Six-year-old Litzy Maria Luna Mendoza of Cuba gives a special hug to Dr. Martin Kaefer, a physician at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis and a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis, who performed a life-changing surgery for the girl on Feb. 20.

Girl’s life-changing surgery shows bond between archdioceses in Cuba and Indy

By John Shaughnessy

As Pope Benedict XVI prepares to visit Cuba on March 26-28, he would likely be inspired by the story of a 6-year-old Cuban girl who has been called “a little miracle.”

With her infectious smile, big blue eyes and strong spirit, Litzy Maria Luna Mendoza has given a special human connection to the ever-growing relationship between the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and the Archdiocese of Camaguey in Cuba.

And thanks to the collaboration of people from both archdioceses, Litzy has benefited from an operation at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis that has corrected a physical condition which threatened her life.

It’s a story of faith, compassion and cooperation, according to Dr. Chuck Dietzen, an Indianapolis physician who had a key role in arranging Litzy’s surgery.

“Mother Teresa always understood that the only way you have true conversion is if you set a good example,” says Dietzen, who worked with her in Calcutta in 1996. “If people pray for hope, health and healing, it’s going to come in the form of another human being. That’s what has happened here. The question is sometimes asked, ‘I’ve been praying to God, but where is he?’ I believe God hears. The real question is, ‘Do we hear him, calling on us to deliver?’”

Building the bridge

The beginning of Litzy’s story actually takes place before she was born, back in 1998 when Pope John Paul II visited Cuba. Following that visit, Catholic Relief Services developed the Global Solidarity Partnership, an effort to use the structure of the Church to link dioceses in the United States with dioceses in developing countries. As part of the partnership, the

U.S. bishops set March 30 as day of prayer and fasting for religious liberty

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The U.S. bishops have urged Catholics and “all people of faith” across the nation to observe March 30 as a day of prayer and fasting for religious freedom and conscience protection.

The bishops announced the daylong observance in a statement titled “United for Religious Freedom” that was approved on March 14 by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Administrative Committee.

They asked Catholics and others to join them in “prayer and penance for our leaders and for the complete protection of our first freedom—religious liberty—which is not only protected in the laws and customs of our great nation, but rooted in the teachings of our great tradition.”

The bishops said that among current threats to religious liberty is the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate that forces employers, including religious ones, to provide coverage of contraception, sterilization and abortifacients in their health plans.

Prayer resources have been posted on the USCCB website at www.usccb.org/international-action/religious-liberty/conscience-protection/resources-on-conscience-protection.cfm.

Also, “Prayer for Religious Liberty” prayer cards are available as a downloadable PDF file. The cards are available in English and Spanish, and feature three images—Mary as the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the U.S.; Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas and the unborn; and St. Thomas More, the patron saint of the legal profession, who was martyred for standing up for his religious beliefs.

In a letter about the March 30 day of prayer addressed to Catholics in their state, Pennsylvania’s bishops said the observance was planned in response “to the assault by the federal government on constitutionally guaranteed religious liberty.” They also cited the federal contraceptive mandate, saying it “puts the Church in a position of either violating its religious beliefs or being labeled an employer in violation of civil rights and sacrificing the business’s financial future.”

Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard praises Catholic schools and school choice at monthly business exchange meeting

By Mary Ann Garber

Catholic education got an enthusiastic endorsement from Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard during his early morning address to Catholic Business Exchange members on March 16 at the Northside Knights of Columbus Hall in Indianapolis.

“Catholic education is a core model in our city,” Ballard said. “There are a number of great schools in Indianapolis, he said, mentioning other private and charter schools that are filling the needs in “education desert” areas of the city.

But the Catholic model by itself is very, very strong,” Ballard said. “I’m hoping that people look at it and will continue to look at it as a way to help us propel education forward in this city.”

Charter schools have been “a tremendous success,” he said. “I’m a big believer in competition...”
Bishop Coyne to be celebrant of Holy Week liturgies at cathedral

By Sean Gallagher

Filled with rituals celebrated only once a year, the liturgies of Holy Week are the solemn high point of the Church’s liturgical calendar. Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, apostolic administrator, will be the principal celebrant for each of them at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, and looks forward to praying with Catholics from across central and southern Indiana during the liturgies.

While he encourages Catholics to gather for such liturgies at their home parishes, Bishop Coyne also said it is good on occasion to participate in them at the cathedral.

“The celebration of the liturgy by the bishop is at the heart of the Church’s life,” he said. “Each parish celebration and each celebration by a priest or deacon shares in the bishop’s celebration of the liturgy, which in turn is joined to the universal liturgy of Christ, the great high priest.

“As a bishop, too, I love to celebrate with people from all over the archdiocese whenever I can. Gathered around the ‘cathedra,’ or ‘chair,’ of this next archbishop, we can celebrate our unity as an archdiocese and continue to faithfully anticipate the naming of our next archbishop.”

The liturgies of Holy Week start with Palm Sunday Mass. They continue with the celebration of the annual chrism Mass, which takes place in the archdiocese on Tuesday of Holy Week.

On Holy Thursday, the Easter Triduum begins with the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper, which celebrates the institution of the Eucharist and the priesthood at the Last Supper. The Lenten season ends when the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper begins.

Christ’s suffering and death are solemnly recalled during the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion.

The Easter Triduum then culminates with the solemn and joyous celebration of Christ’s Resurrection during the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night.

“Aside from the Sunday celebration of Mass, the Easter Triduum is the highlight of our liturgical year,” Bishop Coyne said.

“Not only do we have the new members in our Church at the Easter Vigil, but in the unity of the three days of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, we encounter the mystery of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Bishop Coyne pointed out a unique aspect of the liturgies of the Easter Triduum. Mass on Holy Thursday evening begins with the usual greeting, but does not end with the ordinary dismissal. Both are absent from the liturgy of Good Friday. And the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night does not begin with the ordinary greeting, but ends with a joyful Easter dismissal.

“This is not by accident. It is by design,” Bishop Coyne said. “The Easter Triduum is intended by the Church to be celebrated as a unity. We are encouraged to see these three days as days of liturgy, prayer and vigil, all joined together, all leading us more deeply into the mystery of faith.”

Holy Week liturgies are set at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis

The following is the Holy Week liturgical schedule for SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis.

Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, apostolic administrator, is scheduled to be the principal celebrant of all the liturgies except for Easter Sunday Mass. Father Noah Casey, rector of the cathedral, will be the celebrant of that Mass.

April 1—10:30 a.m. Mass for Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion.

