children, who are “the least resistant to change,” will pick up the new wording quickly.

But introduction of the new translation throughout the English-speaking world can serve as an “occasion to teach them the traditions that are so much larger than them and their parish,” and that they are “united with parishes around the world, from the rising of the sun to its setting.”

Edward Sri, provost and professor of theology and Scripture at the Augustine Institute in Denver and author of *A Biblical Walk Through the Mass*, compared the process of implementing the new missal to the preparations some of his students make for the annual trip to Rome that he leads.

They might have read about and seen pictures of the Vatican before taking the trip, he said, “but there is nothing like walking into St. Peter’s Basilica for the first time” and experiencing it in person.

“That’s the experience that many lay Catholics will be having in the next weeks and months” related to the new missal translation, Sri said. “They have heard about it, but now they are saying it, hearing it. It’s a wonderful opportunity to bring people deeper into the mystery of the Mass.”

Liturgical musician Matt Maher said the introduction of the new translation marks a

moment when “the innovation of the culture meets the slow, deliberate movement of the Church.” Although the media and the blogosphere might want to report immediate results, Maher said he was more excited about “the re-evangelization of the faithful” that might occur generations down the road.

“We live in a very, very tumultuous time of change” in today’s society, he added. “But the Church always has the wisdom to reaffirm what is true and beautiful and important.”

As a musician who works with Christians of other denominations, Maher said he also found an “unintended consequence” of the new missal translation has been “a rise in interest in re-embracing liturgical spirituality.

“As we are re-educating and re-evangelizing, there is a tremendous opportunity to be building bridges,”

he said.

During a question-and-answer period, Cardinal Wuerl acknowledged that in the first days of using the new translation, he would sometimes find himself “drifting back” to the words of the former translation “if I didn’t keep concentrating.

“Isn’t that the way for all of us?” he asked. “I have to be aware that I can’t take my eyes off the page. It made me much more conscious of the words and much more aware that I say those words in a way that was inviting the congregation into the mystery” of the Mass.

Father Barron said he found himself ministering at Mass “in a way that I have not done since I was a deacon.”

Although he said the first weeks of the new translation might be “messy,” he said Catholics should be experiencing that fact that “God has come to be with us in our mess. That’s part of the life of the Mass.” †



Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl

## SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and Saint Meinrad announce Christmas liturgies

The Christmas liturgical schedules for SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis and the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad are as follows:

### SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Dec. 24—4:30 p.m. carols, 5 p.m. Mass, 11:15 p.m. vigil service of lessons and carols, midnight Mass with Bishop Christopher J. Coyne scheduled as the principal celebrant.

Dec. 25—10:30 a.m. Mass.

All times for liturgies in the cathedral are Eastern Standard Time.

### Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church

Dec. 24—7 p.m. vigil, 10 p.m. Mass.  
Dec. 25—9:30 a.m. Mass.

All times for liturgies at Saint Meinrad Archabbey Church are Central Standard Time.

For the Christmas liturgical schedules of other religious communities or parishes in the archdiocese, contact their offices. †

# Founder saddened by closing of Terre Haute pro-life ministry

By Mike Krokos

TERRE HAUTE—The room, once filled with maternity clothes, was nearly empty.

At one time, the clothes extended into the kitchen and closets in bedrooms in the modest home, too.

Baby clothes, diapers, diaper wipes and other “baby things” were also once commonplace at the facility.

Those items were recently donated to Catholic Charities Terre Haute and much of the home’s furniture to St. Patrick School in Terre Haute, the result of the end of an institution that embraced a pro-life cause in Vigo County for nearly four decades.

When Birthright of Terre Haute closed its doors in October, the crisis pregnancy assistance ministry had helped countless women since 1974 deal with the gift—and challenge—of carrying unborn babies to full term.

“We called Catholic Charities and asked how to start a Birthright as soon as the *Roe v. Wade* decision came down,” said Cecelia “Cel” Lundstrom, who helped found and direct Birthright of Terre Haute, a non-denominational outreach, during its 37 years of existence. She served as the director of the facility for all but two years. Birthright was housed at four places through the years, its last address at 227 S. Ninth St. in Terre Haute.

“When *Roe v. Wade* came down, I was stunned,” said Lundstrom, a member of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute. “I thought there won’t be many [women] who will take the lives of their own babies, and I was very mistaken.”

The facility opened on Jan. 22, 1974—a year to the day after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion.

“Our first mission was to save the life of the unborn child, and by doing so, we know were helping the life and the health of the child’s mother,” Lundstrom said. “We did our best to honor motherhood.

“Pregnancy is a beautiful thing. God has to be actively involved in all conception, and so motherhood is always beautiful, and we always tried to promote the dignity of the mother whenever we could.”

Down to four volunteers, Lundstrom made the difficult decision to end the ministry this fall.

“I’m 77 years old, and I just can’t handle it anymore,” said Lundstrom, her voice trailing off.

“It’s heartbreaking to have the place close,” she later said. “It’s not easy.

“It’s very sad to see us close because we were the only pregnancy service in Terre Haute that would not counsel for



Photo by Mike Krokos



Submitter photo

Above, Birthright of Terre Haute was housed at four places through its 37 years of existence. Its last address was at 227 S. Ninth St. in Terre Haute.

Left, Cecelia “Cel” Lundstrom sits at a desk in the now vacant Birthright facility in Terre Haute. The pro-life ministry closed in October after serving Vigo County residents for 37 years.

contraception, which is the root cause of abortion,” Lundstrom added.

The all-volunteer ministry had 18 people helping at the beginning, she noted, but has gradually seen those numbers slip in recent years.

“There have been so many wonderful things [happen through the years], and the volunteers here that we have had were fine people,” Lundstrom said.

Rhonda Maher, one of the last volunteers, helped at Birthright of Terre Haute for eight years.

After stepping down as director of religious education at her home parish, St. Mary-of-the-Woods Parish in St. Mary-of-the-Woods, she felt called to do something else.

“I’ve also been against abortion,” Maher said, “and this seemed like another way to help the Church.”

Maier described Lundstrom as a “very caring, dedicated person” who “gives all she has.

“She is a loving Catholic woman who lives her faith,” she added. “It just broke my heart” to see the facility close.

The stories from Maher’s years volunteering at Birthright are etched in her memory.

“I had a girl call in who was contemplating abortion. I spoke with her on the phone for 15 minutes, begging her to come in, and she never did,” Maher said. “That really impacts you. I still pray for her, and hope it worked out.”

There was also the young lady who came back to Birthright two weeks after delivering her baby, looking for blankets and a car seat to carry the infant.

“Luckily, we had a stroller for her,” she

said. “It made you feel so good that there were people truly in need” that we were able to help.

From the first client, a 40-something-year-old mom who became pregnant out of wedlock, to a 13-year-old teenager, the women who visited Birthright came from all walks of life.

Though adoption was a preferred option during the early years of their ministry, Lundstrom said the “kill it or keep it” philosophy became more prevalent.

“That really is too bad,” she said, “but as time went on, people came to know that we were pro-life and that we would not help them with an abortion.”

Over the years, Birthright became associated with the Catholic Church because the majority of its volunteers were Catholics who came from area parishes.

But “we didn’t appeal to churches, we appealed to individuals,” Lundstrom said.

Msgr. Lawrence Moran, who served as pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute for 20 years before retiring in 2005, said it was providential to have the Birthright



Msgr. Lawrence Moran

facility by the campus of Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

“It was near where college students had access to it easily, and they [Birthright] gave free pregnancy tests and, of course,

referred them to other organizations that could be of help so they wouldn’t [kill] the [unborn] baby.”

The ministry helped countless college students and others in need through the years, he added.

“It was a wonderful pro-life effort in town in a very strategic place,” said Msgr. Moran, who serves as full-time chaplain at the Carmelite Monastery of St. Joseph and chaplain of John Paul II High School, both in Terre Haute.

He, like so many others, was sad to see the ministry come to an end.

“She [Cel] certainly has been one of the great pro-life spokespersons from the very beginning,” he said. “They [the volunteers at Birthright] really tried to reach out” to people in need.

Through the years, Lundstrom said the organization helped thousands of women, though no specific numbers were kept.

“We didn’t need statistics to prove anything,” she said.

