During ad limina visit, Bishop Coyne tells pope about strengths of local Church

**By Sean Gallagher**

Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, apostolic administrator, landed in Rome on Feb. 8 for the ad limina visit of the bishops of Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin with Pope Benedict XVI and the leaders of various offices at the Vatican. Each diocesan bishop around the world makes an ad limina visit every five to eight years. In advance of the trip, surveys about the life of the diocese are filled out by the bishop and his pastoral staff for review by the pope and various cardinals and bishops who assist him. Parts of these surveys for the archdiocese can be viewed online at www.archindy.org/adlimina.

Ad limina is Latin for “to the threshold” and refers to the bishops journeying to the threshold of the tombs of Sts. Peter and Paul, who were both martyred in Rome. In Rome, Bishop Coyne hit the ground running. He and his brother bishops began their first full day there by celebrating an early morning Mass at the tomb of St. Peter in the crypt of St. Peter’s Basilica. Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago was the principal celebrant.

Although that is a special place for a Mass, Bishop Coyne put it in perspective in an e-mail interview with The Criterion.

“It is always a joy to be able to celebrate Mass wherever I can,” he said. “Certainly, some places would be a more profound place to celebrate than others. Each brings its own resonance of faith and history. The tomb of St. Peter is one.”

Other groups were celebrating Mass at the same time in nearby chapels. “You could hear them singing their songs,” said Bishop Coyne in a video posted on the Internet later that day.

“There were different languages echoing through the space... We had the opportunity to reflect upon what it means to be a bishop in this modern day and age, drawing upon the Church’s tradition.

USCCB president says revised HHS mandate won’t solve problems

**ROME (CNS)—** Cardinal-designate Timothy M. Dolan of New York said on Feb. 13 that President Barack Obama’s revision to the contraceptive and sterilization mandate in the health reform law did nothing to change the U.S. bishops’ opposition to what they regard as an unconstitutional infringement on religious liberty.

“We bishops are pastors. We’re not politicians. And you can’t compromise on principle,” said Cardinal-designate Dolan, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. “And the goal posts haven’t moved, and I don’t think there’s a 50-yard line compromise here.

“We’re in the business of reconciliation so it’s not that we hold fast, that we’re stubborn ideologues. No. But we don’t see much sign of any compromise,” he said.

“What [Obama] offered was next to nothing. There’s no change, for instance, in these terribly restrictive mandates and this grossly restrictive definition of what constitutes a religious entity,” he said. “The principle wasn’t touched at all.”

Announced on Feb. 10, Obama’s revision of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ mandate left intact the restrictive definition of a religious entity and would shift the costs of contraceptives and sterilizations from the policy holders to the insurers, thus failing to ensure that Catholic individuals and institutions would not have to pay for services that they consider immoral, Cardinal-designate Dolan said.

For one thing, the cardinal-designate said, many dioceses and Catholic institutions are self-insuring. Moreover, Catholics with policies in the compliant insurance companies would be subsidizing others’ contraception and sterilization coverage. He also objected that individual Catholic employers would not enjoy exemption under Obama’s proposal.

Despite president’s ‘accommodation,’ local Church leaders are determined to defend religious liberty

By Sean Gallagher

Leaders in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and other Catholic organizations in central and southern Indiana remain determined to defend religious liberty, and want Catholics across the state and nation to join them in this effort.

They also expressed skepticism about the Feb. 10 announcement by President Barack Obama that an “accommodation” had been made in a U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) regulation requiring most religious organizations to provide contraceptives and sterilizations in their health insurance plans for their employees.

According to Obama, insurance companies will now pay for these medicines and procedures, not religious employers. But Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, apostolic administrator, said from Rome, during his ad limina visit, in an e-mail interview that “nothing has changed” for Catholic organizations and private employers across the nation.

“The announcement is basically a distinction without a difference,” Bishop Coyne told The Criterion. “We are still going to have to violate Church teaching by providing access to contraception through our health insurance policies.

“It is not just about who pays for it. It is about how it is provided and who provides it. We do. As far as the HHS mandate goes, we need to fight this one all the way. If not, this is only the beginning in terms of allowing the government to determine how people of faith will be allowed to live their faith.”

For the time being, though, the health insurance plan offered to employees of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis won’t be forced to offer contraceptives and sterilizations, said Edward Isakson, archdiocesan director of human resources.

That is because it has not been significantly changed since Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act into law in March 2010. Therefore, the plan has been “grandfathered in,” he said.

“We are hopeful that we can maintain grandfathered status for several years,” Isakson said. “But we can maintain grandfathered status for several years,” he said.

In the meantime, Isakson said it will be important for archdiocesan Catholics to take action to promote the elimination of the
March 25, 3 p.m. for St. John the Apostle, Indianapolis South Deanery
March 22, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg
March 21, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, Shelbyville
March 20, 7 p.m. at St. Lawrence, Shelby County
March 19, 7 p.m. at St. Mark the Evangelist, Greensburg
March 18, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, New Albany
March 17, 7 p.m. at St. Pius X, Indianapolis
March 16, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood
March 15, 7 p.m. at St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bloomington
March 14, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas, Bedford
March 13, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Bloomington
March 12, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, New Albany
March 11, 7 p.m. for Immaculate Conception, Richmond
March 10, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, Charlestown
March 9, 7:30 p.m. at St. Malachy, Brownsburg
March 8, 7 p.m. at St. Paul Katharine Drexel, Indianapolis
March 7, 7 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour, at St. Ambrose, Connersville
March 6, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, St. Meinrad, Connersville
March 5, 7 p.m. for Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Bernadette and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) at St. Therese of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Little Flower)
March 4, 7 p.m. at St. Patrick, Milford

Lenten disciplines include fasting, almsgiving, prayer

Abstinence from meat is to be observed by all Catholics 14 years and older on Ash Wednesday and on all Fridays of Lent. Ash Wednesday is Feb. 22.

Fasting is to be observed on Ash Wednesday by all Catholics who are 18 years of age but not yet 59. Those who are bound by this may take only one full meal. Two smaller meals are permitted if necessary to maintain strength.

“...the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert.”

#1095 “…the Church, especially during Advent and Lent and above all at the Easter Vigil, re-reads and re-lives the great events of salvation history in the ‘today’ of her liturgy. But this also demands that catechesis help the faithful to open themselves to this spiritual understanding of the economy of salvation as the Church’s liturgy reveals it and enables us to live it.”

#1438 “The seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church’s penitential practice.”

“These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing [charitable and missionary works].”

(To read the Catechism of the Catholic church online, log on to www.usccb.org/catechism/text/)

CATECHISM CORNER

What the catechism says about Lent

The season of Lent is mentioned in the Catechism of the Catholic Church in various sections. It is brought up in #540 in the section that explains Christ’s public ministry. In #1485, Lent is discussed in regard to the way in which the Church, especially in its liturgy, sees Christ professed in various ways in the Old Testament.

Finally, in #1486, the penitential nature of Lent is discussed in the section on the sacrament of reconciliation.

#540 “Jesus’ temptation reveals the way in which the Son of God is Messiah, contrary to the way Satan proposes to him and the way men wish to attribute to him (see Mt 16:21-23).”
Pope calls on Syria to address citizens’ legitimate demands

Pope Benedict XVI has warned that a “crisis in the Church” in Syria is a result of “allegations of sex abuse” in the country.

The Syrian Patriarch, Ignatius Joseph III Younan, has called for dialogue to solve the crisis in the country.

The pope said that, so far, he has not heard of any allegations of abuse in the Church, the Church can still be a forceful agent for bringing about change in the larger society.

“We as a Church, we want to be at the forefront of society in helping to deal with this issue so, even in countries where there have not been allegations of abuse in the Church, the Church can still be a forceful agent for bringing about change in the larger society.”

Bishop Daniel Conlon, chairman-elect of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People, said the Vatican’s top investigator of clerical sex abuse, Msgr. Charles Scicluna, spent almost an entire day on Feb. 13 with the participants of the Angelophoge conference.

Demographers gather during a protest against Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad near Homs on Feb. 13. Intense artillery and rocket fire by government forces on Feb. 11 on residential areas in Homs left at least 200 people dead, opposition activists said.

“Al-Assad’s government has expanded to include lay child protection officers, social workers, lawyers and Church leaders from around the world. This year, nearly 50 delegates attended from 15 countries, including Chile, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea.”

Bishop Conlon said he would like to see more bishops and representatives attend from Asia and Africa, even if they are not serving many or any accusations of clerical abuse of minors.

He said, “They would recognize very clearly that there is domestic abuse” of children, which is also plagued by shame or silence that keeps the tragedy largely hidden.

Next year’s Angelophoge conference—"to be hosted by the United States and ‘Vat Lanka’—I’d like to have someone address the cultural realities in developing nations,” he said, “to help us understand better what makes it unlikely at this point for a case of sexual abuse as a child to come forward either as a child or later as an adult.”

“We know that there’s harm that was done. So much as we find it painful to deal with those allegations, we know that for the sake of the one who was abused, it’s beneficial to come forward” and say what has happened, he said.

Bishop Conlon said the Vatican’s top investigator of clerical sex abuse, Msgr. Charles Scicluna, spent almost an entire day on Feb. 13 with the participants of the Angelophoge conference.

The monsignor spoke to the group last year, but spent much more time with the group this year going over what the Vatican expects and wants to see in each national conference’s abuse guidelines.

“He said that Msgr. Scicluna talked with participants ‘very humbly about how important it is for this dialogue to be going on. He wants people to tell him when they think that he’s not on the right path in regard to something. And he goes out of his way to say that people do have access to the Holy See, and they should take advantage of that and, at the same time, that the Holy See is listening to what’s going on.’