April 3—3 p.m. chrism Mass.

April 5, Holy Thursday—6:30 p.m. Easter Vigil.

April 7, Holy Saturday—9 p.m. Easter Vigil.

April 8, Easter Sunday—10:30 a.m. Easter Sunday Mass.

This year will mark a change in the time of the celebration of the annual chrism Mass in the archdiocese.

Starting in the early 1970s, the chrism Mass was celebrated on Tuesday evening of Holy Week. This year, the chrism Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on April 3, the Tuesday of Holy Week.

Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, apostolic administrator, said that the earlier time will allow more Catholics from across the archdiocese to participate in the Mass and return home safely.

U.S. bishops stand in solidarity with people facing Middle East violence

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Citing continuing conflict in the Middle East, the U.S. Bishops’ Administrative Committee reiterated its support for the region’s bishops and all people of faith, urging them to stand against violence even in the face of hostility and aggression.

A statement from the committee, which concluded a two-day meeting in Washington on March 14, called for a change of heart and mind on the part of all those who seek to impose their will upon Christians especially to respond to violence in a change of heart and mind on the part of all those who seek to impose their will upon Christians especially to respond to violence in a reasonable manner.

“The statement says, violence begets violence,” Bishop Murphy said. “Pope John Paul II said it many years ago, and it remains true. When one person has his or her dignity violated, then there are three possibilities. They years ago, and it remains true. When one person has his or her dignity violated, then there are three possibilities. They

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Groups forming in archdiocese to promote beauty and art

By Sean Gallagher

Catholic Writers Guild

Ann Lewis and a group of other Catholic writers across the U.S. and Canada came together in 2007 to found the Catholic Writers Guild (www.catholicwritersguild.org).

Prior to that time, Lewis had worked as a collection of children’s stories based on characters from Star Wars and various comic books. But she wanted something more.

“I felt that I was missing a part of myself,” said Lewis, 45, president of the guild. “I wanted to write my own material, first of all. But I also wanted to write about my faith. And it’s hard as a fiction writer to write about our faith and get it out there because there is a secular resistance to material that has any sort of religious reference to it.

Because of the desire to have her faith inform her work and the challenges of generating submissions, she and the other Catholic writers who had belonged to an online group went a step further and formed the guild.

It sponsors an annual conference that includes workshops to help writers hone their craft and gives them a place to network which to build friendships. Those relationships are then fostered through online discussions throughout the year.

“You realize that you’re not alone,” Lewis said. “That’s major. There are other people who want to do what you want to do. And you can help each other to do that.”

Since the guild was founded, Lewis published a collection of short stories with the theme of faith, titled, “Murder in the Vatican: The Church Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes.”

In addition to helping her and other writers in their work, the example that she and other guild members has nurtured Lewis’ life of faith.

“It has made me really focus on the grace of going about frequenting the sacraments and spending some time in adoration,” she said. “These are things I would have considered doing before. It’s made me grow in my spiritual life. I talk to God more because I need him to talk to me.”

Lewis said that guild members who live close to each other in cities across the country have formed local chapters and sponsored workshops throughout the year as opportunities for support. She hopes that Catholic writers in the archdiocese can start a chapter.

People interested in learning more about the Catholic Writers Guild and establishing a chapter in the archdiocese can contact Lewis at president@catholicwritersguild.com.

Indy Catholic Artists

Father John Hollowell entered the seminary, he had focused his life on sports and working as a math teacher. At that point, the arts weren’t important to him.

But then a spiritual director challenged him to explore the relationship of beauty and the life of faith.

Now, almost three years after his ordination, Father Hollowell said that art is at the heart of his priestly life and ministry.

“The biggest confirmation for me as a priest has been to see the differences in places where there is beauty and where the music is beautiful, and the impact that beauty has on people and in my own celebration of the Mass,” he said. “It’s no longer a theory that I read in Pope Benedict [XVI’s] writings. It’s something that I’ve come to realize is very much true.”

As he came to know other young adult Catholic artists in the archdiocese, Father Hollowell explored with them the possibility of starting a group that would provide spiritual support and fellowship. Earlier this year, those discussions bore fruit in the founding of Indy Catholic Artists.

The group was promoted through e-mail and the Internet social networking website Facebook.

Their first event was a Feb. 17 holy hour of eucharistic adoration at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis during which Father Hollowell preached about the interrelationship of faith and art. Afterward, there was time for fellowship.

Katie Sahm, who helped form the group with Father Hollowell and Melissa Scarlett, a photographer and graphic designer, was at the event, which drew approximately 30 people.

“It was really inspiring for everybody,” said Sahm, a Holy Rosary parishioner. “We just shared what we do, our life experiences, and how important and inspiring meeting each other was.”

While Scarlett and Sahm appreciate the chance to build relationships with other artists through Indy Catholic Artists, they also see a deeper purpose to the group.

“I don’t think this group will be about light topics, and just talking about why things are pretty and why that’s important,” said Scarlett, a member of St. Joan of Arc Parish in Indianapolis. “It’s much deeper and we want to tap into that, especially as Catholics. Art and beauty are a huge part of our tradition.”

Father Hollowell hopes that the new group will help “Catholic artists realize that their art has a role to play in bringing people to Christ, and that it’s not simply secondary to who they are as people. It’s the tool Christ is calling them to use to bring other people to him.”

For more information about Indy Catholic Artists, send an e-mail to Father Hollowell at fatherjohnhollowell@gmail.com.

Ministry through the Arts Project

Jonathan Stahl speaks during a Feb. 11 fundraising dinner for the Ministry through the Arts Project (MAP) that took place at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis. Stahl, a Holy Rosary parishioner, founded MAP to promote the work of Catholic artists in central and southern Indiana.

Catholic, family, but said that practicing the faith wasn’t enough for him during his childhood and teenage years.

Then, as a 20-year-old student studying writing and theater at the University of Indianapolis, he met an aspiring actress who related her love for both her Catholic faith.

“She went to Mass and thought that it was the most beautiful and most powerful thing in the world,” Stahl said. “It kind of shocked me that all of that could be about the Mass. It was through that direct encounter with beauty and of another Catholic artist that I really got set on fire with my faith.”

Now 29, Stahl hopes to bring others closer to Christ and the Church through art in the Ministry through the Arts Project (MAP) that he founded last August (www.mapindy.org).

“If it all comes down to the new evangelization,” he said. “Certainly, I want to entertain people. I want them to have a good time. We as Catholics like to enjoy and celebrate life.

“But if the new evangelization is going to work, if it’s going to be effective, artists will have to take a leadership role in it.”