As a nonprofit, no one was ever paid for their outreach in the entirely independent pro-life ministry.

“We have never done anything that would violate our Catholic faith,” Lundstrom added.

For Lundstrom, some of the “thank yous” stand out.

“There is a woman I see at Mass regularly who still thanks me. ... It really is a tremendous joy when something like that happens.”

As she reflects on the years of Birthright’s existence in Terre Haute, Lundstrom is certain of one thing.

“Our 37 years would have been worth it just to save one child.” †

## Archbishop Dolan defines human dignity as ‘primary doctrine’ of the Church

NOTRE DAME, Ind. (CNS)—Calling the dignity of the human person “a primary doctrine” of the Catholic Church, Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York told an audience at the University of Notre Dame on Dec. 6 that it must prompt Catholics “to treat ourselves and others only with respect, love, honor and care.”



Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan

That doctrine also means people must not be identified “with our urges, our flaws, our status, our possessions, our utility,” but each seen as “a child of God, his creation, modeled in his own image, destined for eternity,” he said.

The archbishop, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, was delivering the inaugural lecture in the university’s new Project on Human Dignity.

“My identity, my personhood ... does not depend on whether or not I have a green card, a stock portfolio, a job, a home or even a college diploma,” Archbishop Dolan said. “Nor does my identity depend upon whom I am sexually attracted to, or to race, religion, gender, social status, bank account, passport or health insurance, but on my essence as a child of God.”

The talk quoted from a wide variety of sources—from Blessed John Paul II to a formerly drug-addicted Vietnam veteran, from Voltaire to a 20-year-old ex-prostitute who came to World Youth Day in Toronto on a dare in 2002 and said it saved her life.

“When we mention Catholic doctrines, we usually mention the Trinity, the Incarnation, the redemption, the Eucharist,” the archbishop said. “I wonder why we never include the doctrine of the dignity of the human person? It’s pivotal. It’s way up there. It’s normative.”

Despite what he called the “caricature of the Church ... that it had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the noble enterprise of defending human rights,” Archbishop Dolan said the Catholic doctrine of the dignity of the human person “startled the brutality of the Roman world with its emphasis on the protection of life, respect for the person, care for the vulnerable, [and] defense of women, babies, children, families, elders and even slaves.

“It gave rise to the greatest system of health care, education and charity the world has ever known,” he added.

The Church that proclaims this doctrine “is not a shrill, crabby, naysaying nag, but a warm, tender, gracious mother who invites, embraces and nurtures her children, calling forth from within the truth, beauty and goodness she knows is within them,” the archbishop said.

The doctrine of human dignity dictates the Church’s position on abortion, immigration and the death penalty, among other topics, he said.

“If the preborn baby in the womb, from the earliest moments of his or her conception, is a human person—an ‘is’ that comes not from the catechism but from the biology textbook used by any sophomore in high school—then that baby’s life ought to be cherished and protected,” Archbishop Dolan said.

“If an immigrant from Mexico is a child of God, ... then we ought to render him or her honor and a welcome, not a

roar of hate, clenched fists and gritted teeth in response to the latest campaign slogan,” he added. “If even a man on death row has a soul, is a human person, an ‘is’ that cannot be erased even by beastly crimes he may have committed, then we ought not to strap him to a gurney and inject him with poison.”

In a question-and-answer period following Archbishop Dolan’s lecture, an audience member cited a letter from Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, Notre Dame president, to Kathleen Sebelius, secretary of Health and Human Services. That Sept. 28 letter urged that the definition of religious employer in the rules for the new health care law be broadened to provide conscience protection.

Father Jenkins noted that the current rules put Notre Dame in the “impossible position” of being required either to provide services and insurance coverage contrary to Catholic teaching or to discontinue employee and student health care plans.

The questioner said non-Catholics also attend and work for Notre Dame who believe that contraception and sterilization are moral. He asked how this “conflict between two consciences” could be resolved without offending the equal human dignity of either side.

Archbishop Dolan replied that he was “grateful” that Father Jenkins had taken a “brave and courageous stand” on this issue.

“Our religion would require us to respect the rights of all and never to denigrate them,” he said. “However, it would also obviously require us to obey our own consciences and follow the allegiances of our own faith.” †

# 'You are not alone,' bishops tell undocumented immigrants

WASHINGTON (CNS)—An emotional pastoral letter to immigrants from the U.S. Hispanic and Latino Catholic bishops offers love, encouragement, welcome, sympathy and assurance that "you are not alone or forgotten."

"We recognize that every human being, authorized or not, is an image of God and therefore possesses infinite value and dignity," begins the strongly worded letter released on Dec. 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. "We open our arms and hearts to you, and we receive you as members of our Catholic family. As pastors, we direct these words to you from the depths of our heart.

"We urge you not to despair," said the letter signed by 33 bishops. "Keep faith in Jesus the migrant who continues to walk beside you. Have faith in Our Lady of Guadalupe, who constantly repeats to us the words she spoke to St. Juan Diego, 'Am I, who am your mother, not here?'"

The letter thanks immigrants for "the Christian values you manifest to us with your lives—your sacrifice for the well-being of your families, your determination and perseverance, your joy of life, your profound faith and fidelity despite your insecurity and many difficulties."

Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, Calif., told Catholic News Service the bishops wanted "to reach out to the immigrant community and express our concern for them, to speak to them in a spirit of solidarity."

Though there has been interest in such a form of outreach for a while, Bishop Soto said there was a sense that it might especially be needed now because, from a political standpoint, it "does not look promising" for government action to improve the legal situation of millions of undocumented immigrants.

"Christian solidarity is not based on political optimism, but it is based on religious hope," he said. The release date of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe was chosen because she "is such a powerful symbol of solidarity and hope, particularly in difficult times."

The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe comes from the

likeness of Mary that appeared on a cloak worn by a poor Indian to whom she appeared on a hillside in Mexico in 1531. Her coloring and features resemble those of an indigenous woman, which at the time and since then has been seen as a message of hope and solidarity to the poor.



Bishop Jaime Soto

Bishop Soto said the letter was the result of a collaborative writing process among the Hispanic bishops. And they hope it will be used broadly around the country by all U.S. bishops.

In the letter, they expressed regret that some people have reacted to the economic crisis by showing disdain for immigrants. Some "even blame them for the crisis," they said. "We will not find a solution to our problems by sowing hatred. We will find the solution by sowing a sense of solidarity among all workers and co-workers—immigrants and citizens—who live together in the United States.

"Your suffering faces" show the "true face of Jesus Christ," the bishops said, noting they are well aware of the great sacrifices they make for their families.

"Many of you perform the most difficult jobs and receive miserable salaries and no health insurance or social security," they continued. "Despite your contributions to the well-being of our country, instead of receiving our thanks, you are often treated as criminals because you have violated current immigration laws."

The bishops also acknowledged the pain suffered by families who have had someone deported or are threatened with deportation; the anxiety of waiting for legal residency status; and the frustration of young people who have grown up in the U.S., but lack the legal immigration status that would allow them to go on to college and get good jobs.

"This situation cries out to God for a worthy and humane solution," they said.

They reiterated the position they, as individuals and as members of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, have taken in support of comprehensive immigration reform. Such legislation should respect family unity and provide "an orderly and reasonable process for unauthorized persons to attain citizenship." It should include a program for worker visas that protect immigrant's rights and that provides for their basic needs, they added.

The letter also acknowledged the difficult and dangerous path people take to come to the United States. "As pastors concerned for your welfare," they asked them to "consider seriously whether it is advisable to undertake the journey here until after just and humane changes occur in our immigration laws."

But, they added, "we are not going to wait until the law changes to welcome you who are already here into our churches, for as St. Paul tells us, 'You are no longer aliens or foreign visitors; you are fellow citizens with the holy people of God and part of God's household'" (Eph 2:19).

As members of the Church, part of the body of Christ, "we offer you spiritual nourishment. Feel welcome to holy Mass, the Eucharist, which nourishes us with the word and the body and blood of Jesus. We offer you catechetical programs for your children and those religious education programs that our diocesan resources allow us to put at your disposal."