“Though cases involving the sexual abuse of a minor by clergy ‘sometimes do not move as quickly as they need to move,’ there is ‘no question’ that the doctrinal congregation, the office that has jurisdictional control of sex abuse accusations, “is very serious about child abuse and the protection of children.”

“THERE IS NO QUESTION in my mind that putting children first is an article of faith here,” the bishop said.

He said the annual conference is an important reminder that putting children first is a task that calls for constant improvement, and is “not an issue that’s going to pass off of the radar screen.”

The protection of children and vulnerable adults has also become an integral part of the Church’s mission “in the same kind of way the catechesis, the sacraments, supporting families, or taking care of the poor” are part of the Church’s life, he said.

Bishop Conlon was one of four delegates representing the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The others were Al Notcon of San Antonio, chair of the bishops’ National Review Board; Deacon Bernie Nojadera, executive director of the bishops’ Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection; and Mercy Sister Mary Ann Walsh, USCCB director of media relations.

How has faith affected your marriage?

The Criterion is inviting readers to share stories of how their Catholic faith has had an impact on their marriages, especially in specific moments of joy, struggle, heartbreak and hope.

Send your stories to assistant editor John Shangnessy at shangnessj@archindy.org or in care of The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your phone number in case additional contact is needed.

PHOTO BY PATRICK JUSZCZYK
Black Catholics in U.S. history

African-Americans and people across the United States observe the month of February as “Black History Month.” Black Catholics have contributed greatly to that history, although they, as all African-Americans, suffered greatly as slaves and, later, from discrimination. Even some southern Catholic bishops and religious orders owned slaves at one time.

Many black slaves were Catholics. John Carroll, the first American Catholic bishop, owned slaves, reported to Rome in 1785 that 20 percent of the Catholics in Maryland were black.

Several black American Catholics are among those being considered for possible canonization. I profiled them in my book Future American Saints?: Men and Women Whose Causes Are Being Considered. Although none have been beatified yet, two of them have been declared venerable, the step before beatification.

Venerable Pierre Toussaint (1766-1863) was a slave in Haiti when his owner moved to New York. Toussaint became a hairdresser, the most popular in the city. He became a free man when his owner died and moved to New York.

He purchased the freedom of Julie Noel, who became his wife. It was their work among the poor blacks and orphans, plus Pierre’s spiritual devotion, that put him on the road toward sainthood. He is buried in St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York, the only layman among cardinals and archbishops.

Venerable Henriette DeLille (1812-62) was the daughter of a white man and his free black mistress in New Orleans. After she grew up, she served those like her, people who were discriminated against because they were of mixed race. She eventually founded the Sisters of the Holy Family in 1842.

Servant of God Mother Mary Lange (1826-1915) became a hairdresser in New York, Toussaint’s city. She became a lay leader, eventually founding the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the first founded by black women.

Tolton is considered the first African-American priest only because the Healy family self-identified itself as white. However, the Healys were an amazing family.

Michael Healy owned a small plantation near Macon, Ga., in the early 19th century. He and one of his slaves, Eliza Clark, had 10 children together. Of course, laws then forbade interracial marriage and the children were considered slaves. Therefore, Michael sent them to the North for their education.

One of their children, James Augustine Tolton, became the first U.S. Catholic bishop of African-American heritage. He headed the diocese of Portland, Maine, for 25 years, from 1875 to 1890.

His brother, Patrick, became a Jesuit priest and president of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Father Tolton, for example, couldn’t find a seminary in the United States willing to accept a black man, and had to go to Rome to study and be ordained. Many lay Catholics in Baltimore reacted vehemently against Mother Lange’s religious congregation, refusing to accept black women religious.

After the Civil War, the Catholic Church began to evangelize among the blacks, especially those in the South. The Society of the Divine Word was founded for that purpose.

Nevertheless, discrimination remained, as the story of Father Tolton indicates.

St. Katharine Drexel used the fortune she inherited to establish the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament to work in schools for Native Americans and Native Americans.

Father Doyle seems overly concerned with the possibility that the laity might “get confused” if Communion is distributed by a layperson outside the context of a Mass.

Let me see if I understand his logic. A layperson can look at the bread that has been consecrated and see Jesus, but can’t look at a man dressed in vestments standing behind an altar elevating the host and tell that he is a priest rather than a layperson or that this is Mass and not a Communion service?

A few years ago, I spoke with a young man preparing to get married. His aunt told him that she thought he and his fiancée were too financially strapped to have a wedding, and that it wouldn’t be “fair to bring up a baby in poverty.” Keenly aware of his joblessness and his minuscule bank account, he concluded she was probably right.

A young man and his fiancée were ready to tie the knot in a few months, and they expected that she would be at the informal phase of her life around the time of their honeymoon so they would be able to consummate the marriage while avoiding bringing a child into the world.

They agreed they would use Natural Family Planning (NFP) after that to avoid a pregnancy. A few years later when they felt financially secure, he told her, they would have their first child.

He admitted, however, that he was conflicted about whether they were really being “open” and “willing” in their marriage if they were going into it with this kind of forethought and intention of avoiding children. In marriage, it can certainly be challenging to harmonize spousal love with the responsible management of one’s life.

Janet Smith and Christopher Kaczor, in an illuminating passage from one of their recent books, side-saddle this challenge and point to the need for a “spirit of generosity” when it comes to procreation.

“Pope John Paul II spoke of ‘responsible parenthood,’ in which couples use practices that are consistent with the natural law and a spirit of generosity in determining how many children they should have. Some Catholics believe that the Church permits the use of NFP only for reasons that verge on the merely ‘natural’ or ‘merely personal’ instead of being informed by a ‘spirit of generosity’ when it comes to procreation.”

A great family.

One could perceive this as one more attempt to limit the role of the laity that Vatican II seemed to be about to accomplish so many years ago.

Will the next move be to have the priest speak a language that laypeople don’t understand—perhaps in order to eliminate any further “confusion”?

Father Doyle can use as much “Christian jargon” as he likes, but his response is this—Jesus is being withheld from those who wish to receive him at times when they may need him the most! There is no confusion about that!
Polish cardinal tours Florida shrine, recalls papal trip to Cuba

In Miami (CNS) — Blessed John Paul II is still offering his prayerful struggles against Nazism and communism in Eastern Europe as this year concludes with a 1990 visit to Cuba, according to a Polish cardinal who as a priest served as the pope's personal secretary for 18 months.

“Cardinal Karol Wojtyła was proclaiming the Gospel in spite of this [communist] system. He was defending the dignity of each person who was created in the image and likeness of God,” said Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, the archbishop of Krakow, Poland, since 2005.

He celebrated Mass and visited with the Cuban-American community at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Charity on Feb. 5 during a visit to the south Florida shrine.

Accompanied by Miami Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski and retired Miami Auxiliary Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski during a visit to the south Florida shrine.

The late nun, who served Cuba from 1958 to 2006, is a native of Cuba, Cardinal Dziwisz and retired Miami Auxiliary Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski during a visit to the south Florida shrine.

Polish Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz presents a framed portrait of Blessed John Paul II to members of St. Patrick Parish in Miami Beach on Feb. 3. The cardinal, who was personal secretary to the pope on his 104 trips abroad, was in south Florida to raise funds and awareness for the John Paul II Center in Krakow, Poland.

“Pilgrimages from around the world are coming to the sanctuary of the Divine Mercy movement, founded in the early 1900s by a Polish nun from Krakow, St. Faustina Kowalska, who is especially popular among Catholic Latinos,” Dziwisz said.

“People in Indiana convicted of a drug offense are currently ineligible for a food stamp card.”

People in Indiana convicted of a drug offense are currently ineligible for a food stamp card.

Broden's proposal.

According to Ashe, the drug felon ban was introduced with the federal Welfare Reform Act of 1996 as an opt-in proposal for states. It gave states the choice to become former drug offenders ineligible for Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, a move intended to discourage drug offenders from exchanging food stamps for drugs. Indiana is one of 12 states that still has a lifetime ban on people convicted of a drug felony from getting food stamps. If the state opts in, the bill's officials may also decide to reverse course and opt out of the ban through legislative action. Currently, states and the District of Columbia have restored nutrition benefits to people with former drug offenses.

Broden's proposal would allow Indiana to opt out of the federal law. Sen. Bill 102 would let people convicted of a drug felony receive food stamps if they meet income guidelines, are enrolled in a drug treatment program, and have not committed another drug offense in the last five years, and are drug free for two months.

Broden said that while the federal legislation was well-intended, it ignores individuals who have received treatment, are in recovery and have reformed their lives.

Ashe said that an adult with no income receives about $200 a month in food stamps or $2,400 in food stamps per year. According to the Indiana Department of Corrections website, it costs an average of $54.28 per day or $19,447.20 a year to keep an adult inmate incarcerated in Indiana.

“Cardinal Dziwisz visited Miami in 1987 during that papal visit to the United States. It was one of the first papal visits to Mexico and Cuba,” the cardinal said.

Food stamps ban for reformed drug offenders is being reconsidered

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

Kanda and her husband were both employed and working hard to save money before their son died.

When the recession hit, they unexpectedly found themselves unemployed.

In the program, Kanda applied for food stamps, but was denied. She had a previous drug-related conviction on her record, which bans her from receiving food stamps.

Kanda’s story is not uncommon, said Cheryl Asche, founder of Information Referral and Ex-Offender Services, a ministry at St. Augustine Parish in South Bend, Ind., in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese, that helps ex-offenders successfully transition back into society.