Stahl hopes that MAP will encourage Catholic artists in a broad variety of media, and help make beauty and the arts a more conscious part of the life of faith of individual Catholics and parishes in the archdiocese and beyond.

One of the ways that this will happen is through MAP’s sponsorship of Catholic arts festivals.

Stahl has been in contact with people involved in Indy Catholic Artists, and hopes that the two organizations will work together to promote beauty and art in the Church in central and southern Indiana.

“I don’t think that it’s a surprise that so many groups are starting up,” Stahl said. “I think that’s the way the Holy Spirit works. But it’s not a mystical snap of the finger. It’s the incredible men and women encouraging us to go out and use our vocations to further the Gospel.”

The Criterion Friday, March 23, 2012
Clerical sex-abuse scandal

Nothing tore the Catholic Church apart so thoroughly in the past decade as the clergy sex-abuse scandal. It seems safe to say that no one ever imagined the period of scandal when it first broke or that it would reach the international proportions that it did.

We know that many Catholics even stopped practicing their faith because of the scandal. We also know that that was an unfortunate reaction, essentially hurting themselves by no longer taking advantage of the spiritual and psychological assistance that the Church offers because some human members of the Church acted sinfully.

Nevertheless, a decade after the scandal headlines broke, other members of the Church are still determined to make sure that nothing like that scandal happens again.

The largest international symposium on the topic took place on Feb. 6-9 in Rome. It was organized by the Jesuit’s Pontifical Gregorian University with the backing of the Vatican. The purpose of the symposium was to inspire and educate bishops’ conferences around the world and represent to the Vatican’s mandate to establish anti-abuse guidelines by May.

The United States, Australia, Canada and Germany already have binding guidelines they are working under, and dioceses that might not have had effective procedures now have them. Of course, that includes the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, which had them in place for many years.

The message at the symposium was clear: those in authority must come first. There is to be no more silence on the part of bishops or priests out of a mistaken idea that they are protecting the Church.

No one spoke more plainly about that silence than Msgr. Charles Scicluna, who heads the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s handling of sex-abuse cases. He said, “The deadly culture of silence, or omerta, is in itself wrong and unjust.” Omerta is usually associated with the Mafia.

Bishops have a duty to cooperate fully with civil authorities when civil laws are broken, Msgr. Scicluna said.

His superior, U.S. Cardinal William Levada, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, gave the opening address at the assembly. He said that more than 4,000 reports of sexual abuse of minors were received by his office during the past 10 years.

They showed, he said, that an exclusively canonical response to the crisis has been inadequate, and that a multifaceted and more proactive approach by all bishops and religious orders is needed.

Emphasis at the symposium was given to the need to listen to victims. The cardinals, bishops and others present practiced what was preached by listening to Marie Collins, an Irish woman who had been abused as a child.

At the beginning of the symposium, she told those assembled that her abuser’s superiors shifted the blame onto her and fail to stop the perpetrator caused her more pain and shock than the abuse itself.

Canada’s Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, was listening to Collins. Later, he and other bishops led a solemn penitential service in which they asked forgiveness for failing to protect children and serving instead as an “instrument of evil against them.”

Under Cardinal Levada’s leadership, the Holy See’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is determined to bring this problem under control.

Last May, it released a circular letter listing what should be the Church’s five emphases in addressing clerical sex abuse:

• Listening to the victims and their families with a commitment to their spiritual and psychological assistance as a shepherd of souls should do.

• Taking concrete steps to ensure a safe environment for children in churches and schools.

• Paying greater attention to the formation of candidates for the priesthood and religious life with regard to a true understanding of celibacy, chastity and spiritual fatherhood.

• Focusing on continuing formation of the clergy and awareness of sexual abuse issues.

• Cooperating with the civil authorities in cases of alleged crime by anyone working for the Church.

We believe that this scandal is finally being brought under control. There might be a bishop or superior of a religious order who hasn’t gotten the message yet, but they should be few and far between.

If there had ever been any doubt about the pope’s and the Vatican’s position, those days are over.

—John F. Funk

Federal mandates and the crushing of religious freedom

On Jan. 20, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a mandate placing First Amendment rights and religious freedom in the crosshairs.

The mandate, as a provision of the health care reform act signed into law in 2010, requires “preventive health services” to be covered by all health insurance issuers and all group health plans. Those insurance plans must provide—with no co-pay—the full range of Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptive methods for women.

These include not only surgical sterilizations, but also potential abortion-causing agents such as Plan B—the morning-after pill, intrauterine devices (IUDs) and another form of “emergency contraception” known as Ella.

This drug, which the FDA acknowledges also may work against the life of the embryo “by preventing attachment [implantation] to the uterus,” can be taken up to five days after “unprotected” sex.

Essentially, all employers would thus be forced—and therefore required—to financially subsidizing pharmaceutical abortions, contraception and sterilization procedures for their employees. All these procedures represent sinful and damaging human choices as the Catholic Church has never ceased to point out.

The mandate constitutes a direct intrusion into the religious works and governance of the Church. It represents a federally sponsored violation of its members’ consciences.

The Vatican, as the largest provider of not-for-profit health care in the U.S., operates roughly 600 hospitals and employs three-quarters of a million people in addition to employing hundreds of thousands of others in her educational and social service ministries.

Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago aptly described the authoritarian environment represented by the mandate in one of his recent newspaper columns. “The bishops would have to love the separation between Church and state and was the reason we enjoined just a few months ago, when we were free to run Catholic institutions in conformity with the desires of the Church, when the government couldn’t tell us which of our ministries are Catholic and which not, when the law required that they not mix the two.”

The mandate is “crushing of religious freedom in the world as they seek to comply with the law protected rather than crushed” by the Constitution, as the Supreme Court recently ruled in the HHS mandate.

When the government documents were made available, it became clear that there was no compromise at all, that the mandate held stringent procedural modifications that left the substance of the mandate entirely intact.

The day the “accommodation” was announced, in fact, the mandate was entered into the Federal Register with no changes, along with other possibilities of modifications at a future date—reminiscent of then House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s famous “we will pass the Obamacare: “We have to pass the bill so that you can find out what is in it.”

The purpose of the ObamaCare mandates be extended to cover food, shelter, clothing, autos, etc. In this scenario, everything else will be “paying for everyone else’s essentials …”

The real issue, of course, has nothing to do with “universal insurance issues”—like abortion or birth control—and everything to do with whether someone else can force us to pay for “essential to the health of women and families.” I assume such items as food, housing, clothing and shelter are “essential to the health of women and families” as well.