Citizens and permanent residents of the U.S. "cannot forget that almost all of us, we or our ancestors, have come from other lands and together with immigrants from various nations and cultures, have formed a new nation," they said. "Now we ought to open our hearts and arms to the recently arrived, just as Jesus asks us to do when he says, 'I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was an alien and you took me into your house'" (Mt 25:35). †

## Philadelphia leader: 'Painful' year may bring school and parish closings

PHILADELPHIA (CNS)—Three months after his installation, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia warned Catholics that the archdiocese faces "very serious financial and organizational issues that cannot be delayed."

In a pastoral letter dated Dec. 8, the archbishop called Advent "a season of self-examination in the light of God's word," and said there was "no better time to speak frankly about the conditions we now face as a community of believers."

The letter hinted at coming closings or mergers of parishes and schools, and said the operating budget of each archdiocesan department will receive "careful scrutiny."

"To whatever degree complacency and pride once had a home in our local Church, events in the coming year will burn them out," he said. "The process will be painful. But going through it is the only way to renew the witness of the Church; to clear away the debris of human failure from the beauty of God's word; and to restore the joy and zeal of our Catholic discipleship."

Archbishop Chaput also said the first months of 2012 will see the resolution of all the cases of priests who have been suspended following allegations of sexual misconduct with minors, as well as the start in March of the abuse-related criminal trial of four priests or former priests of the archdiocese and a lay teacher.

"The harsh media environment likely to surround" the trial "will further burden our laypeople and our clergy," the archbishop said. "But it cannot be avoided."

Archbishop Chaput stressed that the "overwhelming majority" of priests "have served our people with exceptional lives of sacrifice and character.

"The hard truth is that many innocent priests have borne the brunt of the Church's public humiliation and our people's anger," he said.

He also emphasized the role of Church leaders as stewards of Church resources "for the whole Catholic community, to carry out our shared apostolic mission as believers in Jesus Christ.

"This means that as archbishop, I have the duty not just to

defend those limited resources, but also to ensure that the Church uses them with maximum care and prudence; to maximum effect; and with proper reporting and accountability," he said.

Although the archdiocese "remains strongly committed to the work of Catholic education," Archbishop Chaput said that mission "is badly served by trying to sustain unsustainable schools."

He said a blue-ribbon commission would make its recommendations in January, and "will likely counsel that some, and perhaps many, schools must close or combine." A similar "careful scrutiny must be applied to every aspect of our common life as a Church, from the number and location of our parishes, to every one of our archdiocesan operational budgets," he said.

"This honest scrutiny can be painful because real change is rarely easy; but it also restores life and health, and serves the work of God's people," Archbishop Chaput said. "We cannot call ourselves good stewards if we do otherwise." †

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## Christ's virgin birth reveals that he is Lord of creation

By Fr. Thomas Thompson, S.M.

Advent is a good time to ask ourselves: Who is this Jesus, whose birth we are preparing to celebrate?

One way to respond is to linger long and lovingly on the phrases from the creed that we profess at Christmas and every Sunday. Jesus Christ is “the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages ... consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.”

Those last words are also found in the Gospel of John, one of the Christmas Gospels. “All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be” (Jn 1:3), and in St. Paul’s Letter to the Colossians. Christ is “before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:17).

These texts indicate the Church’s belief that the one whose Incarnation we celebrate at Christmas was present from before the beginning of the world, and that the imprint of Christ is deeply embedded on all creation.

The birth of Christ was preceded and accompanied by the extraordinary events recounted in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke.

• The first of these events was the announcement to Zechariah that his wife, Elizabeth, would give birth to a son.

Similar to Abraham’s wife, Sarah, Elizabeth was beyond child-bearing age. When Sarah heard the news that she was to bear a son, she laughed, and the son that she bore was called Isaac, which in Hebrew means “the laughter of God.” Sarah’s laughter reveals that all of this world’s certitudes can be reversed.

When Elizabeth gave birth to John, the people recognized that “surely the hand of the Lord was with him” (Lk 1:66).

• The second sign was the message of the angel Gabriel to Mary, announcing that she would conceive a child who “will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,” and “of whose kingdom there will be no end” (Lk 1:32-33).

In answer to Mary’s question of how this could come about, the angel responded that this would be a wholly miraculous event brought about, not by a human father, but by God: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High

will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” (Lk 1:35).

Then, in the Gospel of St. Luke, the angel spoke the same words already addressed to Abraham. “Nothing will be impossible with God” (Lk 1:37)—not even a virgin mother.

The virginal conception of Christ through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit has cosmic significance. The same creator Spirit, who hovered over the waters at the dawn of creation, was responsible for the conception of Christ in the womb of the Virgin Mary and for the renewal of creation in Christ.

Mary’s virginal conception was not so much a personal Marian privilege, but rather a sign that points to something much greater, something that confounds the ordinary course of the universe.

It was fitting that Mary should give birth in so extraordinary a manner to the one who is extraordinary beyond all measure.

Few may be able to enter into the implications of this truth that is expressed in doctrine. But Mary being both a virgin and a mother, and the resurrection of Christ from the dead, are two events in revelation history that show even the totally unlettered that the ordinary course of nature has been completely overturned.

These two events indicate that the God whom we believe in is not only our Creator and Savior, but also the Lord of the universe!

The poetry of the early Church, expressed in its hymns, made frequent reference to the virgin birth as the most fitting way for Christ to come into the world.

A hymn attributed to St. Ambrose, for example, addressed Christ as “the redeemer of the nations,” and asked him to “come and make known your wondrous birth, which so befits your grandeur and sanctifies the Earth. ... A virgin was your mother, O holy mystery! Let all creation marvel at that Nativity.”

Another hymn from a sixth-century writer, Venantius Fortunatus, describes how all creation is in reverence as Christ comes to dwell in the body of Mary:

“The God whom Earth and sea and sky adore and laud and magnify, whose might they own, whose praise they tell, in Mary’s



Mary adores the sleeping Christ Child in this work by Italian Renaissance painter Giovanni Bellini. The fact that the Son of God was born of a virgin reveals that he is the Lord of all creation.

body deigned to dwell.”

The early hymn writers also loved to dwell on the physical relation between Mary, a creature, and her son, the Word present at the beginning of creation. Mary, now enthroned on high, once cared for and nurtured the one who made the stars!

The new translation of the *Roman Missal* restores the complete text of Eucharistic Prayer 1, which contains the ancient Church’s description of the role of

Mary and the saints in the celebration of every Eucharist: We make this sacrifice of praise “in communion with those whose memory we venerate, especially the glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ,” and of all the saints.

(Marianist Father Thomas Thompson is director of the Marian Library at the University of Dayton, Ohio.) †

## Extraordinary events happen in the births of John the Baptist, Jesus

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

The evangelist St. Luke wants his readers to know the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the births of John the Baptist (Lk 1:5-25) and Jesus (Lk 1:26-56).

He arranges his account to make the point that, just as John’s birth to aged parents was miraculous—as was the birth of Isaac to the aged Abraham and Sarah (Gn 17:1-21; 18:1-15)—so much more so was the birth of Jesus, whose conception came about through



The angel Gabriel greets Mary in this church window depicting the Annunciation. In describing this scene, St. Luke shows through Mary what it means to trust in God.

the power of the Holy Spirit and his birth through the Virgin Mary.

Luke crafts his account so that the reader will recognize the central importance of the child Jesus in God’s plan of salvation.

At the appearance of the angel in the Gospel of St. Luke 1:26-34, Mary is startled and wonders how she is to bear a son because she is a virgin. But Mary accepts her divinely ordained role wholeheartedly: “May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).

Such unhesitating obedience and attentiveness to God’s plan is to characterize Mary in all the instances that Luke mentions her.

Luke lifts up Mary as the model believer.

Luke prepares the way for the announcement of Jesus’ birth by relating the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah. This birth announcement, like that of Jesus’ birth, has the five-standard elements of this genre in the Old Testament (e.g., Jgs 13:3-20):

- Appearance of an angel.
- Fear by the human observer.
- The heavenly message.
- Reassurance.
- A sign.

Luke describes Zechariah’s reaction to the angel’s appearance as more fearful than that of Mary. “Zechariah was troubled ... and fear came upon him” (Lk 1:12). While Mary too “was greatly troubled” when she was greeted as

the “favored one,” she nonetheless “pondered what sort of greeting this might be” (Lk 1:28-29).