The road back to becoming a productive citizen is hard enough, but it is especially challenging for those who have a drug felony conviction,” Ashe said. That is something that she would like to see changed.

And Asche is not alone.

Sen. John Broden, R-South Bend, would, too. Broden, who is authoring a proposal, Senate Bill 102, to address the problem, said that he became aware of the issue when he used to dine at a diner called Dismiss House in South Bend, and heard firsthand the frustration these individuals have faced. To give context, he pointed out many of them were mothers with children who may have felt that if people could demonstrate they had successfully completed a respected drug treatment program and had remained drug free that they should be eligible to get food stamps.

The Indiana Catholic Conference, the Church’s official representative in the state on public policy matters, supports Broden’s proposal.

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Broden said that while the federal legislation was well-intended, it ignores individuals who have received treatment, are in recovery and have reformed their lives.

Ashe said that an adult with no income receives about $200 a month in food stamps or $2,400 in food stamps per year. According to the Indiana Department of Corrections website, it costs an average of $54.28 per day or $19,447.20 a year to keep an adult inmate incarcerated in Indiana.

“It’s all about recidivism,” Ashe said. When people get the help they need—it gives them a chance to change, do a job, get a support family or food stamps—it really helps them remain drug free, and on the road to being self-sufficient and contributing members to their community. But when they don’t, it increases their chances that they may become desperate and resort to drugs or crime.”

Ashe also said there is research showing that good nutrition really helps ease drug cravings, which helps a person stay drug free. “If an ex-offender can stay drug free, then they have less chance of committing a crime to support a drug habit,” she said.

“The federal government allows people living in drug treatment programs to use their food stamps to pay for foods furnished by the facility. This is one of the few benefits or quarters to the YWCA of North Central Indiana and Center for the Homeless. People in Indiana convicted of a drug offense are currently ineligible for a food stamp card.”

Allowing the clients to pay for meals using food stamps helps the organizations lower their food cost, Ashe added. “These organizations are not able to receive food stamp money for these individuals even though they are feeding them. Senate Bill 102 would allow these agencies to recoup the cost of feeding ex-offenders convicted of drug felonies.”

Even though Senate Bill 102 did not receive a hearing in the Senate, Broden said that he felt hopeful that the bill could still have a chance of passing this year.

Broden said that he is working on finding a new home for his bill, and hopes to get it amended into an existing bill that is moving.

“Cardinal Dziwisz added, “and we would like to share this gift with others, disseminating his thoughts, his achievements, his way of serving people throughout the world.”

Stay connected with the legislature through weekly I-CAN updates

Get connected and join the Indiana Catholic Action Network— I-CAN.

Interested parties may join I-CAN electronically at the ICC Website.

In addition to the I-CAN Update each week, people can obtain more detailed information regarding the bills and the legislative process through the ICC Legislative Action Center.

Under policy tools, click on “issues and legislation,” and access the state or federal bills by clicking “current legislation.”

Also, people can access the archived updates, ICC positions and other background information at the ICC website at www.indianacc.org.
Sanctity of Life awards dinner is March 8 in Indianapolis

Vocations appreciation dinner

Distinguished pro-life service

The Wabash Valley Right to Life organization honored St. Patrick parishioner Cecelia Lundstrom of Terra Haute, right, on Jan. 26 for her distinguished service to the cause of life through the former Birthright of Terra Haute ministry to mothers and babies in need in west-central Indiana and east-central Illinois for 37 years. During the fundraiser at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Lundstrom accepted her award from the Rev. Paul Cooper, left, pastor of Marshall Baptist Church in Marshall, Ill., and vice chairman of the pro-life organization, and Sara Lee of Terra Haute, center, treasurer of Wabash Valley Right to Life.

March 1

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg.
Four Contemporary Stories of Discovering One’s Way,” Lenten series, session one of four. Franciscan Sister Barbara Leonhard, presenter, 6:30-8:30 p.m., $15 per session or $25 for four. Information: 317-933-6437 or center@oldenburgcfc.com

March 2-4

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 335 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “The Desert Call–A Weekend Lenten Retreat,” Notre Dame Sister Catherine Giffords, presenter, $115 per person/$230 per couple. Information: 317-543-7681 or marcia.johnson@archindy.org

March 3

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg.
“What Does It Mean To Be the Salt of the Earth?” Franciscan Sister Karla Barker, presenter, 9-11 a.m., $25. Information: 317-933-6437 or center@oldenburgcfc.com

March 5

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis.
“Hospitality–A Doorway into Lent,” Benedictine Sister Carol Falkner, presenter, Mass, 5 p.m., buffet dinner and endowment, $30 per person. Information: 317-543-7681 or www.archindy.org/fatima

March 7

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove.
“Lenten Journey–Way of Forgiveness,” session two of four, Benedictine Sister Angela Jarboe, presenter, 6:30-9:30 p.m., $25 per person includes dinner. Information: 317-738-7581 or benedictinum@domech.org

March 8

St. Mary of the Greenwood School, 389 S. Meridian St., Greenwood.
“Praying the Lenten Weekday Lectionary,” Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, presenter, 7 p.m., no charge. Information: 317-888-2601.

Our Lady of the Greenwood School, 389 S. Meridian St., Greenwood.
“Hospitality–A Doorway into Lent,” Benedictine Sister Carol Falkner, presenter, 7 p.m., buffet dinner and endowment, $30 per person. Information: 317-543-7681 or benedictinum@domech.org

Sanctity of Life awards dinner is March 8 in Indianapolis

Magr. Joseph Schaeckel, pastor of St. Mary of the Greenwood Parish in Indianapolis and director of the archdiocesan Mission Office, is the keynote speaker for the 2012 Archdiocesan Sanctity of Life Dinner on March 8 at the Riverview Banquet Center and Lodge, 6729 Westfield Blvd., in Indianapolis. The awards dinner raises funds for the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry. With this year’s award recipients are Sylvia and Linda Ebert, members of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, Holly Batsel, a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis; and Dr. Hans Geisler, a member of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis.

Reservations are $45 per person, $85 for married couples and $135 for students. For reservations or more information, call the archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry at 317-236-1569 or 800-382-9386, ext. 1569, by the Feb. 22 deadline. 

Retreats and Programs

February 20

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Day of Reflection,” $38 per person includes continental breakfast and lunch. Information: 317-543-7681 or maricia.johnson@archindy.org

February 22

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., $35 per person includes continental breakfast and lunch. Information: 317-543-7681 or maricia.johnson@archindy.org

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove.
“Lenten Journey–Way of Forgiveness,” session one of four, Benedictine Sister Angela Jarboe, presenter, 6:30-9:30 p.m., $15 per session or two for $25. Information: 317-933-6437 or center@oldenburgcfc.com

February 24-26

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “The Desert Call–A Weekend Lenten Retreat,” Notre Dame Sister Catherine Giffords, presenter, $115 per person/$230 per couple. Information: 317-543-7681 or marcia.johnson@archindy.org

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad.
“Reading the Book of Hosea,” Lenten retreat, Benedictine Father Emiliano Zuniga, presenter, preticket registration fee, 812-357-6585 or mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu

February 29

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove.
“Lenten Journey–Way of Forgiveness,” session two of four, Benedictine Sister Angela Jarboe, presenter, 6:30-9:30 p.m., $25 per person includes dinner. Information: 317-738-7581 or benedictinum@domech.org

March 1

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg.
“Four Contemporary Stories of Discovering One’s Way,” Lenten series, session one of four. Franciscan Sister Barbara Leonhard, presenter, 6:30-8:30 p.m., $15 per session or two for $25. Information: 317-933-6437 or center@oldenburgcfc.com

March 2-4

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 335 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “The Desert Call–A Weekend Lenten Retreat,” Notre Dame Sister Catherine Giffords, presenter, $115 per person/$230 per couple. Information: 317-543-7681 or marcia.johnson@archindy.org

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad.
“Reading the Book of Hosea,” Lenten retreat, Benedictine Father Emiliano Zuniga, presenter, preticket registration fee, 812-357-6585 or mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu

March 3

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg.
“What Does It Mean To Be the Salt of the Earth?” Franciscan Sister Karla Barker, presenter, 9-11 a.m., $25. Information: 317-933-6437 or center@oldenburgcfc.com

March 5

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 335 E. 56th St., Indianapolis.
“Hospitality–A Doorway into Lent,” Benedictine Sister Carol Falkner, presenter, Mass, 5 p.m., buffet dinner and endowment, $30 per person. Information: 317-543-7681 or www.archindy.org/fatima

March 7

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove.
“Lenten Journey–Way of Forgiveness,” session three of four, Benedictine Sister Angela Jarboe, presenter, 6:30-9:30 p.m., $25 per person includes dinner. Information: 317-738-7581 or benedictinum@domech.org

Vocations appreciation dinner

Three Knights of Columbus councils based in Aurora, Bright and Lawrenceburg hosted a vocations appreciation dinner on Jan. 13 at St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg. Honored at the meal were vocations directors and priests, religious and a deacon who minister in the Batesville Deanery as well as seminarians from that deanery. Among those attending the meal were, from left in the front row, Franciscan Sisters Shirley Gerth and Joan Miller, Fathers Jack Hartzer, Peter Gallagher, Aaron Jenkins and Shaun Whittington, Franciscan Sister Margie Neimer and seminarian Anthony Stange, and, from left in the back row, Fathers John Meyer, George Joseph Nanganchukutu, Brendan Dickson, transitional Deacon Jim Byrd, permanent Deacon Tim Helter, and Fathers Eric Johnson, Steven Donohue, Scott Nobbe and Jonathan Meyer.
WASHINGTON (CNS)—A revision in a federal health care mandate that would shift the payment of contraception and sterilization coverage from religious employers to health insurance companies still infringes upon religious liberty and should be addressed, said an official of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The mandate’s narrow exemption for religious organizations that host and support self-insured parties, like many dioceses and Catholic organizations, could still force entities morally opposed to contraception to pay for such services, said John Carr, executive director of the U.S. bishops’ Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development.