I am hopeful that the ObamaCare mandate in direct violation of their religious freedom, to pay for practices they recognize as morally reprehensible.

(Father Tadeusz Pucholczyk, Ph.D., earned his doctorate in neuroscience at Yale University and did post-doctoral work at Harvard University. He is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. www.ncbcenter.org)
Another Catholic ‘swing vote’—Supreme Court gets health reform law

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Although there are no specifically Catholic issues under consideration when the U.S. Supreme Court hears oral arguments on March 26-27 on various aspects of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Catholics will play some key roles.

With six of the nine current Supreme Court justices being Catholics, it is almost inevitable that a Catholic justice will be a “swing vote” determining the outcome in at least one of the cases. And Catholic groups and individuals have not been shy about filling friend-of-the-court briefs seeking to sway the justices toward their hoped-for outcome.

The lawsuits before the court have nothing to do with the contraceptive, sterilization and abortifacient mandate set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)—and the First Amendment religious freedom questions raised by it—which has been the subject of a number of other suits in lower courts.

There are four questions before the high court in three cases, with five-and-a-half hours of arguments scheduled over the three days:

• Does the Anti-Injunction Act, which says no tax can be challenged in court before it is due, preclude a challenge to the Affordable Care Act until after the individual mandate takes effect in 2014? (Florida v. Department of Health and Human Services, one hour, on March 26.)

• Does Congress have the power to require Americans to buy health insurance—the “minimum coverage provision,” also called the individual mandate? (Department of Health and Human Services v. Florida, two hours, on March 27.)

• If the individual mandate is overturned as unconstitutional, can other parts of the Affordable Care Act remain in effect? (National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius, and Florida v. Department of Health and Human Services, 90 minutes, on March 28.)

• Can Congress require the states to expand their Medicaid programs for those with low incomes and the disabled? (Florida v. Department of Health and Human Services, one hour, on March 27.)

Dozens of organizations and individuals have filed friend-of-the-court briefs in the cases, including 46 Catholic groups.

The heads of 19 U.S. Catholic religious orders joined with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the national Catholic social justice lobby Network in a brief supporting the medical expansion, calling it “a moral imperative that all levels of government institute programs that ensure the poor receive” health care.

The nuns—many of whose congregations serve health care minorities—said they “have watched firsthand ... the devastating impact of the lack of affordable health insurance and health care on working children and other vulnerable members of society.”

In a separate brief, an interfaith coalition called Faithful Reform in Health Care said the Medicaid expansion is both “morally proper and legally permissible.”

“Because states opt out of Medicaid, the only compulsion they face is the knowledge that the Medicaid expansion is the right answer, and working toward making that a reality,” the coalition, made up of Muslim, Jewish and Christian organizations, including many Catholic religious congregations, said the scriptures of the three Abrahamic religions and the sacred teachings of other faiths “understand that the duty of justice and mercy for the needy ... includes addressing the general welfare of the nation includes giving particular attention to the poor and the sick.”

The lawsuits believe that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is a penumbras expansion of federal power that undermines religious liberty and responsibility, “diminishes the sphere of private charitable activity, androgates to the federal government totalitarian control of a ‘vastly important and deeply personal matter’ it said.”

The New Jersey-based American Catholic Lawyers Association based its opposition to the individual mandate on the principle of federalism.

“Forcing a person into a market—dragging that person, kicking and screaming into a cage of action in which he or she has and wants no involvement whatever—contradicts utterly the deeply embedded tradition of individual autonomy and self-determination which is a hallmark of our nation,” the association’s brief said.

Pope Benedict XVI offers condolences to Coptic Orthodox on death of patriarch

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In Jerusalem’s Church of the Holy Sepulcher on March 18, a priest lights a candle in front of a picture of Coptic Orthodox Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria, Egypt. Pope Shenouda, who served as patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church for 41 years, died on March 17 at the age of 88.

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Events Calendar

March 23
Our Lady of Lourdes School, 301 S. Dossey Ave., Indianapolis. Men’s Club, Lenten fish fry, 5-8 p.m., $6 adults, $3 children. Information: www.clnindy.org

Our Lady of the Greenwood School, 399 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. Lenten fish fry, 5-7 p.m. Information: 317-888-2861 or emdunham@gmail.com

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish, 211 S. Fort, Aurora. Lenten fish fry, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Information: 812-926-1558.

March 25

March 26
Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. “Questions on Religious Life with the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia,” high school and young adult women welcome, 6:30-8 p.m. Information: 317-236-1490 or carmeliindiana.org

St. John the Evangelist Church, 120 S. Georgia St., Indianapolis. “Questions on Religious Life with the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia,” high school and young adult women welcome, 6:30-8 p.m. Information: 317-236-1490 or carmeliindiana.org

March 30
St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Ave Maria build, rummage sale, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Information: 317-385-5098 or bengregg41@gmail.com

March 31

Most Holy Name of Jesus Church, 21 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Spring rummage sale, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454.

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southaven, Beech Grove. Shop JMNInspired gift shop, “Spring Stratavaganza,” 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 317-545-7681 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org

March 30-April 1
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Transformation—Change That Lets Your Soul Grow Up,” Missional Oblate of Mary Father John Mark Ettenson, $15 per person/$328 per couple. Information: 317-545-7681 or marcia.johnson@archindy.org

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. “St. Benedict’s Way,” Benedictine Brother Maurus Zoeller, presenter. Information: 812-357-6585 or bennyt@smarchab.org

April 1
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Outstanding Stations of the Cross,” 4 p.m. Information: 317-545-7681 or marcia.johnson@archindy.org

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg, “RCIA Retreat-A Time to Disciple,” Franciscan Sister Barbara Leonard, presenter, 1-5:30 p.m., $45 per person includes supper. Information: 812-931-6437 or center@oldenburgfranciscan.org

April 2-5
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Come Away and Rest Awhile,” silent, non-guided days/ evenings of reflection, $30 per day, $25 per night. Information: 317-545-7681 or marcia.johnson@archindy.org

Retreats and Programs

March 26
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Forgiveness: It Has Nothing to Do with the Offender,” Jay Landry, presenter, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., $58 per person. Information: 317-545-7681 or marcia.johnson@archindy.org

Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad. “Reflections on the Triumph,” Holy Week retreat, Benedictine Mugr. Denis Robinson, presenter. Information: 812-655-0855 or mugr@smarchab.org