Zechariah questions how the birth of a son will be possible since he and his wife, Elizabeth, are advanced in years (Lk 1:18). His way of questioning the angel Gabriel seems humble and deferential in comparison to Abraham’s response when God announced to him the upcoming birth of Isaac.

“Abraham fell face down and laughed as he said to himself, ‘Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah give birth at 90?’ ” (Gen 17:17).

Nevertheless, Zechariah is struck with muteness for his unbelief until John is born.

When Zechariah’s muteness is compared to the inability to speak that was visited on both the seer Daniel at the appearance of the angel Gabriel (Dn 9:21; 10:15) and on the prophet Ezekiel at the appearance of the heavenly throne chariot (Ez 3:26), Zechariah, through his muteness, appears to share in the prophetic mission of his son, John.

By contrast, Mary, who raises questions about how the birth of Jesus could happen, is not blamed for her uneasiness. Luke wishes to portray her more positively because she will give birth to the Son of God and not merely to the greatest of the prophets.

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

## From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

## Biblical readings: Exhorting the Jews to return

From Dec. 17 through Dec. 24, the biblical readings in the Office of Readings are taken from Chapters 45 to 52 of the Book of Isaiah, excluding the three "Servant Songs" in those chapters. A fourth "Servant Song" is in Chapter 42. Those readings are more appropriate for Holy Week than for the week leading to Christmas.



These chapters were likely written in Babylon by an unknown prophet toward the end of the Babylonian Exile, about 150 years after Isaiah prophesied in Jerusalem. While Isaiah advised Judah's kings about protecting Jerusalem, this prophet knows that Jerusalem has been destroyed and looks forward to its reconstruction.

As we saw last week, Jerusalem was spared from destruction by the Assyrians in 701 B.C., as Isaiah predicted it would be. But it was destroyed by the Babylon King Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B.C. and the Judeans taken prisoner to Babylon. Then, in 539 B.C.,

the Persian Empire under King Cyrus conquered Babylon.

In the passages read next week, written after Cyrus told the Jews that they could return to their homeland, the prophet exhorts the Judeans to do so—return to Jerusalem and begin the task of rebuilding their lives.

We can understand their reluctance to do that, so they need some prodding. They have been in Babylon for almost 50 years and they know that Jerusalem was destroyed. Most of them were born in Babylon. Besides, they believe that God has forgotten them. Why would they want to pack up and move back to that land that they consider, literally, God-forsaken?

The prophet acknowledges all that, but begs to disagree: "Zion said, 'The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.' Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you" (Is 49:14-15).

He has to convince the people that God is redeeming them, using Cyrus as his instrument. Therefore, he proclaims that the

Jewish God is beyond comparison with any other gods, such as the Babylonian's Marduk. "I am God, there is no other; I am God, there is none like me" (Is 46:9).

The Jewish God is the Creator and lord of history. "It was I who made the Earth and created mankind upon it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens; I gave the order to all their host" (Is 45:12).

He is the Creator and redeemer of Israel. "Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, his maker" (Is 45:11), and "Thus says the Lord, your redeemer" (Is 48:17).

He promised that those who return will "enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy; they will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee" (Is 51:11).

Therefore, he implores, "Break out together in song, O ruins of Jerusalem! For the Lord comforts his people, he redeems Jerusalem" (Is 52:9).

Finally, the prophet proclaims that God is sovereign over all nations. "The Lord has bared his arm in the sight of all the nations; all the ends of the Earth will behold the salvation of our God" (Is 52:10). †

## Consider This/Stephen Kent

## Who says we don't live in a cruel, unusual and crazy world?

While Congress' inability to deal with such basic accounting practices as revenue and expenses captured the headlines, the nation's inexorable inability to deal with life and death quietly continued considering the how, why, whether and when to kill miscreants.



In Idaho, a death-row inmate for almost a quarter-century did not want to be killed. He was executed.

In Oregon, a two-time murderer wanted to be executed. He was reprieved, and now plans legal action against the governor, whom he calls a coward for denying him his right to be killed.

A federal judge in Ohio approved changes which the state made in its execution procedures, such as not having enough executioners on a given day. ("Two chairs, no waiting?")

"Ohio's revised lethal injection policy and practices are the most comprehensive in scope, and will be the best documented in the nation," said a spokesman for the prison system. Might this result in a license plate motto: "Ohio: We Do Death Right"?

And in Washington state, a person charged with a capital crime must be recommended by the prosecution for the death penalty before the jury considers the ultimate fate.

Church teaching does not approve the death penalty. It gives a highly conditioned exemption if it is the only possible way to protect society. "But the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity 'are very rare, if not practically nonexistent,'" said Blessed Pope John Paul II.

"I simply cannot participate once again in something that I believe to be morally wrong," said Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber in announcing a reprieve for convicted murderer Gary Haugen. The governor said he will do the same for anyone up for execution until his term ends in 2015.

Kitzhaber said he has regretted not stopping two earlier executions. The death penalty is morally wrong, unfairly administered and amounts to a very expensive life sentence, he said, because no one is executed unless they waive appeals.

The object of Kitzhaber's clemency—Haugen—was not appreciative, to say the least.

"I feel he's a paper cowboy," Haugen said. "He couldn't pull the trigger."

The governor "basically pulled a coward's move," said Haugen, by acting on his personal beliefs instead of carrying out the will of Oregon voters, who reinstated the death penalty in 1984.

The 49-year-old inmate said he plans to ask lawyers about possible legal action to fight Kitzhaber's temporary reprieve, which lasts until the governor leaves office.

In neighboring Idaho, despite pleas from the pope and his bishop, the state's governor,

who is Catholic, declined to stop the execution of Paul Rhoades, "It's tough, it's tough," Gov. Butch Otter said of reconciling his faith and the death penalty. "I support the death penalty." Other ways are available to punish criminals and protect society, Boise Bishop Michael P. Driscoll reminded Otter in a letter.

Rhoades was living proof of this for his 24-year tenure in prison before death.

In King County, Wash., Prosecutor Dan Satterberg will not seek the death penalty for a man charged with the deaths of his partner, stabbed well over 100 times, and of the couple's 2-year-old son. Washington law for aggravated murder allows one of two penalties—life in prison or death. The prosecutor selects the penalty to be presented to a jury.

And so it plods along. Life or death depends on the locus of the crime and the disposition of an incumbent governor. But be assured in Ohio, death will come clearly and efficiently. Why can one state assure the security of its people with jail cells and another only by lethal injection?

Capital punishment not only approaches the boundary of morality, it exceeds the limits of rationality.

The death penalty is not only wrong, it is crazy.

(Stephen Kent, now retired, was editor of archdiocesan newspapers in Omaha and Seattle. He can be contacted at: [considersk@gmail.com](mailto:considersk@gmail.com).) †

## Catholic Education Outreach/

Harry Plummer

## 'Don't eat the marshmallow'

About four years ago I was pleased to learn that a new expression, "Don't eat the marshmallow," was going around one of the Catholic high schools I was serving as superintendent.

It began after I gave a talk at a National Honors Society induction ceremony at that school. My talk

included a reference to a remarkable psychological study that illustrated one of the most fundamental moral precepts that we teach in Catholic schools—success is achieved through self-control and learning how to restrain the need for immediate gratification to obtain a greater good.

After you read the study's findings, I think you will understand why I was pleased.

More than 40 years ago, a brilliant Stanford University psychologist named Walter Mischel began a most remarkable study.

One at a time, hungry 4-year-olds were placed in a room with a researcher who offered them a marshmallow. The researcher explained that he had to leave the room, but if the child could keep from eating the marshmallow until he returned, the child could have two marshmallows.

Of the 400 or so children who participated in this study, about one-third of them controlled their impulse to eat the tasty morsel. The rest either ate it immediately or resisted for a while, but gave in before the researcher returned after a 15- to 20-minute absence.

Many years later, those children—now adults—were tracked down and their lives were reviewed based on a number of success indicators.

The result? Children who did not delay the gratification of eating the marshmallow seemed to have difficulty keeping focused on tasks, had trouble dealing with stressful situations, and had a higher degree of behavioral problems in school and in their personal lives.

On the other hand, Mischel's analysis of the results showed that the children who had resisted eating the marshmallow demonstrated statistically significant higher levels of success as measured by such things as greater job satisfaction, happier marriages, higher incomes and better health.