“The fact is we have to go back to the beginning,” Carr told several hundred people during the opening session of the Catholic Social Ministry Convocation Feb. 12. “The best way to get out of this is not to get into it. We should not have the government dictate what’s a ministry or not. We need the administration to revise it, we need the Congress to repeal it or we need the courts to stop it.”

Carr also said that making no-cost contraception and sterilizations available to American women is a top legislative priority of the administration. “Lots of people have said, ‘What are the priorities of the Obama administration?’” Carr told the gathering. “Well, we know one. It’s free birth control for everybody.”

President Barack Obama announced the revision on Feb. 10 after three weeks of intensive criticism over a federal mandate that would require most religious organizations and how the revision pertains to self-insured care mandate that would shift the payment of contraception coverage still infringes upon religious liberty and that’s the heart of who we are,” he said.

“belligerent, unnecessary and deep- ly offensive to the content of Catholic belief,” was simply the latest in a pattern of actions taken by the Obama administration that shows that it is “to put generously—some deal to people of faith.”

Archbishop Chaput exhorted Catholics to stand firm in faith in the debate regarding the regulation. “Catholics should not be quick to accept feeble compromises on issues of principle,” he wrote. “The HHS mandate is bad law, and not merely bad, but dangerous and insulting. It needs to be withdrawn—now.”

In his column, Archbishop Chaput referred to an open letter to Obama in which The Catholic University of America president Father Donald Wuerl, D.C., and Notre Dame law professor Carter Sned, Harvard University law professor Mary Ann Glendon, Princeton law professor Mary Ann Glendon, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and others called on the administration to withdraw the rule.

The revised regulation “changes nothing of moral substance,” the bishops said. “We’ve got people who aren’t Catholic, who don’t want to be in business with religious groups about the rules first made public on Feb. 12, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia wrote that the revised mandate did not solve the problem.”

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput wrote that the revised regulation was Cardinal-designate Dolan as well as the USCCB on the White House had been in touch with any bishop or Cardinal-designate Dolan said the White House only called Cardinal-designate Dolan said that he had the HHS mandate, which he described as “dictates of their respective faiths or bending the knee to the administration’s proposal.”

The Wall Street Journal, the three men said that the USCCB administration officials would have better understood the potential implications of the revised regulation and founder of Prison Fellowship and the Colson Center for Christian世界观 and founder of Prison Fellowship and the Colson Center for Christian Reconciliation, who was introduced by Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, R-Neb.

“Understandably, she’s trying to make our lives better and ensure access to the fixes for a good chunk of stuff that goes on in Catholic hospitals. It’s tough for her to say this,” Carr said. “She’s in a bind;” the cardinal-designate said of Sister Carol. “When she’s talking to [HHS Secretary Kathleen] Sebelius and the president of the United States, in some ways, these are people who are picking the checks for a good chunk of stuff that goes on in Catholic hospitals. It’s tough for her to say this,” Carr said. “She’s in a bind;” the cardinal-designate said of Sister Carol. “When she’s talking to [HHS Secretary Kathleen] Sebelius and the president of the United States, in some ways, these are people who are picking the checks for a good chunk of stuff that goes on in Catholic hospitals. It’s tough for her to say this,” Carr said. “She’s in a bind;” the cardinal-designate said of Sister Carol. “When she’s talking to [HHS Secretary Kathleen] Sebelius and the president of the United States, in some ways, these are people who are picking the checks for a good chunk of stuff that goes on in Catholic hospitals. It’s tough for her to say this,” Carr said. “She’s in a bind;” the cardinal-designate said of Sister Carol. “When she’s talking to [HHS Secretary Kathleen] Sebelius and the president of the United States, in some ways, these are people who are picking the checks for a good chunk of stuff that goes on in Catholic hospitals. It’s tough for her to say this,” Carr said. “She’s in a bind;” the cardinal-designate said of Sister Carol. “When she’s talking to [HHS Secretary Kathleen] Sebelius and the president of the United States, in some ways, these are people who are picking the checks for a good chunk of stuff that goes on in Catholic hospitals. It’s tough for her to say this,” Carr said. “She’s in a bind;” the cardinal-designate said of Sister Carol. “When she’s talking to [HHS Secretary Kathleen] Sebelius and the president of the United States, in some ways, these are people who are picking the checks for a good chunk of stuff that goes on in Catholic hospitals. It’s tough for her to say this,” Carr said. “She’s in a bind;” the cardinal-designate said of Sister Carol. “When she’s talking to [HHS Secretary Kathleen] Sebelius and the president of the United States, in some ways, these are people who are picking the checks for a good chunk of stuff that goes on in Catholic hospitals. It’s tough for her to say this,” Carr said. “She’s in a bind;” the cardinal-designate said of Sister Carol. “When she’s talking to [HHS Secretary Kathleen] Sebelius and the president of the United States, in some ways, these are people who are picking the checks for a good chunk of stuff that goes on in Catholic hospitals. It’s tough for her to say this,” Carr said. “She”
The Council’s ministry is focused on re-evangelizing people in countries and cultures that were once primarily Christian, but where the faith is now the minority case. A meeting of Synods of Bishops in the fall will discuss this topic. [Archbishop Rino Fisichella] said that one of the most important things is to evangelize ourselves,” Bishop Coyne said. “If we’re going to be committed to the work of the new evangelization, we need to be so committed to the person of Jesus Christ and to the Church and to the Church’s teachings so that there is an authenticity to what we do.”

Later that same day, the bishops of Indiana had a 20-minute audience with Pope Benedict XVI in the apostolic palace at the Vatican. In his first video posted to the Internet later that evening, Bishop Coyne reflected on the visit with the pope in which each bishop had the chance to talk about the life and ministry of the local Church that he represented.

“I talked about the great opportunity that we have in the state of Indiana and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for positive growth, for real growth in people coming to our Church because we are such a healthy Catholic community in central and southern Indiana,” Bishop Coyne said. “Whoever the next archbishop will be will have such an opportunity to continue to do the good work that Archbishop [Daniel M.] Buechlein did, and to foster people coming to our faith and to foster charitable works and to do new evangelization.”

Bishop Coyne said he appreciated the chance to spend time with the Holy Father. “It was a very special moment to be able to sit down for 20 minutes with him,” he said. “We sat down and had a conversation. He asked questions as he listened to what we had to say. He was very interested in the work that’s going on in Indiana and in the Church.”

In a later e-mail interview with The Criterion, Bishop Coyne said that the audience with Pope Benedict also gave him a new appreciation of the spiritual wealth of knowledge and years. I just want to sit back and listen to them.”

Some meetings with Vatican officials went to the fundamental liberties of our nation. It’s just that important.

“The cost of contraceptives, and other employee benefits.

Isakson said that the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and Wisconsin were making their ad limina visits to the Vatican to report on the status of their dioceses to the pope and Vatican officials.

Left, Bishop Timothy L. Doherty of Lafayette, Ind., and Bishop Christopher J. Coyne of Indianapolis walk through snow at St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on Feb. 11. The bishops were on their ad limina visits to the Vatican. This was the second snowfall in a week in a city where snow is as rare as a papal concile.

Above, Pope Benedict XVI meets on Feb. 9 with U.S. bishops from Indiana on their ad limina visits to the Vatican. Seated at left are: Bishop Christopher J. Coyne of Indianapolis; Bishop Timothy L. Doherty of Lafayette; Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of South Bend; and Bishop Dale J. Meliczek of Gary. Bishops from Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin were making their ad limina visits to the Vatican to report on the status of their dioceses.

“HHS regulation was announced last August. United States voiced their concern to HHS officials after the regulation was announced last August. They include Cardinal Francis George of Chicago and Archbishop Jerome Listecki of Milwaukee,” Bishop Coyne said. “Among all of these men, there is this incredible wealth of knowledge and years. I just want to sit back and listen to them.”

Some meetings with Vatican officials have been cancelled due to a series of snowstorms that hit Rome and much of Italy prior to and during the start of the ad limina visit.

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Indianapolis parish to host annual Lenten speaker series

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, 1962, issue of The Criterion.

Cisterion  

The Criterion. Here are some of the items found in the Feb. 16, 1962, issue of The Criterion.

- Recite breviary for Council.
- Pope John urges all priests.
- God demands it" evangelist sparks "right-wingers." Says Council may define "the Church!"
- "HEIDELBERG, Germany—The head of the Holy See’s Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity said here it is very important that the coming ecumenical council give a basic explanation of the position on Catholicism within the Mystical Body of Christ. Cardinal Augustin Bea, addressing a gathering of Protestant Catholic students and university professors here, said that the nature of the true Church of Christ which would be spelled out by the council. The council must make clear the indefeasible effect of every valid baptism, he said. "All who are baptized have been incorporated in Christ and made children of God. Such a declaration would serve to teach that all other Christian brothers and sisters are members of the one great family of Christ," he said.

- New Albany Serrarents set contests, exhibit. 
- "Anti-laison" peril seen by speaker Charles Clark

- Father Raymond De Souza

Vocations are born from openness to the love of God, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Love of God nurtures love of neighbor, especially in people with vocations to the priesthood or religious life, said Pope Benedict XVI in his message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

The papal message for the 49th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, which will be observed on April 29, was released on Feb. 19 at the Vatican.