April 11
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southaven, Beech Grove. “A Thomas More Seminar—Bridges to Contemplative Living,” session three of four, Benedictine Sister Julie Sewell, presenter, 5:15 p.m., Mass, 6 p.m., simple supper, $89.95 includes book and supper. Information: 317-788-7581 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org

April 13
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5355 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. “Finding God in the Garden,” Father Michael O’Mura, presenter, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., $38 per person. Information: 317-545-7681 or marcia.johnson@archindy.org

April 13-15

April 25
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southaven, Beech Grove. “A Thomas More Seminar—Bridges to Contemplative Living,” session four of four, Benedictine Sister Julie Sewell, presenter, 5:15 p.m., Mass, 6 p.m., simple supper, $89.95 includes book and supper. Information: 317-788-7581 or benedictinn@benedictinn.org

Registrations open for National Black Catholic Congress in Indianapolis in July

Registrations for the National Black Catholic Congress on July 18-21 at the JW Marriott Hotel in Indianapolis are due by June 1. Congress organizers hope there will be a large delegation from Indianapolis and Indiana. To register, log on to the congress website at www.nbcccongress.org. Submit the form online with the notation “paying as individual with check” then send a check for $200 to the Multicultural Ministry Office, Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis 46202. Participants can opt to pay the congress fee in four installments of $50 due by June 1. There will be no on-site registration at the congress.

Al Kresta to speak at Catholic Radio Dinner

Al Kresta, host of “Kresta in the Afternoon,” which is broadcast on more than 180 Catholic radio stations nationwide, will be the keynote speaker for the eighth annual Catholic Radio Dinner at 5:30 p.m. on April 18 at the Riverwalk Banquet Center, 6729 Westfield Blvd., in Indianapolis. The dinner is a fundraising event for Catholic Radio Indy 89.1 and 90.3 FM.

Tickets are $60 per person and $420 for a table of eight if purchased before April 1. After that date, the cost is $65 per person and $500 per table. Raised as a Catholic, Kresta left the Church and became a Protestant minister. During the 1980s and ‘90s, he hosted a popular Christian radio show in the Detroit metropolitan area.

Questions posed to him on his show led him to return to the Catholic Church. In 1997, Domino’s Pizza founded a program.

Tom Monaghan recruited Kresta to found the Ave Maria Communications media postulate. For more information about the Catholic radio dinner or to log on to www.catholicradioindy.org.

Conventional Franciscan Father John Bamman, second from left, associate pastor of St. Joseph University Parish in Terre Haute, and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology students, from left, Kyle Bippus, Katherine Zapficki, Michael Junge, Angelica Cox, Katelyn Stenger and Lisa Lillis, helped build a house in the Republic of the Philippines during the St. Joseph University Parish campus ministry service trip from Feb. 26 to March 3 as part of Habitat for Humanity’s Collegiate Challenge, a national project to help the poor.

Students volunteer for Habitat for Humanity’s Collegiate Challenge

Students from St. Joseph University Parish’s campus ministry group in Terre Haute volunteered with Habitat for Humanity during the spring breaks for Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and Indiana State University in late February and early March. The students participated in the Collegiate Challenge, Habitat’s national alternative spring break program.

“During my first time volunteering with Habitat for Humanity’s Collegiate Challenge,” said Jeff Schaffer, a Catholic campus minister at the parish, “we are excited to serve the community and help ensure that families have decent, affordable housing.”

Conventional Franciscan Father John Bamman, associate pastor, also participated in the service project. This is Rose-Hulman Institute students helped build a new home and the Indiana State University students assisted with emergency home repairs.

Both groups also prayed and reflected on their experiences as well as social justice issues related to poverty and housing. 
By Natalie Hoefer
Special to The Criterion

“And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth” (Mt 27:59).

“If only you had listened to Me and not hardened your hearts, you would have the Shroud of Turin exhibit on display at St. Monica Parish during Holy Week. The criterion is providing such an opportunity.

St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis is offering this exhibit, sponsored by the Father Solanus Casey Council and studies of the shroud at the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese, is an approximately 14 foot by 4 foot digitized photo of the shroud, encased and back-lit for easier viewing.

The exhibit also contains informational display boards, replicas of the nails and scourge used by Romans during Christ’s time, a video about the shroud, a replica of St. Juan Diego’s tilma, which bears the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and other items. Books, videos and informational material are also available for purchase. All proceeds are applied to maintain the exhibit.

The concept of the traveling exhibit came from the Fort Wayne Knights of Columbus members after a local parish hosted a similar but larger exhibit from California in 1996. “It was tremendous,” said Alex Fiato, a member of the Father Solanus Casey Council that is sponsoring the exhibit, “but it was big and bulky. We wanted something that was easy to set up and rapidly deployed.”

The tour of the traveling exhibit is a testimony to its success. From Michigan to New York, from New Jersey to Louisiana, and even as far as the Philippines and India, the exhibit has had an impact on people. In India, “it brought Muslims and Hindus to tears,” said Fiato.

The exhibit has had an impact on someone much closer to home as well—Fiato’s daughter, Elizabeth. Elizabeth was an eighth-grade student questioning her Catholic faith when she visited the large exhibit from California.

“I kept watching the video over and over,” she recalled. “I’m a ‘why’ girl, and there were just too many things on that cloth that science couldn’t explain for me not to see the shroud as a gift from God.”

Now an adult and member of St. Monica Parish, she continues to be fascinated by the shroud. “She is serving as the contact person for coordinating the exhibit’s display in Indianapolis. She will speak at 5:30 p.m. on April 6, the last day of the exhibit at St. Monica Parish, to discuss the history of the shroud and the evidence that points to its authenticity as the burial cloth of Christ. A Spanish translator will be available for the presentation.

The exhibit is open to everyone, regardless of their parish affiliation or faith tradition. There is no charge, although donations are welcome to help cover expenses.

People who wish to view the exhibit while it is at St. Monica Parish should park in the north parking lot, which is closest to St. Augustine Hall where the exhibit will be displayed. The Shroud of Turin exhibit will also be on display at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford during the week before Holy Week, and at St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis during the week after Holy Week.

Elizabeth Fiato encouraged everyone to see the shroud exhibit, especially the “doubting Thomases.” “For someone to get all the things to line up—the blood type, the location of the scourge marks, the pollen and all these other things—there’s no way someone could have mastered all that,” she said. “The science just takes my breath away, and science can’t contradict the truth.”

Charlotte, N.C. (CNS)—A community of cloistered nuns and the Te Deum Foundation have jointly acquired land in North Carolina’s Cleveland County for a new monastery and a future seminary.