Remarkably, the children who resisted immediate gratification for the achievement of a greater reward also scored an average of 210 points higher on the SAT test!

Conclusions drawn from Mischel's famous marshmallow study have been debated for decades. While respecting the various interpretations I have read, I cannot help but think how clearly it illustrates the importance of developing in youths the virtue of temperance, the cardinal virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and ensures the will's mastery over our sensitive appetites (cf., *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1809).

In a culture often obsessed with immediate gratification and where, as writer Jules Lobel suggests, youths are invited to "gorge on fast food, sound bites, and one-liners," the need to help them learn how to brush by the tempting marshmallows of short-term pleasures to achieve higher goals and values has never been greater.

Teaching approaches to accomplishing this are varied and are called by many names. But I can tell you what Catholic educators call it. They just call it doing their job.

(Harry Plummer is executive director of the archdiocese's office of Catholic education and faith formation. He can be reached at [hplummer@archindy.org](mailto:hplummer@archindy.org).) †

## Faithful Lines/Shirley Vogler Meister

## The holidays bring love and joy to almost everyone

As I write this, I am happily humming Christmas music that I heard the night before at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Hall in Indianapolis. The building was formerly a bank on the near south side of the city.



The Indianapolis Maennerchor sang for parishioners and friends there for the first time.

The choir hopes to sing at the church—which has a reputation for its beauty—sometime in the future. I so love to go with my husband, Paul, when they have such venues.

Paul has been a member of the Maennerchor for 50-plus years. He joined the choir after we moved from Illinois to Indianapolis a few months after we were married.

Through the years, we often took our daughters to concerts at the Athenaeum in downtown Indianapolis, especially during the Advent season when St. Nicholas came for

the children.

If some readers don't know the story of St. Nicholas, I recommend the books *St. Nickolas, A Biography of a Legend* by Charles W. Jones or *St. Nicholas: Miracle Worker of Myra* by Jeanne Ancelet-Hustach.

There are many adult and children's books with various versions of the life of "St. Nick" and his ministry to the poor as the bishop of Myra.

As Catholics, we know that St. Nicholas should not be the center of attraction during the Advent and Christmas seasons.

We should focus on celebrating the birth of Christ the King, our Savior.

I feel so fortunate to be a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, where we have participated in Masses for many years.

Coincidentally, the parish in our youngest daughter Lisa's neighborhood in Nashville, Tenn., is also named Christ the King Parish.

How wonderful I felt this year when we went to Christ the King Church for Mass while visiting Lisa and her family in Tennessee for Thanksgiving.

Lisa hosted the largest family gathering we have ever had in our extended family. What a blessing that Thanksgiving holiday visit was for us!

Christ, our King, is central to our Catholic faith and other Christian faiths.

The Advent and Lenten seasons are reminders that Christ should be at the center of our lives. He came as an infant in a miraculous manner to save us through his death and resurrection, and he can be held in our hearts every day.

Following Christmas, we have the New Year's celebration when most of us make wonderful resolutions that impact our lives for the rest of the year. I wonder how many of us actually keep those resolutions for very long. I often slip up myself.

I pray that God will bless *Criterion* readers abundantly during the Advent and Christmas seasons, and throughout the New Year!

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

Fourth Sunday of Advent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Dec. 18, 2011

- 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
- Romans 16:25-27
- Luke 1:26-38

The first reading for this weekend is from the Second Book of Samuel.



At one time, the two Books of Samuel were a single volume. Translations and editions over the centuries divided this one volume into two books.

David is the principal figure in these books. The ancient Hebrews looked upon David much more than as a king.

Beyond all else, David was God's chosen representative, given the kingship so that laws and circumstances might provide an atmosphere in which the people more fervently would follow God and be loyal to the Covenant.

For this weekend's second reading, the Church offers us a reading from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

Scholars unanimously say that Paul of Tarsus indeed authored this epistle, and that this epistle was his masterpiece. For this reason, it appears first in sequence among the 14 epistles attributed to Paul and placed in Bibles immediately following the Acts of the Apostles.

As indicated by its title, Paul sent this epistle, or letter, to the Christian population of Rome.

In the first century A.D., Rome was the center of the Mediterranean world in every respect—political, economic and cultural. It also was the largest city in the Roman Empire. Not surprisingly, Rome, the great imperial capital, had within its borders a great array of ideas and religions, Christianity among them.

In this weekend's reading, as is often found elsewhere, Paul asserts his own vocation as an Apostle.

His vocation from God came so that "all the Gentiles" might believe in and obey God, "who alone is wise."

For the final reading this weekend, the Church proclaims a beautiful part of St. Luke's Gospel from Luke's Infancy

Narrative.

It is the story of the Annunciation, the event when Gabriel, the angel, came into the presence of Mary, a young Jewish woman, in Nazareth in Galilee to inform her that she would be the mother of the long-awaited Redeemer.

The reading abounds with meaning. Luke makes clear that Mary was a virgin, and that the conception of the Redeemer would not be the result of any human relationship.

Behind this fact is the reality that God, as Creator and the provider of order to the universe, can do anything. He is almighty. The Redeemer will be the Son of God. He will be David's successor.

The Redeemer's coming will fulfill God's promises, spoken by the prophets all through the ages, to bring life and salvation to the people. The birth of this Redeemer will be the ultimate satisfaction of the ancient covenant.

Vital to the message of the story is Mary's response to the angel.

"I am the maidservant of the Lord," she says. "Let it be done to me as you say."

## Reflection

In each of these readings, speaking through the Scriptures, the Church makes a very important point.

God reaches out to us. This outreach is not vague, pointed to a few or impossible to see. It came in the persons of individuals with whom we can relate—David, Paul and Jesus.

This outreach occurs as a response to our own inadequacy and limitations. God is almighty, but God's supreme power over all creation is not the most consoling point here.

Rather, the most reassuring factor is that God's great love for us prompts the dispatch of messengers, such as David, Paul and Jesus, to guide us to union with God and therefore to peace in our hearts and life in eternity.

The Church approaches Christmas strongly convinced of the fact of God's love. God loves us and saves us. He does not leave us helpless in our own powerlessness. He reaches out to us to draw us to the Divine Presence.

It is up to us to respond to the Lord's invitation. Do we accept God or do we turn God away? It is that simple. †

## Daily Readings

Monday, Dec. 19  
Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a  
Psalm 71:3-6, 16-17  
Luke 1:5-25

Tuesday, Dec. 20  
Isaiah 7:10-14  
Psalm 24:1-6  
Luke 1:26-38

Wednesday, Dec. 21  
St. Peter Canisius, priest and doctor of the Church  
Songs 2:8-14  
or Zephaniah 3:14-18a  
Psalm 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21  
Luke 1:39-45

Thursday, Dec. 22  
1 Samuel 1:24-28  
(Response) 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-7, 8abcd  
Luke 1:46-56

Friday, Dec. 23  
St. John of Kanty, priest  
Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24  
Psalm 25:4bc-5ab, 8-10, 14  
Luke 1:57-66

Saturday, Dec. 24  
2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16  
Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29  
Luke 1:67-79

Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)  
Isaiah 62:1-5  
Psalm 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29  
Acts 13:16-17, 22-25  
Matthew 1:1-25  
or Matthew 1:8-25

Sunday, Dec. 25  
The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)  
Midnight  
Isaiah 9:1-6  
Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13  
Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-14  
Dawn  
Isaiah 62:11-12  
Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12  
Titus 3:4-7  
Luke 2:15-20  
Day  
Isaiah 52:7-10  
Psalm 98:1-6  
Hebrews 1:1-6  
John 1:1-18  
or John 1:1-5, 9-14

Go Ask Your Father/Fr. Francis Hoffman

## Canon law recommends that Catholics should be confirmed before marriage

My Catholic friends and I had a discussion about having to be confirmed before you can be married in the Catholic Church.



I was told many years ago that you didn't have to be confirmed, but it was to the advantage to the couple getting married.

I looked in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, but could not find that information. What is the correct answer on this matter, and where can I direct my friends to look for information about it.

You won't find the answer to your question in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, at least not directly.

One would assume that if you must be at least 18 years old to marry validly in the Catholic Church in the United States, you would have already received the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, holy Eucharist and confession.