"The profound truth of our existence is thus contained in this surprising mystery: Every creature, and in particular every human person, is the fruit of God’s thought and an act of his love, a love that is boundless, faithful and everlasting," Pope Benedict wrote.

"It is in this soil of self-offering and openness to the love of God, and as the fruit of that love, that all vocations are born and grow. By drawing from this wellspring through prayer, constant recourse to God’s word and to the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, it becomes possible to live a life of love for our neighbors, in whom we come to perceive the face of Christ the Lord," the pope wrote.

Pope Benedict wrote that love of both God and other people “must be lived with a particular intensity and purity of heart by those who have decided to set out on the path of vocation discernment toward the ministerial priesthood and the consecrated life.”

"Calling on the Church to "create the conditions that will permit many young people to say ‘yes’ in generous response to God’s living call," the pope recommended "Scripture, prayer and the Eucharist" as the most valuable means "enabling us to grasp the beauty of a life spent fully in service of the kingdom.""

Quoting his predecessor, Blessed John Paul II, Pope Benedict called families the "primary and most excellent seedbed of vocations to a life of consecration to the kingdom of God.”

New law allows parents of Catholic school children to save in state income taxes

Criterion staff report

Thanks to a new law, parents of Catholic school children may be eligible to save $34 per child in this year’s Indiana state income taxes.

“It’s part of the school voucher bill that was passed last April,” said Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, the Church’s official representative on public policy in the state.

“It provides a $1,000 deduction per child who is enrolled in a non-public school or is home-schooled. It’s not a credit. It’s a deduction. As an example, if you have $10,000 in taxable income and have one child in a Catholic school, then you could deduct $1,000 because of that child. You’d end up paying taxes on $9,000,” said Tebbe.

With the state tax rate at 3.4 percent, Indiana taxpayers would save $34 for each $1,000 in deductions, Tebbe figured.

“It’s a good thing and a step in the right direction,” Tebbe noted. “It gives families something that recognizes the sacrifices they make, and the fact that the state saves money because they don’t have to pay for these children in a public school.”

For more information about the state tax deduction, see Income Tax Information Bulletin 107 at www.in.gov/dor/4950.htm.

What was in the news on Feb. 16, 1962? Holy Father urges priests to recite breviary for Council, and father of H-bomb sees U.S. passing Russia in space race

By By Sean Gallagher

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., in Indianapolis will host its 12th annual Lenten speaker series titled “Spaghetti and Spirituality.” On Feb. 29, March 7, March 14 and March 21.

Before dinner and each week’s presentation, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for adoration following the conclusion of the traditional Latin Mass at noon. Another Mass, celebrated in English, will start at 6:45 p.m.

A light, meatless pasta dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. at Msgr. Prior Hall. Each presentation will begin at approximately 7:15 p.m. and ordinarily conclude by 8:30 p.m. In years past, Holy Rosary’s annual 40 Hours Devotion has been included during “Spaghetti and Spirituality.” This year, it will take place Oct. 7 near the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, which is usually observed on Oct. 7.

Bruce Konicek, a Holy Rosary parishioner who helps oversee the “Spaghetti and Spirituality” series, said that the speaker series has drawn an average of 200 participants per session in recent years. “Depending on the speaker, we can get visitors from nearby 50 parishes,” Konicek said.

People attending sessions during this year’s series will have the chance to learn about the Church’s perspective on the continuing economic problems of many people in society, how the example of the saints from the past can help us today, discuss the growing secularization of society and hear a presentation about caring for the elderly.

On Feb. 29, Dr. Clark, professor of economics and senior fellow at the Vincentian Center for Church and Society at St. John’s University in New York, will speak on the topic “A Catholic Perspective on the Financial and Economic Crisis.”

“Professor Clark has written extensively both in this area and about Catholic social justice,” Konicek said. “This is a timely discussion which I think will interest many Catholics.”

On March 7, Holy Rosary will welcome Dominican Mother Mary Assumpta Long, a co-founder of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist in Ann Arbor, Mich.

She will discuss “Great Saints in Times of Turbulent Times: What about the Present Moment?”

In the next session on March 14, international Catholic apologist and speaker Raymond De Souza will give a presentation titled “De-Christianization and the Catholic Counter-Revolution.”

“I am hopeful that both Raymond and Mother Mary Assumpta will convince each of us that we are called to live by examples set forth by Jesus Christ and by the saints,” Konicek said.

“Spaghetti and Spirituality” will conclude on March 21 with a presentation by Carmelitine Sister P. Peter Lillian Di Maria on the liturgy of Holy Thursday and Holy Friday.

Sister Peter Lillian has been director of the Germantown, N.Y.-based Avila Center for Gerontology since 1997. She has more than 30 years of experience in continuing care ministry, and has developed successful dementia care programs.

“I think we are seldom equipped, especially from a Catholic understanding, to reflect on our own calling for caring for our elderly parent, spouse or loved one,” Konicek said. “I believe Sister Peter Lillian will shed light on this matter, and give an inspirational viewpoint from the Catholic Church’s teachings.”

Konicek is looking forward to the Lenten series at Holy Rosary, which highlights the hard work of the parish staff and the volunteerism of many fellow parishioners.

“I am absolutely amazed by the dedication of parishioners who [volunteer] to make this program successful,” Konicek said. “Over 1,000 meals are prepared throughout this Lenten program. Knowing that visitors and parishioners alike are fed both spiritually and nutritionally makes us so proud.”

—Bruce Konicek

Report from Yugoslavia: Religious freedom is largely an illusion

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Lent marks renewed effort to bring Catholics back to Church

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Just as they have during the season of Lent in recent years, some U.S. dioceses make concerted efforts during Lent to invite Catholics who have stopped going to Church back into the fold.

Some dioceses have reported success with the “Catholics Come Home” campaign, while others have set their focus on using the sacrament of reconciliation during Lent to draw Catholics back who have drifted away from the practice of their faith.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which this year is on Feb. 22. A day of fast and abstinence, it is not a holy day of obligation, but is one of the top three solemnities in the Church that draws the biggest crowds.

Catholics Come Home, an organization based in the Atlanta suburbs, has been used in 33 dioceses with television commercials reaching an estimated 80 million viewers in regional Lenten and Christmas campaigns — and 250 million in national campaigns, said the organization’s founder and president, Tom Peterson.

Not all dioceses have before-and-after numbers, but “in those dioceses that have had historical census data and have been able to track since Catholics Come Home, Mass attendance has increased an average of 10 percent,” Peterson said.

Waging such a campaign, especially with TV ads, can seem costly. Peterson admitted. “Bishops and dioceses don’t have extra money to do things like this, but when families and parishioners are asked if they have a relative, a friend, a neighbor or a co-worker away from the Church, nearly 100 percent say yes,” he said. “And when they’re asked, ‘Would you like them to come home?’ 10 of thousands of people say yes” by contributing to the cost of such a campaign.

Peterson told Catholic News Service that a campaign can be undertaken “that would be bringing souls home for about 11 dollars apiece — a pretty good investment, in my view.”

The Diocese of Colorado Springs, Colo., used Catholics Come Home for “two or three years” when the program was still in its infancy, said Bishop Michael J. Sheridan.

“I, as any bishop, recognized the fact that there are many, many Catholics out there who for one reason or another have drifted away from the practice of their faith,” Bishop Sheridan told CNS.

“Yes, we had success. We haven’t continued to track it year after year to see how many have stayed with the faith as a result of that. But when those ads were done, there were significant bumps in attendance at Mass and at the confessional,” he said.

“It was as successful as anything I had ever seen. I’m glad to see it’s gone national,” Bishop Sheridan added. “Pastors tell me they’re in the confessional for hours, more than their regularly scheduled time. People will come, and they’ll sit in there for two or three hours to hear confessions. It’s clear that people want to get reconciled with God and the Church.

Many are regular faithful Catholics. Others are returning to the practice of their faith after many years.”

The Archdiocese of Boston worked with Catholics Come Home last year during Lent, said Scott Landry, the archdiocese’s secretary for Catholic media.

Landry said he first got in touch with the apostolate in 2008, after “somebody sent me a link to their first commercial, and I thought it was the best presentation of the Catholic faith I had seen in just two minutes.”

Catholics Come Home served as a successor to “Arise Together in Christ,” an archdiocesan initiative that had finished the previous year.

The markers for success are “a little bit higher here,” Landry told CNS. “Some folks are disgusted by the Catholic Church here.”

The archdiocese was the epicenter of the clergy sexual abuse scandal that broke 10 years ago. In addition, by the middle of the 2000s, the archdiocese had to close or consolidate dozens of parishes.

“Many Catholics held their head low here for many years,” Landry said. “But with the frequency of the commercials that were aired, they started saying, ‘Gee, I didn’t know the Church had been involved in all this for all these years.’”

Although the archdiocese didn’t track the effects statistically, it asked pastors for the feedback they were getting from parishioners. “Those that were already coming to Church felt that this campaign was a huge boost to their Catholic identity and their morale.”

The archdiocese also is participating in a campaign called “The Light Is On For You,” which encourages Catholics long absent from the Church to go to confession during Lent. The initiative, started by the Archdiocese of Colorado Springs, has been “very successful for us in Lent,” Landry said. “This is our third year doing it, and it’s been very successful.”

Bishop Sheridan in Colorado Springs offered a succinct analysis of why such programs are effective: “Especially before Easter and during Lent, people have a heightened sense of need for conversion.”

Added Landry, “We see this as the first step of a long-term process of inviting people back to the Church.”