Mother Dolores Marie of the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration, abbess of St. Joseph Monastery, and Wilhelmina Mobley, president of the Te Deum Foundation, announced the purchase of 484 acres in Mooresboro, about 60 miles west of Charlotte. The property is situated on the south side of the Broad River, adjacent to a county-protected greenway.

The land will be split between the Poor Clares, for a permanent monastery, and the Te Deum Foundation, for a future regional seminary. The Poor Clares, who moved their community to the Diocese of Charlotte from Ohio in 2010, have been living in a temporary monastery on the St. Ann Parish campus in Charlotte. They are now raising money to build a chapel and monastery on the 333 acres they will occupy.

The Poor Clares are part of the religious order of Eternal Word Television Network founder Mother Angelica, located in Hanceville, Ala., at the monastery near the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The other 151 acres are being set aside for a regional seminary—-a project being spearheaded by the Te Deum Foundation, a nonprofit organization that operates separately from the Diocese of Charlotte and supports seminarians in their education. The proposed seminary would be the only one in the southern region of North and South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi.

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484 acres set aside for future regional seminary and monastery in the South

Te Deum Foundation Network founder Mother Angelica, located in Hanceville, Ala., at the monastery near the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The land will be split between the Poor Clares, for a permanent monastery, and the Te Deum Foundation, for a future regional seminary. The Poor Clares, who moved their community to the Diocese of Charlotte from Ohio in 2010, have been living in a temporary monastery on the St. Ann Parish campus in Charlotte. They are now raising money to build a chapel and monastery on the 333 acres they will occupy.

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Te Deum Foundation

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Charles Schisla

**We've never done anything like this before**

“Bastain, refers to as “a little Catholic kid on the east side of Indianapolis” who attended the former St. Francis de Sales School, the former right now where the parents don’t know how to be parents… because no one showed them. I learned a long time ago that unless you see it you can’t conceive it. So what do you do?

“We have to expand what the school is,” Ballard said. “It has to be a health center. It has to be a counseling center. It may have to be a job counseling center for some of these parents. It has to be more of a community model. The school has to be more than just the school.”

If the students don’t receive help to achieve success during their educational years, he said, they are more likely to make the wrong choices and end up in jail.

“The vast, vast majority of any city’s budget across the nation is public safety,” Ballard said. “We spend an enormous amount of time and money on 4 to 5 percent of the population because we didn’t do the right thing back then [when they were in school]… Somebody has to step in and break that cycle.”

Public safety also is a priority for his administration, he said, as is supporting the police officers and firefighters who risk their lives every day to serve and protect our communities.

“I think half of the firefighters in Indianapolis are from the City of Indianapolis,” Ballard said. “We’re about community,” he said. “We’re about holding the students to standards of behavior, which we can do better and easier because we’re private schools. Formation is what makes us so strong and so good as Catholic schools.”

St. Simon the Apostle parishioner Jacky Byers of Indianapolis, who serves on the budget and finance committee of the archdiocesan Finance Council, said after the program that she was glad to hear Ballard commend the good work of Catholic schools.

“They are a great model for other schools,” Byers said. “It’s really neat to see kids from all different economic statuses, different schools and different family backgrounds coming together and developing as good Christian young people.”

Lizy Maria Luna Mendoza is all smiles as she savors an ice cream-filled moment of celebration with her mother, Arletty Mendoza Monaga. The celebration followed days after Lizy, a child from Cuba, underwent a life-changing surgery on Feb. 20 that was made possible through the efforts of a group from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Through his contacts, Dietzen found an Indianapolis specialist—Dr. Chuck Kaefer at Riley Hospital for Children—who agreed to perform the surgery for Lizy. Lizy and her mother, Arletty Mendoza Monaga, arrived in Indianapolis on Feb. 11, 2012. The three-hour surgery was performed nine days later.

“Dr. Kaefer came out and gave us the ‘thumbs up’ sign,” Schisla recalls. “There were a lot of smiles, and we had a large group hug.” It was the outcome that Lizy’s mother has always believed would happen one day.

“Ever since Lizy was born, I knew that something miraculous would happen,” her mother says, “I had faith that things would work out for everyone, it was impossible, a lot of faith kept me going. I’m really thankful to everyone.”

It’s just been like having family here.”

During their time in Indiana, Lita and her mother have been blessed with the support of Michelle Wesler Medcalf, a member of the Indianapolis contingent of the Global Solidarity Partnership, who has helped provide meals, meals and transportation for them.

“Many others have given of their time, talent or financial resources,” says Medcalf, a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenwood.

“It’s a rich blessing to see the medical healing and subsequent joy of this little girl and her mother.”

“Dr. Kaefer has been pleased with Lizy’s recovery and improvement since the surgery.”

“Thearchdiocesebroughtinawhogeightookhadafterdamagetheytheshe10, andshewouldhaveneededkinsurgeryкал процедурасhehewas10, and shewouldhaveneededakidneytransplant.Now,shewillhaveagoodlife,”saidKaefer,a member ofImmaculateHeartof Mary Parish in Indianapolis and head of Pediatric Volunteers International, an organization whose members travel to Guatemala two times a year to provide surgeries for children.

Lizy’s successful surgery “will make a profound statement back in Cuba,” says Dietzen, a member of St. Alphonsus Ligouri Parish in Zionsville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

The goodwill has already spread. ArchbishopJuan Garcia Rodriguez of Camaguey sent a note to thanks to the Indianapolis contingent of the Global Solidarity Partnership.

“It is my intention to give thanks and praise to God for the years of brotherhood between our dioceses,” Archbishop Rodriguez wrote. “A sign that confirms this blessing has been the necessary operation of little Lizy Maria. In the name of all the children of our archdiocese, we thank you for this new gesture of charity to them that marks the history of the growth of our fraternal relationship.”

A child gets the opportunity for a healthy, extended life.

Two archdioceses from different countries take another step in a special partnership. All because of the faith that binds them.

“People of faith have been terrific, positive and generous,” Schisla says. “Through Lizy, we see God in his people and their actions.”

Lizy Maria Luna Mendoza wraps her arms around Dr. Chuck Dietzen, an Indianapolis physician who arranged for the 6-year-old girl from Cuba to undergo an operation that corrected a condition that increasingly threatened the functioning of her kidneys.

**SCHOOLS**

School vouchers are “an important tool” to help students from low-income families, he said, by giving their parents a choice about where their children receive an education.

“Only great example of Catholic education is [Cardinal] Ritter Jr., [Sr. High School],” Ballard said. “African-American boys who go to Catholic school have a better chance at an outstanding rate compared to other schools in the city.”