The *Code of Canon Law* makes this statement: "Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before being admitted to marriage, if this can be done without grave inconvenience" (#1065.1).

The question is: Why is it fitting to receive confirmation before marriage?

Because confirmation, if received worthily, brings with it the grace and strength you need to fight the good fight and live as a Christian.

With confirmation, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are strengthened—wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety and fear of the Lord. These spiritual gifts are helpful for married life. †

I was once told by a priest that if I were in a country that did not have a Catholic church, but there was a Greek Orthodox church, that I could receive the Eucharist there, that it would not be a sin and that it would be a valid Communion.

My sister thinks that I was given incorrect information because they are not under the pope.

The priest said it had to be either if a Catholic church was not available or there was an emergency to be able to receive Communion at a Greek Orthodox church.

The priest is correct on this matter, and your sister is partially wrong.

This question is answered in the *Code of Canon Law* under the topic "communicatio in sacris" or—as we say in English—"intercommunion."

A quotation from the pertinent section of the code explains that, "Whenever necessity requires or a genuine spiritual advantage commends it, and provided the danger of error or indifferentism is avoided, Christ's faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, may lawfully receive the sacraments of penance, the Eucharist and the anointing of the sick from non-Catholic ministers in whose Churches these sacraments are valid" (#844.2).

So if you are residing in or visiting a country where no Roman Catholic church is nearby, say within an hour's drive, but there is a Greek Orthodox church near you, you can lawfully—according to the Catholic Church's *Code of Canon Law*—attend their liturgies and receive holy Communion, confession or the anointing of the sick because all seven sacraments instituted by Christ are valid in the Orthodox Churches.

Your sister is correct that the Orthodox Churches are not completely united to the pope. However, their sacraments are valid because they have not broken the line of apostolic succession. †

## Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The *Criterion* invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the "My Journey to God" column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to "My Journey to God," *The Criterion*, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367 or e-mail to [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org). †

## My Journey to God

### The Gifts of Advent

May these be your gifts this Advent:  
The Peace that comes from stillness,  
The Hope that comes from waiting,  
The Joy that comes from giving,  
The Love that comes from receiving,  
The Word of God made flesh,  
Coming down to Earth in word and sacrament.

By Gina Langferman



(Gina Langferman is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. A worker places the star atop the Christmas tree at St. Peter's Square in Vatican City on Dec. 6.)

# Rest in peace

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

**BABBITT, William Thomas**, 91, Most Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Nov. 6. Husband of Rita Babbitt. Father of Janis Hamilton, Gerry Kennedy, Beth Runkle, Tim and Tom Babbitt. Grandfather of 12. Great-grandfather of 24. Great-great-grandfather of two.

**BEISWENGER, Hope**, infant, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 5. Daughter of Robert and Crystal (Sullivan) Beiswenger. Sister of Samantha Beiswenger. Granddaughter of Steve and Karen Sullivan and Robert Beiswenger. Great-granddaughter of Ed Wilson and Mary Beiswenger.

**BRAUN, Beverly Lee (Cecil)**, 81, Annunciation, Brazil, Nov. 23. Mother of Margaret Bastin, Jayne Stalcup, Dennis, Jeffrey, John, Patrick, R. Michael and Vincent Braun. Sister of Carol Graham and Shirley Skelley. Grandmother of 46. Great-grandmother of 23.

**CLEGG, Zachary Allen**, 16, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Nov. 29. Son of Steve and Amy Clegg and Michelle and Larry Owens Jr. Brother of Brittany and Elijah Clegg. Stepbrother of Christina, Laura and Larry Owens. Grandson of Laura Anderson and Carl and Evelyn Benning.

**DELLAROSA, Daniel Anthony**, 79, St. Joseph, Clark County, Nov. 30. Husband of Mary Ann DellaRosa. Father of Cindy and Terry DellaRosa.

Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of five.

**GULDE, Joseph, Jr.**, 81, St. Mary, Rushville, Oct. 29. Father of Rebecca, Christopher, Joseph, Nicholas and Steven Gulde. Brother of Bill Gulde. Grandfather of three. (correction)

**HABEL, Kevin L.**, 54, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Dec. 3. Husband of Bobbi Habel. Father of Jarrett Habel. Son of Dale and Lorraine Habel. Brother of Sue and Patrick Habel.

**HASTY, Edwin J.**, 87, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Dec. 3. Husband of Teresa Hasty. Father of Mariann Denton, Jane Gilliam, Barbara Morgan and Michael Hasty. Brother of Ruth Hansen. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of 18.

**KEYLER, William G.**, 84, Most Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Nov. 5. Husband of Alice (Gough) Keyler. Father of Margaret, Daniel, John and Michael Keyler. Brother of Robert Keyler. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of nine.

**KIMBLEY, Mary Rose**, 87, Most Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, Nov. 7.

**KIRTLEY, Shari Rose (Sparks)**, 45, St. Susanna, Plainfield, Nov. 25. Wife of David Kirtley. Mother of Adeline and Sophie Kirtley. Daughter of Ron and Joyce Sparks. Sister of Brad and Brian Sparks.

**KOTLOWSKI, Donald L.**, 84, St. Michael, Greenfield, Nov. 30. Husband of Helen Kottowski. Father of Daniel, Donald, Randy and Roger Kottowski. Grandfather of 11. Great grandfather of three.

**LITMER, Margie R.**, 85, St. John the Evangelist, Enochsburg, Dec. 3. Mother of Lonnie Litmer. Sister of Carol and Nettie Litmer. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of 14.

**LONG, James R., Sr.**, 71, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Dec. 1. Father of Tabitha Bramlett and

James Long Jr. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of six.

**MILLER, Diane E.**, 74, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Nov. 26. Sister of Charlene Bube and Phyllis Osbourn.

**NOBLES, Rita Ann**, 62, Annunciation, Brazil, Nov. 29. Wife of Larry Nobles. Mother of Jennifer Downey, Teresa Youngblood and Randy Nobles. Sister of Rhonda Barr, Rhea, Rick and Rod Albright. Grandmother of four.

**RIEDEMANN, Gertrude E.**, 92, St. Mary, Greensburg, Dec. 1. Mother of Joyce Holtkamp, Roseanne Noah, Julie Reed, Missionary Sister M. Sefapano Riedeman, Carl, Dale, David, Omer, Paul and Robert Riedeman. Sister of Rita Kramer and Henrietta Stein. Grandmother of 26. Great-grandmother of 13.

**SMITH, Preston Kent**, 75, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, Nov. 25. Husband of Catherine Smith. Father of Becky Thompson, Diane, Stephen and Walter Smith. Stepfather of Daphne and Julie Austin, Dana Miller, Dawn Wilkins, Dale and Dean Schmalz. Grandfather of 24. Great-grandfather of 11.

**TOBIN, Mark S.**, 58, St. Joan of Arc, Indianapolis, Dec. 2. Father of Mollie and Chandler Tobin. Brother of Jean Minks, Ann Schlensker and Bill Tobin.

**VENTURA, Anna**, 86, Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, Indianapolis, Nov. 13. Mother of Marie Faulk and Antoinette Ridenour. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of seven.

**WEILER, Stephen C.**, 59, St. Peter, Franklin County, Nov. 28. Son of Vincent and Leona Weiler. Brother of Brenda Bessler, Joanne Bone, Diane Gehrig, Marjorie Powell, Linda Skipton, Irene Zerr, Allen, Frank, Harold, Lawrence and Martin Weiler.

**ZINSER, Francis R.**, 85, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville, Nov. 20. Husband of Mary Geraldine Zinser. Father of Karen Heil, Bob, Rocky and Terry Zinser. Grandfather of 10. †



## Advent in Lithuania

People walk past a lit Christmas tree at Cathedral Square in Vilnius, Lithuania, on Dec. 6.

## Cuban bishops announce Marian jubilee year, confirm papal visit during 2012

HAVANA (CNS)—The Cuban bishops announced that 2012 would be a Marian jubilee year and that Pope Benedict XVI would come to Cuba as a “pilgrim of *La Caridad*,” the popular name for the Virgin of Charity of *El Cobre*, the country’s patroness.

In a Dec. 8 pastoral letter, they declared a jubilee year from Jan. 7, 2012, through Jan. 6, 2013, and said Cubans need the joy of faith, the strength of Christian love, and the light of hope that can come from “a reunion with our Christian roots,” and with the “enthusiastic reception of the teachings of Jesus Christ.”