Retired Hong Kong cardinal warns of ‘schism’ within Chinese Church

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Chinese Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun warned that the Chinese Catholic Church is “on the verge of a schism” between communities cooperating with government structures and those who refuse to register with government authorities, and he called on the Vatican and other churches to shun “organizations that are not only foreign but clearly hostile to the Church.”

Cardinal Zen, retired bishop of Hong Kong, made his comments in an article published on Feb. 8 by Asia News, a missionary news agency based in Rome. Cardinal Zen wrote, “We can see that the underground community that once flourished so well now runs the risk of dying of neglect and discouragement, because it seems to be neglected and outcast by the Holy See.”

Cardinal Zen wrote:

“The situation of the Church in China is particularly unusual because not bishops, but bodies outside the Church — are leading our Church.”

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Added Landry, “We see this as the first step of a long-term process of inviting people back to the Church.”
God’s greatness inspires humble fear and transcending love

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

When we behold the grandeur and vastness of the nighttime sky, we may be overcome not only with a feeling of joyful liberation but also with one of fearful powerlessness. Such mixed emotions are reflected in the words of the psalmist who sighs: “Who can detect trespasses? Cleanse me from my inadvertent sins” (Ps 19:13).

This tension between joy and fear in the heart can lead to greater attentiveness—a point echoed in Psalm 111: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps 11:10, cf. Prv 1:7).

Fear has the potential to motivate. Those “who are in dread of the commandments of our God” (Ezr 10:3) may well be ready to go to great extremes to obey his will. At the heart of such obedience is an attentive listening to what God expects of us. We tremble in terror when we imagine ourselves standing in the shoes of Abraham as he takes his beloved son, Isaac, up Mount Moriah to sacrifice him to the Lord. When the angel of the Lord calls out to Abraham and stops him from killing the child, the angel says: “For now I know that you fear God, since you did not withhold from me your son, your only one” (Gn 22:12).

This particular divine test, which is unique to Abraham in the entire Bible, teaches us that we, too, in our own ways have times of testing in which we are stretched to the limits. In these trying times, we recognize that we are called to do God’s will and not our own.

In the more typical circumstances of daily life, we are called to be aware that God is watching over our every action (Ps 33:8, 13-15). Such awareness is an important way of fearing the Lord. Here the emotion of fear is not an intense feeling of trembling, but rather a steadiness that takes the form of loyal love, as in Hosea. Such awareness is an important way of fearing the Lord. Here the emotion of fear is not an intense feeling of trembling, but rather a steadiness that takes the form of loyal love, as in Hosea. Such awareness is an important way of fearing the Lord... (Ps 6:7-9).

This attentiveness to the teachings and commands of the Lord is a primary example of “fear of the Lord” in action. Such attentiveness to the Lord shapes one’s conscience and becomes a key element in decision-making. Learning how to obey God is a lifelong process that starts in the household and extends well into old age. Parents are to instruct their children in the law of the Lord, but in turn children are to honor their parents (Dt 4:10, 5:16).

This respect for parents cultivates an attentiveness that is closely tied to the obedience we must give to God. Leviticus 19:32 states: “Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the old, and fear your God. I am the Lord!” Those who cultivate an attitude of loyal attentiveness to the Lord express this in worship and in their way of life. The distinctiveness of the way of life of the faithful is highlighted by the psalmist as a key attribute of the person of integrity—one who “honors those who fear the Lord” (Ps 15:4).


According to John, “there is no fear in love” (1 Jn 4:18). The point here is that God, who is love, comes to dwell within us, and can move us to the point where we are fully confident that God will accept us in the final judgment. In such a loving heart, there is no room for fear.

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

Job life of questions reminds us that God’s ways are beyond our understanding

By David Gibson

Do you remember the Old Testament man named Job? There is a lot of Job in a lot of us.

Job suffered shocking losses—and “suffered” is the appropriate word. At its outset, the Book of Job’s wealthy main character loses all his possessions. All his children die. Such losses could push many of us to the brink.

I should point out that, from the beginning, Job is presented as a good man. Even God considered him very good.

Moreover, the first chapter of Job reminds us three times that this man “feared God.” It becomes clear, though, that Job’s God-fearing ways did not mean he was too terrified or timid to defend himself to God.

Job’s losses set the stage for a series of rather open, frank conversations about God and with God that form this biblical book’s core. Job brings his anguish to God. God questions Job. Job wonders aloud what kind of God could allow these hurtful losses to occur. Why? That was Job’s key question. Why did so much that was painful enter into the life of this good, God-fearing man? Why isn’t that also humanity’s virtually universal question in the face of suffering? Job’s question is our question. “Today’s inquirer might ask, ‘Why do bad things happen to good people?’”

Job’s drama plays out as we listen and wonder what will become of a man whose faith is so strong, but who lost so much and suffers so greatly. Is his faith at risk? Job found himself face to face with God’s unsearchable ways. Job reached the limits of his human capacity to understand God.

And for Job this was frustrating, just as anyone’s limited understanding of God’s ways might prove frustrating.

The Book of Job prompts readers to consider the possible outcomes of loss and suffering in their own lives and the lives of others. Faced by suffering, some people report that they:

• Felt abandoned by God.

The Book of Job asks us to consider questions of why God allows suffering in the lives of his people. The questions posed in the Book of Job are questions posed not only by Job, but by every human being who has ever experienced pain and suffering.

In hisBook of Job, God is not so much a God who punishes as a God who permits. God permits suffering in order to test our faith, to prove our commitment to him, to show us what we truly believe.

But God answers the question of why at the end of the Book of Job. God’s answer is not a question we can understand on this side of eternity. It is a mystery, a secret, a mystery that God keeps to himself.

Still, Job always was a God-fearing man. In biblical terms, that meant he was bonded to God and lived accordingly. It meant that he revered and respected God. It also implied that Job was wise. For, says the Book of Proverbs, “the beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord” (Prv 9:10).

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

Job life of questions reminds us that God’s ways are beyond our understanding
Biblical readings: The Book of Ecclesiastes

The book is a search for the meaning of life and of the relationship between God and the individual. The author’s conclusion, given in the second verse, is, "Vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!" (Ecc 1:2). He admits that God has a plan for what happens in the world, but says the child of hidden humans, who seek kindom without ever finding it anywhere.

Qoheleth searches for happiness in many things—the pursuit of pleasure, wisdom and wealth—but concludes that all of them are only vanity and a chase after wind. He repeatedly says, "Even the most successful people, or the wisest, must eventually die.

Since everything ends in death, he says, "nothing that humans can accomplish can give a person happiness. That's true. However, whatever one's hands achieve is what one can recognize as good—it is well for a man to eat and drink and enjoy all the fruits of his labor under the sun during the limited days of the life which God gives him; for this is his lot" (Eccl 5:17). He also concludes, "Who knows what is good for a man in life, the limited days of his vain life [which God has made] to be?" (Eccl 6:12).

The philosophy in Ecclesiastes is contrary to that of most of the Jewish Scriptures. Even when one is not in kindom, people were encouraged to seek wisdom, and their reward would be large family, wealth, a long life, and an honorable burial. Ecclesiastes, though, says, "Should a man have a hundred children and live many years, no matter to what great age, still if he has not the full benefit of his goods, or if he is deprived of burial, of this man I proclaim that the child born dead is more fortunate than he" (Eccl 6:3). Obviously, for us Christians, the Book of Ecclesiastes is incomplete. We believe that happiness is a gift of God, but we believe that it will be known to us in heaven.

School vouchers and tax credit scholarships

How's the scoop on school vouchers and tax credit scholarships? Let's look at the data.

- 90 percent of the local funding amount if household income is up to 100 percent of Reduced Lunch eligibility;
- 50 percent of the local funding amount if household income is up to 150 percent of Reduced Lunch eligibility (see accompanying chart); and
- 40 percent of the local funding amount if household income is up to 200 percent of Reduced Lunch eligibility.

The goal of the archdiocese is to have Catholic schools identify each and every eligible student of a particular grade level at the beginning of the school year. A student may be eligible for the next fall for an Indiana state school voucher. Eligibility can only be determined in the following year.

Income Eligibility Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>90% Voucher</th>
<th>50% Voucher</th>
<th>40% Voucher</th>
<th>30% Voucher</th>
<th>20% Voucher</th>
<th>Tax Credit Scholarship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Adult</td>
<td>$20,665</td>
<td>$30,977</td>
<td>$41,390</td>
<td>$51,802</td>
<td>$62,214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Adult, 1 Child</td>
<td>$27,991</td>
<td>$41,986</td>
<td>$55,902</td>
<td>$69,916</td>
<td>$84,938</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Adult, 2 Children</td>
<td>$35,317</td>
<td>$52,075</td>
<td>$67,084</td>
<td>$82,097</td>
<td>$97,109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Adult, 3 Children</td>
<td>$42,643</td>
<td>$61,051</td>
<td>$76,462</td>
<td>$91,875</td>
<td>$107,292</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Adult, 4 Children</td>
<td>$50,969</td>
<td>$74,575</td>
<td>$90,084</td>
<td>$105,591</td>
<td>$121,103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considersk@gmail.com

School vouchers and tax credit scholarships for non-public school students are now a reality in Indiana. The Office of Catholic Education wants qualifying families to understand their options. It is important to consider a Catholic education for their children for the 2012-13 school year.

We also want parents to understand and invest in tax credit scholarships to enable eligible families to choose Catholic education. Again, there are receive significant state tax benefits for themselves and their children.

Indian School Vouchers • A family who meets eligibility guidelines for the federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program can receive a scholarship from the state to cover part of Catholic parochial school tuition at the least of three amounts: 1) The amount of reduced lunch entitlement or free lunches charged by the school. 2) A maximum of $4,500 for a student in grades 1-8. 3) A maximum of $6,000 charged by the school. Per student per grade, the school must submit an application for tax credits to the Indiana Department of Revenue. The school must report the total amount of tax credits earned.