St. Philip Neri School on the near east side of the city, “I would appreciate it if you would do that because I think it’s important for the future of the City of Indianapolis.”

The mayor began his talk by discussing his second four-year term.

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NEW YORK (CNS)—St. Patrick’s Cathedral, “America’s parish church and the soul of the city,” will undergo a $175 million, five-year restoration project that is necessary for its survival, according to Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York.

Cardinal Dolan made the announcement on the steps of the cathedral Monday, about 17 hours before reviewing the 251st St. Patrick’s Day Parade Fifth Avenue.

An 133-year-old landmark is a “rugged edifice” home for people of all religion who “come here for a hint of the divine and assurance of how we are all connected,” Cardinal Dolan said. 

He said the history of St. Patrick’s, from its inception in 1859 by Archbishop John Hughes, New York’s first archbishop, to its dedication by Cardinal John McCloskey in 1879, was a tribute to Archbishops Hughes’ foresight, and the commitment of Irish immigrants to their faith and their country.

Cardinal O’Brien said contemporary pundits called the proposal “Hughes’ Folly” because it was thought to be unrealistic, poorly timed, too expensive and remote from the heart of New York.

“Irish immigrants were openly rejected by the elite of the day,” he said.

On St. Patrick’s Day, Irish immigrants and their descendants filled St. Patrick’s Cathedral in the heart of Manhattan then spilled out onto Fifth Avenue to join 2 million spectators in Manhattan then spilled out onto Fifth Avenue to join 2 million spectators

##New ways proposed by HHS to pay contraceptive costs for religious employers

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The U.S. Department for Health and Human Services (HHS) on March 16 released a new proposal to outline new ways for religious organizations that have moral objections to providing free contraceptives, sterilization and abortions to their employees to comply with the requirement.

Among the suggestions proposed are having the costs covered by a “third-party administrator” of a health plan or “independent agency” of other sources, such as rebates from drug makers.

The Obama administration also announced that most college student health insurance plans will have to include free contraceptive coverage. Although the policy will apply to all colleges and universities, religious affiliated institutions will be given an additional year to comply with the mandate.

It also said colleges that have self-insured student health coverage plans will not be required to offer free contraception coverage. Media representatives of the U.S. bishops and Catholic health care and college organizations told CNS on March 19 that they were still reviewing the proposals laid out in a 32-page document published on March 16 in the Federal Register.

The proposal “would establish alternatives” to fulfill the federal contraceptive, sterilization and abortive mandate when health coverage “is sponsored or arranged by a religious organization that objects to the coverage of contraceptive services for religious reasons and that is not exempt under the current regulations published on Feb. 15, 2012.”

“Tis document serves as a request for comments by advancing the proposal’s rulemaking on the potential means of accommodating such organizations while ensuring contraceptive services for plan participants and beneficiaries covered under their plans or, in the case of student health insurance plans, those of their dependents without cost sharing,” the agency said.

On Jan. 20, HHS announced that the federal government would require all employers, including religious employers, to provide no-cost coverage of all contraceptives approved by the Food and Drug Administration as part of preventive health services for women. Only houses of worship are exempt.

In an accommodation announced on Feb. 10 and published on Feb. 15, President Barack Obama said religious employers could decline to cover contraceptives if they were morally opposed to them, but that health insurers that provide their health plans would be required to offer contraceptives free of charge to women who requested such coverage. His announcement did not answer how the mandate applied to self-insured employers.

The newly published proposal reinforces mandated contraceptive coverage at religious entities, including hospital and social service agencies. It also stresses that the cost would not be directly paid by the employer, but by a “third-party administrator” or “independent agency.”

Administration officials who spoke with reporters in a conference call before the proposal about the stress the need to find ways for the third-party administrators to offset costs of contraceptive coverage. They suggested that administrators could use funds from other sources, such as rebates from drug makers.

The administration is seeking public comment on the proposed ruling for the next 90 days before it makes a final decision.

In its announcement on college student health insurance plans, the Obama administration stated, “third-party administrators that provide self-insured student health coverage will not be required to offer free contraceptive coverage.”

Merry Sister Mary Ann Walsh, director of media relations for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, told CNS, “The bishops are studying the announcement which HHS put forth late Friday afternoon.”

“We have to spend time reviewing it,” said Sister Carol Keehan, a Daughter of Charity who is president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association.

The director of communications for the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities said his organization was “still examining the notice released on Friday.”

Steve Schneck, director of the Institute for Religious Liberty at Catholic University of America, described the proposal as encouraging, particularly because it is “from the administration-seeing period which he said can give Catholic employers an opportunity for further input.

He noted that the proposal clarifies some of the language in the federal health mandate and indicates that more religious organizations will be exempt from the contraceptive coverage than previously realized.

Religious institutions that get their insurance coverage under a higher institution that qualifies for the exemption will also get the exemptions,” he said. In other words, a Catholic school which follows the diocesan health insurance plan would also be exempt from the contraceptive coverage.

“This is not about the Church wanting to force anybody to do anything. It is instead about the federal government forcing the Church consisting of its faithful and all but a small number of its laity to accept contraceptive, sterilization and abortifacients to their employees which they have a religious objection to,” the bishops said.

“It is an American issue,” the bishops added.

Nor is the issue about access to contraception or about “the bishops somehow ‘barring contraception’ when the U.S. Supreme Court took that issue off the table two generations ago,” they said.

What especially concerns the bishops about the contraceptive mandate and the narrow religious exemption to it is the “new definition of who we are as people of faith and what constitutes our ministry,” the statement said.

“Government has no place defining religious and religious ministry,” the bishops said. “This thus creates and enforces a new distinction—lenn both to those of us who hold to tradition and to federal law—between our houses of worship and our great ministries of service to our neighbors, namely the poor, the homeless, the sick, the students in our schools and universities, and others in need.”

Such a definition creates “a second class of citizenship within the United States” because the federal government “could spread throughout federal law, weakening its traditional respect for conscience and its laws of religious liberty and diversity,” they added.

The bishops said their Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty plans to publish a statement on religious liberty that will “address the broader range of religious liberty issues.

The upcoming document “reflects on the history of religious liberty in our great nation, surveys the current range of threats to this foundational principle, and states clearly the resolve of the bishops to act strongly, in concert with our fellow citizens, in its defense.”

The bishops closed their statement by calling on Catholics and other people of faith “to join us in prayer and penance for our leaders and for the complete protection of our first freedom—religious liberty—which is not only protected in the laws and customs of our great nation, but rooted in the teachings of our great tradition.