The bishops did not announce dates of the papal visit, but said it would be part of national observances of the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the Virgin of Charity of *El Cobre*, the small statue of Mary found floating in the Bay of Nipe, which came to be the country’s most revered icon.

The Vatican earlier confirmed that a papal trip to Mexico and Cuba for spring 2012 was in the final planning stages.

Since August 2010, a replica of the statue of the Virgin of Charity has been traveling around the country for a series of processions, prayer services and Masses. Record crowds have turned out for the religious events in

every part of Cuba, exceeding the expectations of organizers, and meeting with no apparent resistance from the country’s communist government.

The tour of the replica, known as *La Mambisa*, has led to a new springtime of faith in the hearts of the Cuban people, the bishops said.

People have been spontaneously attracted to the Virgin “and undergo a peculiar inner harmony with her,” they said, much as children bond with their mothers before words are spoken, through silences, songs, gestures and offerings.

This maternal language, “so dear and personal,” has helped people recover values and helped meet the needs of the sick, those separated from their loved ones, prisoners and their families, young people, elderly and people worried by financial pressures.

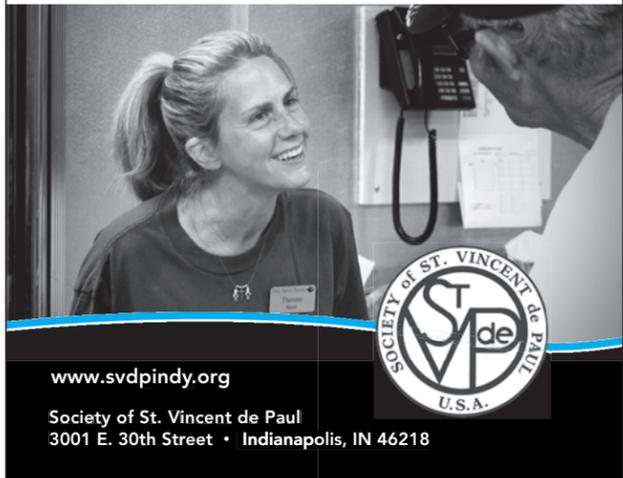
“The Virgin of Charity is talking to us and offering us the best thing—God’s son Jesus Christ, our only Savior,” the bishops said.

They encouraged “all who can” to make a pilgrimage during the jubilee year to the shrine of *El Cobre* in the Archdiocese of Santiago de Cuba.

Pope John Paul II visited Cuba in January 1998, the first trip of a pope to the nation. †

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## CHRIST’S COMING IN CHRISTMAS

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**Vigil Mass**

December 24

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Dickens Carolers

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Presider: Fr. Noah Casey

**Vigil Service of Lessons and Carols**

December 24

11:15 p.m.

Presider: Fr. Noah Casey

**Midnight Mass**

December 24

12:00 a.m.

Presider

Bishop Christopher J. Coyne

Concelebrant

Fr. Noah Casey

**Christmas Mass**

December 25

10:30 a.m.

Presider: Fr. Noah Casey



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# Website fosters faith, fellowship among students, campus ministries

MELBOURNE, Fla. (CNS)—They are the future of the Church and world and it just makes sense that as young adults pursue advanced education for their careers, they should be able to deepen their faith with prayer, fellowship and knowledge about their faith at the same time.

At [www.newmanconnection.com](http://www.newmanconnection.com), young adults are doing exactly that. Via the virtual world, they are connected to a community of others just like themselves.

"Campus ministry is where I found my faith," said Katrina Teano, a 23-year-old graduate student at Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne. "I'm connected with Newman Connection, do the online classes and really like it because it's connected to people in other schools in the country. All kids are welcome and if this gets someone involved—that's the benefit."

The Newman Connection, a nonprofit organization founded in July 2009, unites Newman centers across the country, providing a medium for communication as well as a support structure and ongoing development for students and the centers.

"There's so much work to be done in campus ministry," said Bill Zerrusen, its founder and president. "Through the Newman centers, we want to create a Catholic home within the public university boundaries where the kids can come and get the support they need."

Newman centers were inspired by Blessed John Henry Newman, who encouraged societies for Catholic students attending secular universities.

"I discovered God in law school," said Chad-Michael Cunningham, 28, who is director of Catholic campus ministry and development at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn. "God has made it an amazing ride, a really unique place to be in the world, a neatly carved-out job of working with students who might not know things, but know they want to know."

In late August, Newman Connection launched two online educational courses, "Exploring *YouCat*" and iFACTS, which stands for the Institute for Advancing Catholic Thought and Studies.

*YouCat* is a new youth catechism released this summer as a supplement to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; iFACTS is a project of the Vanderbilt Catholic community and endorsed by Nashville Bishop David R. Choby, who online welcomes students to the institute.

"A lot of this is the fruit of Blessed Pope John Paul II and his love for youth," the bishop said in an interview with Catholic News Service. "He encouraged and supported

them. World Youth Day 2011 is a prime example. I'm happy to see that this younger generation is discovering the richness of this life of faith and the hope and joy it brings. It's a real grace."

Cunningham started teaching catechism classes to Vanderbilt freshmen in September 2010, but it was meeting with the Newman Connection in February 2011 that catapulted the iFACTS program from a university classroom to the world and that classroom is available free, live-stream, online, 24/7 to all who visit the website.

"Newman Connection gave us the opportunity to say what we were saying, but into a very big microphone," Cunningham said. "I now get to speak with a countless number of people as to why their faith is important and especially how you live it—the practical side of our faith."

Newman Connection's resources include a list of the Newman centers on campuses around the country. Campus ministries connected to one another through the site number 159; for each one of those, the site includes a calendar of events; times for Mass, confession and adoration; center details and staff; and location and contact information.

"Exploring *YouCat*: Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church" is taught by three priests. One is Father Jim Kelleher, a priest of the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity.

"We live in a complex, highly technical and driven world," said Father Kelleher, who ministers at Our Lady of Corpus Christi Center for New Evangelization in Corpus Christi, Texas. His order operates the center.

"A person can feel left out. The despair you find in society and particularly on college campuses is 'not knowing the purpose of my life,'" the priest told CNS. "Blessed Pope John Paul II saw the young people as under-served and said he was not going to give up on them. He challenged them 'to come to know Jesus because the more you and I know Jesus, the more we know ourselves.'"

Victor Chapa, development director for Catholic campus ministry at Texas A&M International University in Laredo, Texas, encourages parents to visit the Newman Connection website. "It helps a lot for parents to see Catholic centers at secular universities. Newman Connection is doing a really great job of providing all the information."

"I'm involved in Catholic education because a large number of our kids are not catechized and aren't going to Mass," said Thomas Monaghan, founder and chancellor of Florida's Ave Maria University, in Ave Maria.

But "not all kids can afford to go to Catholic schools, and



Father John Sims Baker, chaplain of Vanderbilt Catholic, talks with students on Dec. 1 at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., who are planning a group trip to the upcoming March for Life in Washington. Elise Burgett, a senior from Medway, Mass., looks over e-mail from students signing up for the trip. Vanderbilt Catholic is the Nashville Diocese's campus ministry serving Catholic students at the university and one of the campus ministries involved in the Newman Connection.

we've got to teach our kids that the most important thing in their lives is to be in sanctifying grace. It is the foundation for everything else—living in Christ's presence," he said. "We're finding that the Newman centers on non-Catholic campuses are revitalizing—they're producing vocations and the leaders of the future."

The foundation upon which Newman Connection was built is called United in Prayer, which has its own link on the site. It's a national network of Catholics praying together for Newman centers and Catholic campus ministries across the country. Participants make a pledge to pray on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.

"I've encouraged our students to sign up, uniting our Catholic students across the nation in prayer to support each other," said Father Peter Nassetta, chaplain/director of campus ministry at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va.

Religious communities are involved in the prayer network, too. One is Mother Angelica's Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration at Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Hanceville, Ala., who include young adults in their intentions at perpetual adoration. Another is the Fathers of Mercy in Auburn, Ky. †

## Health and Human Services secretary says girls under 17 must consult doctors to get Plan B

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The U.S. bishops' pro-life spokeswoman said she was relieved that the Obama administration has decided not to allow the Plan B One-Step "morning-after pill" to be sold without a prescription to those under 17.