Indiana Tax Credit Scholarships • These are scholarships provided through the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust that provide a minimum of $500 toward the tuition of a student in a non-public school of the parents’ choice. The student must be a current non-public school student in grades 1-12 who received a Tax Credit Scholarship for a previous school year. The student must attend a non-public school in Indiana. The student must be a resident of Indiana. The student must be a member of a religious denomination or have a religious affiliation.

Donating to Tax Credit Scholarships • Donors—individuals or corporations—are eligible for a 50 percent credit against their state tax liability for contributions made through an Indiana Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO). The SGO of the archdiocese is the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust. A change in the law allows gifts to be designated by the donor to a specific school or group of schools, but not to specific students. An individual school must establish a fund within the trust of at least $5,000 to allow donations.

The Church has a critical role to play in countering cultural currents which, on the basis of extreme individualism, seek to promote notions of freedom detached from moral truth, “the pope told the U.S. bishops.

‘There can be no doubt that a more consistent witness on the part of America’s Catholics to their core moral principles, to make a major contribution to the renewal of society as a whole,’ challenged the pope.

The Church must “a radical secularism which finds increasing support and attempts to impose its values on the entire Catholic community in the United States, opposed to core moral teachings of the Judeo-Christian tradition, but increasingly strong and vocal. These meetings between pope and bishop, known as ad limina visits, are usually polite affairs, but can become highly charged on certain situations in the visiting bishops’ dioceses to which they respond.

And two-thirds of those in the survey say they believe in the flip-flop philosophy of politicians for whom long-held beliefs may extend from one election to another.

At the heart of every culture, the pope said, is a consensus about the nature of reality and the moral good. Today, that consensus has eroded significantly in the face of powerful new cultural currents. "Today, that consensus has eroded significantly in the face of powerful new cultural currents. How then do we continue to be believable, to stand firm in a world that no longer believes in absolutes, as they are in so many situations of the visiting bishops’ dioceses to which they respond.

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The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Feb. 19, 2012

- Isaiah 43:18-19, 21-22, 24b-25
- 2 Corinthians 1:18-22
- Mark 2:1-12

The Book of Isaiah is the source of this weekend’s first reading. These verses are from the second section of Isaiah. At the time of their composition, the long, dreary exile of Jewish survivors of the Babylonian conquest generations earlier of the two Jewish kingdoms had ended. These exiles, or their descendants, yearned for their homeland. The opportunity to return came when the Persian emperor, Cyrus, overwhelmed Babylonia. He allowed the exiles to go home.

The religiously devout among the exiles saw God as the true deliverer. Cyrus merely was the instrument of God in this process. It is not all glorious and happy. God accuses the people of allowing despair to overtake them in Babylon, and abandoning hope that God would protect them. Regardless, God was true to the Covenant. Return to their homeland was bittersweet. The land was desolate and uninhabited. The prophets still faced the task of sustaining and fortifying the people’s faith.

St. Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians provides the second lesson for this weekend’s liturgy. Corinth was a chief city in the Roman Empire. With a large population, including people from throughout the Mediterranean world, it was a destination for pioneer Christian missionaries. Converts were made in Corinth. A Christian community was formed there. Evidently, however, these converts were the source of some anxiety for Paul because they were quarreling among themselves, straying into sin and pagan practices, and being proud and straying into sin and themselves, straying into sin and falling back into the ways of paganism.

The Community was formed there. It was the instrument of God in this process. It is not all glorious and happy. God accuses the people of allowing despair to overtake them in Babylon, and abandoning hope that God would protect them. Regardless, God was true to the Covenant. Return to their homeland was bittersweet. The land was desolate and uninhabited. The prophets still faced the task of sustaining and fortifying the people’s faith.

My Journey to God

Winter

Silence

Gracious God, may the wintry quiet of the earth call me deeply to discover the inner silence in which You dwell.

Let my spirit, like that of the now-sleeping springtime, take the time, make the space, make the time, for Your life within me to grow.

By Sister Susan Marie Lindstrom, O.S.B.

(Benedicite Sister Susan Marie Lindstrom is a member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, Ind.)

Daily Readings

Monday, Feb. 20
James 3:3-4, 8-10
Psalm 19:8-10, 15
Mark 9:14-29

Tuesday, Feb. 21
St. Peter Damian, bishop and doctor
James 4:1-10
Psalm 55:7-11, 23
Mark 9:30-37

Wednesday, Feb. 22
Ash Wednesday
Joel 2:12-18
Psalm 51:3-6a, 12-14, 17
2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Thursday, Feb. 23
St. Polycarp, bishop and martyr
Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Psalm 1:1-4, 6

Friday, Feb. 24
Isaiah 58:1-9a
Psalm 51:3-6a, 18-19
Matthew 9:14-15

Saturday, Feb. 25
Isaiah 58:9b-14
Psalm 86:1-6

Sunday, Feb. 26
First Sunday of Lent
Genesis 9:8-15
Psalm 25:4-9
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:12-15

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Does evidence for the Eucharist dictate that silence be observed in churches?

O n was raised a Catholic in the 1950s and 60s. I left Church in the 1980s, but am now starting to attend Mass again. However, I am very distressed by the amount of noise in church, especially right after Mass. As soon as the priest processes out, our parish church sounds like a sports bar during the Super Bowl. I see children running between the pews, yelling to their friends, while their parents seem to pay no attention because they are talking to their friends. Back in the ‘50s and ‘60s, you could hear a pin drop in church, and if it became necessary to speak you always did so in a whisper. We were taught that this was God’s house, and that we were there to pay honor and reverence. The way I see it is this: God gives us 168 hours a week. Can’t we devote just one of those hours to God alone while we are in his house? We would still have 167 other hours to socialize.

The Mass is the re-creation of Christ’s Passion and crucifixion. I don’t imagine that Mary and John walked away from Calvary discussing John’s new haircut or how Mary’s veil looked! (Martinsburg, Pa.)

A s your concern is well-expressed and serves as a helpful reminder of the importance of reverence in what is clearly a sacred space. While there is no “rule” about talking in church, a few thoughts might help us to think about an appropriate solution.

First, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal says, “Even before the celebration itself, it is a praiseworthy practice for silence to be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to receive the sacred celebration in a devout and fitting manner” (#145).

Although the instruction makes no specific reference to silence at the end of Mass, it would seem that a period of quiet at that time would allow gratitude to fill the soul for the special gift received. The countervailing argument, of course, is that prayer is not just vertical, but also horizontal. It puts us in closer touch not only with the Lord, but also with the community of disciples who share our faith in Jesus.

It’s a natural instinct and a good thing for parishioners to want to welcome one another and catch up on one another’s lives—and it is often a sign of a parish’s vitality that people genuinely enjoy socializing before and after the Sunday Eucharist.

So the question becomes how to combine that value of community with the reverence due to Christ present in the tabernacle and the respect owed to people who are still praying after Mass is over. Certainly a nod of recognition and a smile is appropriate when filling out of the pew, but even a few whispered words of greeting.

But an extended conversation at a normal decibel level is better postponed until parishioners are in the gathering area—the “lobby” for Catholics of my vintage. Some parishes make the preference explicit by signs or bulletin announcements.

That way, both quiet reverence and happy conversations have their proper setting.

Newer parish churches have been built with larger gathering areas to accommodate those twin goals. Also, in order to foster the special attention that the Eucharist merits, I know of some parishes which, shortly before Mass starts, a lector makes an announcement that the next few minutes will be spent in silent preparation for the sacred celebration.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at kd Doyle or askfatherkdyle@gmail.com and 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.)

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, Locust Grove, KY 42057 or e-mail to criterion@archindy.com.
Benedictine Sister Anna Rose Lueken ministered as a teacher, principal, librarian and retreat center administrator

Benedictine Sister Anna Rose Lueken, a founding member of our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, died Feb. 1 at 90. A native of Lacon, Ill., she was 13 years old when her family moved to Indianapolis.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Feb. 11 at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School in Indianapolis. Sister Anna Rose taught at St. Anthony of Padua School in Indianapolis during her 50-year ministry in Catholic education. She retired in 2010 then ministered as the community’s librarian and later worked at the St. Therese of the Infant Jesus School.

In 1970, she earned an endorsement in library science.

During her 50-year ministry in Catholic education, she was the librarian at the St. Therese of the Infant Jesus School in Indianapolis.

She retired in 2010 then ministered as the community’s librarian and later worked at the St. Therese of the Infant Jesus School.

In 2010, she was named emeritus librarian at the St. Therese of the Infant Jesus School.

She died on Feb. 11, 2010, at the age of 90.

Sister Anna Rose Lueken was the only child of Richard and Mary (Kemp) Lueken. She is survived by her sister, Sister Margaret Mary Lueken, and her brother, Mark Lueken. She is also survived by her nieces, nephews, and great-nieces and nephews.

Sister Anna Rose Lueken was a Missionary of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth.

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Government has no authority to redefine marriage, say Catholic leaders

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The archbishops of Los Angeles and New York criticized a federal appellate court decision on Feb. 7 that ruled unconstitutional California’s Proposition 8 in a 2-1 decision in favor of an appeal-approved initiative that forbade same-sex marriage in the state.

“The government has no competence and no authority to ‘redefine’ marriage or ‘expand’ its definition to include other kinds of relationships,” said Archishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles in a Feb. 7 statement. “To do that is to say that marriage no longer exists. And this would have grave consequences for children and for the common good of our society.”