"Luckily, things did not go from bad to even worse," Deirdre McQuade, assistant director for policy and communications at the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, told Catholic News Service on Dec. 8. "We're pleased that they did not expand access to this very powerful drug."

McQuade said Plan B One-Step, known generically as levonorgestrel, "is 40 times more potent than comparable progestin-only birth control pills for which a prescription is required" even for adult women.

Announcing the decision on Dec. 7, Kathleen Sebelius, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, said the drug manufacturer,

Teva Women's Health, had not proven that those under 17 were sufficiently mature to use Plan B One-Step properly.

"There are significant cognitive and behavioral differences between older adolescent girls and the youngest girls of reproductive age," who could be as young as 11, Sebelius said.

Although "science has confirmed the drug to be safe and effective with appropriate use," she said, "the switch from prescription to over-the-counter for this product requires that we have enough evidence to show that those who use this medicine can understand the label and use the product appropriately."

"I do not believe that Teva's application met that standard,"

Sebelius said. "The label comprehension and actual use studies did not contain data for all ages for which this product would be available for use."

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has long opposed over-the-counter sales of Plan B, with McQuade saying in 2009 that it "has no authentic therapeutic purpose, and can actually cause harm to women and their newly conceived children."

Sister Carol Keehan, a Daughter of Charity who is president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, said in a Dec. 9 statement that Sebelius' decision was "not a case of politics versus science," as some have claimed.

"There is no strong science that definitively establishes the safety of this drug when self-administered by 11- and 13-year-olds" nor any long-term studies "that demonstrate the drug's potential impact on future reproductive choices these young girls will make," she said. †



Deirdre McQuade

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# New Albany Deanery parish celebrates 150 years of faith

By Sean Gallagher

At 59, Jerry Finn has many memories of the life of St. John the Baptist Parish in Starlight, the New Albany Deanery faith community that he has been a member of his entire life.

But his connection to this 150-year-old parish goes back to its earliest days. His great-great grandparents were involved in the founding of it in 1861.

Those ties between the generations at St. John aren't just historical, Finn says. It defines the parish here and now.

"I think St. John's is just naturally intergenerational," he said. "It's not uncommon to see elementary students being lectors [and] adults serving as altar servers. Everybody pitches in because we're not a really big parish."

At 320 households, the St. John the Baptist Parish community needs to call upon many of its members to make possible such parish events as its Strawberry Festival held annually in late May. It was also seen in the parish's 150th anniversary Mass and dinner, which were celebrated on Nov. 6.

Finn experienced this cooperation growing up, and saw that the parishioners did this not just out of duty. They also simply enjoyed being around each other.

"Our life revolved around the parish, the sacraments and going to Mass every Sunday," he said. "But even the social aspects [were important]. There were Euchre parties. There was the parish festival, the turkey shoots. The parish was more than just the sacramental life. It was definitely community life, too."

For many years, an important part of the parish's community life was centered on its school, which closed in 1993.

It formed the faith of generations of children, including Finn's classmate, Father Tom Smith, a member of the Conventual Franciscan Province of Our Lady of Consolation, based in nearby Mount St. Francis.

He and his classmates learned some rudimentary Spanish as grade school students in the early 1960s from St. John's pastor at the time, Father Charles Noll.

Father Tom says that childhood experience planted the seeds of his priestly vocation and his particular interest in Hispanic ministry, which he carried out for many years in the New Albany Deanery

"No question," said Father Tom, who is now director of the Holy Cross Retreat and Conference Center in Mesilla Park, N.M. "I'm sure that that was part of the inspiration of my own vocation because I went from Starlight straight to Mount St. Francis."

St. John's current pastor, Father Wilfred "Sonny" Day, experienced the close-knit nature of the parish when he served as its administrator from 1971-74 and again in 1976.

He was glad to return as its pastor in 2010.

"It's like coming back home," Father Day



Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, center, apostolic administrator, prays the eucharistic prayer during a Nov. 6 Mass at St. John the Baptist Church in Starlight that celebrated the New Albany Deanery faith community's 150th anniversary. Concelebrating the Mass were, from left, Father William Ripperger, a former administrator of the parish, and Father Wilfred "Sonny" Day, current pastor.

said. "I'm baptizing grandbabies of people that I married. It's delightful. I enjoy it very much."

Father Day had to return to Starlight, however, on a much more somber occasion in 1985.

In the middle of the night on Aug. 31 of that year, a fire broke out in the parish rectory. Father Richard Smith, its pastor at the time, and two of his priest friends, Fathers William Fisher and Kenneth Smith, who were visiting that weekend, all died in the blaze.

At the time of the tragedy, Father Day was pastor of St. Augustine Parish in nearby Jeffersonville and also served as dean of the New Albany Deanery.

He came to the parish to identify the bodies of the deceased priests.

"It just pulled [the parish] together even more," Father Day said. "I still remember Archbishop [Edward T.] O'Meara driving down that day after he heard about it."

One of the last people to see the parish's pastor alive was longtime parishioner Sharon Niehoff, who, at the time, lived across the road from the parish and served as the custodian of its now-closed school.

"It was devastating to everyone," said Niehoff, 78. "Father Smith had married my son and daughter-in-law on Friday night, and the fire happened at about 3 a.m. the next morning. He ate his last meal sitting at my left at the wedding reception."

Niehoff soon saw her fellow parishioners come together in the clean up



In this undated photo from the 1960s, Father Charles Noll, pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in Starlight from 1959-65, speaks outside a new classroom building for the parish's school, which closed in 1993.

after the fire much like they would in parish social events.

"Everyone is always so eager to help each other," she said "Everybody stands behind their neighbors and friends and relatives."

Finn hopes the family spirit continues at St. John as it begins its next 150 years.

"I hope that we can always pass on that

sense of community to people, but do it in an inviting way," he said. "I hope we always have that welcoming aspect that helps people who are new to the area feel like this is as much their parish as ours."

(For more information on St. John the Baptist Parish in Starlight, log on to [www.stjohnstarlight.org](http://www.stjohnstarlight.org).) †

## What was in the news on Dec. 15, 1961? Pope John XXIII appeals for Christian unity and for the primacy of Latin

By Brandon A. Evans

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

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

• **Appeal for Christian unity voiced in new encyclical**

"VATICAN CITY—His Holiness Pope John XXIII has used the words of a fifth-century pontiff, St. Leo the Great, to invite all separated Christian bodies back to unity. Pope John spoke in a 7,000-word encyclical, entitled 'Aeterna Dei Sapientia' and dated November 11. The new encyclical, the sixth of his pontificate, was released here on Dec. 9. The invitation to unity is addressed to all 'separated

brothers,' but the context of the encyclical directs it chiefly to the schismatic Christian churches of the East."

• **Tanganyika 'echo': Marian student shares Independence Day joy**

• **Point of agreement: World Council stresses Christian social duty**  
• **Ladywood announces \$2 million expansion**  
• **Pope emphasizes primacy of Latin in liturgy**

"VATICAN CITY—Latin must keep its 'sovereign place' in the public worship of the Church, according to His Holiness Pope John XXIII. But the pope in so stating also said that prayers and hymns in the

language of the people are 'sources of great spiritual value.' The pontiff spoke out on the use of both Latin and the vernacular in a letter to the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music. ...

"[Vernacular] prayers and hymns, which have been welcomed to a certain extent in the simple ceremonies of our churches for a long time, are sources of great spiritual value. Yet it will always be a sacred duty that the royal scepter of Latin be raised, and its noble reign by made to prevail in the solemn liturgy, whether in the most illustrious basilica or in a humble country church."

• **German Catholics plan special study**

in Protestantism

- **Mastery of language mission center's goal**
- **Stress employers' duty to set work standards**
- **Family clinic: Stormy engagements often point to serious marital trouble ahead**
- **The John Birch Society: a final appraisal**
- **Pass closing law in Oklahoma City**
- **Anne Culkin: Her boyfriend got fresh**
- **NCWC completes study on federal school aid**
- **Bishop Fulton Sheen raps negative anti-communism**

(Read all of these stories from our Dec. 15, 1961, issue by logging on to our archives at [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com).) †