“Our government has a vital interest in promoting marriage for two reasons,” Archishop Gomez said. “First, because marriage is the foundation of society. Second, because government has a duty to promote the well-being of children, who have the right to be born and raised in a family with both their mother and their father.”

He added, “This debate over marriage is not about equality or about the needs of individuals. It is much bigger than that. It is about the nature of the human person and the nature of society.”

Cardinal-designate Timothy M. Dolan of New York called the 2-1 decision by a three-judge panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals “a grave injustice, ignoring the reality that marriage is the union of one man and one woman” in a Feb. 7 statement.


The majority opinion said Proposition 8 violates the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees a process and equal protection under the law. It said the state, which had given homosexual couples the right to marry, could not revoke that right.

“Prop2Marry, which put the initiative on the ballot and fought in court to uphold it, can appeal the decision, either to the full 9th Circuit or directly to the U.S. Supreme Court. In the meantime, the appeals panel said no same-sex marriages can be performed,” said Bishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of Oakland, Calif., chairman for the U.S. bishops’ Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage.

“To flourish, it must be infused with moral direction that is grounded in the truth. Of course, the true meaning of marriage, like the gift of human life, is ultimately not subject to a vote or court ruling,” Bishop Cordileone added in a Feb. 7 statement.

“But in California, as in every other state where marriage has been put to a vote, the people justly upheld the truth of marriage. How tragic for California, for the nation, and especially for children, that this correctly informed judgment has now been set aside.”

The 9th Circuit’s decision is “the last action in an ongoing attempt to redefine marriage,” said Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington.

“What cannot be changed is the truth: Marriage is the sacred institution that unites a man and a woman with each other and with the children born of their union. It is not the mere public recognition of a committed relationship for the sake of benefits for two adults,” Cardinal Wuerl said in a Feb. 7 statement.

“While today’s action is disappointing, it will not be the final word on this issue.”

The proponents of same-sex marriage do an outstanding job of creating the illusion of momentum and support for their cause,” said Derek McCoy, executive director of the Maryland Marriage Alliance, in a Feb. 8 statement.

“However, in reality they are steadily losing support among Americans. Every single time the issue of same-sex marriage has come to a vote by the people, it has failed. In 31 states, Americans have rejected attempts to redefine the one institution that is fundamental to the continued existence of every society.”

Proposition 8 passed with 52 percent of the vote. It banned same-sex marriage in California and gathering signatures for a new ballot measure that would explicitly overturn Proposition 8.

Auxiliary Bishop Gerald E. Wilken of Los Angeles, president of the California Catholic Conference, expressed disappointment in the ruling but also commented on what it was not.

“We are disappointed by the ruling today by a panel of the 9th Circuit that would invalidate the action taken by the people of California affirming that marriage unites a man and a woman and any children from their union,” he said in a Feb. 7 statement. “However, given the issues involved and the nature of the legal process, it’s always been clear that this case would very likely be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. Marriage between one man and one woman has been—and always will be—the most basic building block of the family and of our society.”

“In the end, through sound legal reasoning, we believe the court will see this as well and uphold the will of the voters as expressed in Proposition 8. We continue to pray for that positive outcome.”

Supporters of the court’s decision included Suzanne Bennett Johnson, president of the American Psychological Association.

“Research shows that marriage provides important insurance and wellness benefits and that same-sex couples are similar to heterosexual couples in essential ways including the fact that they are just as likely as opposite-sex couples to raise mentally healthy, well-adjusted children,” she said in a Feb. 7 statement. “There is no scientific basis for denying marriage equality to same-sex couples.”

The 154,000-member association said it has been a strong advocate for full equal rights for gays for 35 years, based on social science research on sexual orientation. †
In Lima’s poor neighborhoods, life revolves around water

LIMA, Peru (CNS)—Of all the parts of her tiny, wooden house on a parched hillside at the city’s edge, Emilia Lazo Campos is proudest of the bathroom. The tiles gleam despite the dust. There’s even a shower—in case Lazo and her family ever get water service.

But the most important part, to her, is the dry latrine—an “ecological bathroom,” as she calls it—which requires no water for flushing, has no odor, attracts insects like her old latrine did, and will eventually produce compost that she can use for a small garden.

Her neighbor, Paulino Huaman, agrees. “I doubted at first,” he says of his unusual bathroom. “But there’s a big difference from a latrine. It’s more hygienic.”

Hygiene is complicated in Flor de Amancaes, the shantytown where Lazo and Huaman live, on the dry flank of the Andes Mountains, on the very edge of Lima. Peru’s sprawling capital. Beyond the reach of the public water system, they and their neighbors rely on tank trucks that rumble up the hill to fill trash-barrel-size containers with water.

Scooping the water into large buckets and trudging up the hill or a steep staircase is usually a task for women and children.

In poor neighborhoods in Lima, the second-largest desert city in the world, after Cairo, life revolves around water. Every drop for cooking, bathing, drinking and washing clothes must be hauled home.

But the water delivered by the tank trucks is expensive. In a month, Lazo and her neighbors may pay between five and 10 times as much for water as residents of upper-class districts on the public water system. And there is no guarantee that the water delivered by tank trucks is safe to drink.

Now environmental experts from a Jesuit social services center are working with the residents of Flor de Amancaes and nearby neighborhoods to save and recycle water, to help reduce costs and make the best use of a scarce resource.

“Our goal is for people to have a better quality of life by developing their leadership skills,” says Ofelia Montes, director of the center, which is formally called the Basic Labor Education Program, but is better known by its Spanish acronym, PEBAL.

On a sweeping Sunday afternoon, on the steep hill above Flor de Amancaes, a group of men from the neighborhood wresstle a huge piece of green nylon mesh onto a wire frame. The mesh is one of four that will eventually be installed. Although their purpose is not evident in the dry Lima summer, the scrubby, dead stalks of plants on the hillside—and the scattered orange flowers clinging to life in the barren terrain—hint at the change that will come with winter.

Beginning in July, fog will roll up the valley from the Pacific Ocean, barely visible in the distance, and blanket this hillside. The plants will spread leaves, and the flower for which the neighborhood is named will bloom briefly.

The plants will sprout leaves, and the flower for which the neighborhood is named will bloom briefly. The plants will sprout leaves, and the flower for which the neighborhood is named will bloom briefly. The plants will sprout leaves, and the flower for which the neighborhood is named will bloom briefly. The plants will sprout leaves, and the flower for which the neighborhood is named will bloom briefly.

Considering that the average family uses more than 25 gallons of water a day, the amount may seem small, but on this parched hillside every drop counts. Huaman Tinco says the water can be shared among the families, to reduce their costs, or used to irrigate a community garden.

Over the next hill, residents are experimenting with a community garden irrigated with recycled water from cooking or washing. Ten houses have outdoor sinks that drain into a gravel-filled pit where bacteria and reeds help filter out soap and other contaminants. The water collects in a large plastic tank connected to perforated hoses that irrigate squash plants and herbs.

PeBAL and local businesses have provided the materials for the composting latrines, fog catchers and filtering system, while the residents provide labor and agree to maintain them. Community commitment is crucial, says Huaman Tinco, who has seen similar projects fail because of lack of follow-through and upkeep.

Providing clean water is especially important in neighborhoods such as Flor de Amancaes, where many children and elderly people suffer from diarrheal illnesses.

So far, the composting toilets—about 15 in all—and the fog catchers and filtration system are small steps, but in a country where about one-fifth of city dwellers still lack in-house water hookups, every step counts.

Behind the community building in Flor de Amancaes, where his neighbors are checking a fog-catcher net before installation, Luis Camarena Quintana, secretary of the neighborhood association, shows off the outdoor tap they have installed for the fog-catcher system.

“This is important,” he says. “We’re doing it for the children.”

Georgia Supreme Court ruling strikes down law on assisted suicide

ATLANTA (CNS)—A unanimous decision by the Georgia Supreme Court that struck down a law banning people from publicly advertising to help with assisted suicide puts the elderly and people with disabilities “in a terrible tragedy,” said a national pro-life leader.

The ruling by the Georgia Supreme Court puts the lives of older people and those with disabilities in grave danger because it opens the door to publicly advertising to help with assisted suicide, said a national pro-life leader.

“The 1994 state law did not prohibit public advertising to help with assisted suicides, but it made it a felony for those who promote that they could assist with a suicide. In its Feb. 6 decision, the court said the law violated free speech rights,” said Burke Balch, director of the National Right to Life's Powell Center for Medical Ethics.

“This ruling essentially says if you want to advertise helping people jump off a cliff, you can hang out your changed conviction in Georgia,” he told The Criterion, Right to Life News.

Balch called on the Georgia Legislature to "quickly remedy” the Supreme Court’s ruling by enacting legal protections against doctor-prescribed death and other forms of assisted suicide.

"Failure to take swift action could result in the deaths of countless older disabled and those with disabilities,” he said.

Physician-assisted suicide was approved by voters in Washington state in 2008. It also is legal in Oregon, where voters approved it in 1994, and Montana, where a state court has ruled it is not against public policy.

The U.S. bishops issued a policy statement on assisted suicide last summer calling it a "terrible tragedy, one that a compassionate society should work to prevent."

The statement, “To Live Each Day With Dignity,” said the assisted suicide movement "actually risks adding to the suffering of seriously ill people."

The document criticized the idea of involving physicians in helping their patients commit suicide, calling it "a corruption of the healing arts."

Catholics should be leaders in the effort to defend and uphold the principle that each of us has the right to live with dignity through every day of our lives,” the document said. “The claim that the ‘quick fix’ of an overdose of drugs can substitute for these efforts is an affront to patients, caregivers and the ideals of medicine.”