“Prayer is the ultimate source of our strength—for without God, we can do nothing. But with God, all things are possible,” they added.
Catholic Nutrition Center
Saves Lives — Before, After
Results are Breathtaking

Children like Carmen are what keep
Ana Aleman going even on her worst day.
She found baby Carmen lying in
an old milk crate on a side street in El
Progresso, Honduras. Abandoned by her
family, the frail infant’s skin clung to her
bones. She was severely malnourished —
early dead.
Ana, the director of Prince of Peace
Nutrition Center, rescued her and brought
her back to her mini-stute for treatment.
Now Carmen is a happy, healthy
toddler. The care she received at Prince
of Peace Nutrition Center has literally
saved her life.

“How can you see a need like baby
Carmen’s and turn away?” says Ana
Aleman, a devout Catholic. “My faith
compels me to help these children. And
I thank God every day that I have the
opportunity to work here. This is what
Christ meant when he said we should
live out our faith.”

A Texas native, Aleman came to
Honduras 10 years ago on a mission trip,
and she never left. Moved to tears after
seeing tiny children with skeleton-like
bodies and desperate mothers begging
passersby for help, she decided to
open the nutrition center that now
provides life-saving care to dozens of
malnourished children whose destitute
parents cannot afford to feed them.

“We see so many sad cases coming
here. It is truly heartbreaking,” she
says. “Children are the most tragic
victims of poverty. They are helpless
to protect themselves, and their
impoverished parents are simply
incapable of caring for them.”

Aleman explains that the mothers who
bring their children to the nutrition
center are living at the most severe
levels of poverty — typically living
on less than $1 per day. They are also
uneducated and may be providing their
children with poor food choices, leading
to vitamin deficiencies and other health
problems. Such babies come in to
the center weighing little more than a
newborn even though they may actually
be nearly a year old.

At the nutrition center the children
are provided with five daily meals, and
they remain under close supervision
until they are nursed back to health.

Meanwhile, their mothers are taught
how to prepare nutritious meals using
inexpensive foods available locally. This
training insures that the children don’t
relapse into the same malnourished
state they arrived in once they leave
Prince of Peace.

“The mothers are thrilled to see their
children recover,” Aleman says. “After
seeing their children suffer, it is also
a relief for them to have solutions —
ways of warding off malnutrition with
the training they’ve received.”

Carmen Hernandez, a mother whose
2-year-old son has been at the nutrition
center for two months, was overwhelmed
by how quickly he recovered from a
severe case of malnutrition.

“Joel was so sick even the local
hospital turned us away,” says Hernandez,
who then brought him to Prince of
Peace. “This place is wonderful. My
son’s recovery is a miracle.”

Dramatic recoveries like Joel’s are
what Aleman lives for, however,
she knows that is a mission she
could never accomplish alone. She
acknowledges the nutrition center
depends on the financial support
of Cross Catholic Outreach and its
Catholic donors in the U.S. They, she
says, empower her to serve.

“It is amazing what we can do by
working together. Cross Catholic
Outreach’s donors play a role and
Ana Aleman plays a role. Neither
can be whole without the other,” says
Jim Cavnar, the American charity’s
president. “In fact, Cross Catholic
Outreach was created with that
perspective in mind. We wanted
to develop a stronger connection between
Catholics in the U.S. and Catholics
who serve overseas. We wanted
parishioners in America to see what a
difference their support makes
in the lives of the poor — and, at
the same time, sought to give the poor
an opportunity to bless us with their
great faith. In that way, the Church
is united and all of us are blessed.”

To make a tax-deductible contribution
to Cross Catholic Outreach and its work
with Catholic charities overseas,
use either the enclosed postage-paid
brochure or send donations to: Cross
Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC00871,
PO Box 9558, Wilton, NH 03086-9558.

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

“We’ve received an impressive number
of endorsements from American Bishops
and Archbishops — more than 60 Catholic
leaders at last count,” explained Jim
Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic
Outreach. “They’re impressed by the fact
that we’ve done outreach in
more than 40 countries and that we
undertake a variety of projects, everything
from feeding the hungry and housing the
homeless to supplying safe water and
supporting educational opportunities
for the poorest of the poor.”

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

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

“Cross Catholic Outreach’s close
collaboration with the Pontifical
Council Cor Unum is a source of
encouragement,” the Archbishop said.

“The Holy See has unique knowledge of
local situations throughout the world
through its papal representatives in
nearly two hundred countries and
through its communications with Bishops
and others who care for the poor and
needy in every corner of the world.”

CCO president, Jim Cavnar, explained
the significance of this connection.

“Our collaboration with Cor Unum
allows us to fund outreach in virtually
any area of the world, and we have
used that method in special cases —
to help the victims of natural
disasters, for example,” he said. “It only
represents a small part of our overall
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benefit in those situations. We have been
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Escaping the Deadly Cycle of Poverty

Cross Catholic Outreach Celebrates Success of its Global Mission

Mercedes Nuez’s day begins at 6:30 a.m. when she enters Guatemala City’s huge, rat-infested dump. The single mother will spend the next 13 hours wading through piles of steaming garbage in search of items that she can sell for a few cents to one of the city’s recyclers. The work is backbreaking. With each breath of methane gas rising from the trash, she feels as if her lungs may burst—but she keeps going because she knows that if she stops her daughters won’t eat tonight.

“There is no one to help but the Lord.”

Mercedes Nuez, worker on the Guatemala City dump

For Nuez and the nearly 2,000 poor families who live off this massive garbage dump, a hard life is all they know.

“Life is very hard here. The days are long, and there aren’t many sources of help for people like me,” says Nuez, who has been working in the dump since she was 14 years old. “I never went to school, but I am thankful my girls are getting an education. Maybe then they can escape the life I have had to live.”

The education Nuez is talking about is an afterschool program created to help the city’s poor. Their school, on the edge of the dump, is an important ray of hope in the otherwise beleaguered community.

“Thanks to donations from compassionate Americans, this educational center is able to provide a whole new world of possibilities to children who have only known the eight filthy blocks that surround the garbage dump,” explains Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a U.S.-based charity helping to support schools in impoverished communities worldwide.

Cross Catholic Outreach is a firm believer in helping the poor through educational programs. Independent research backs up the value of their approach.

“Study after study has shown that investing in basic social services for children is a key to alleviating their conditions and opportunities, it is literally saving lives.”

Cavnar highlighted Cross Catholic’s education programs. Independent research backs up the value of their educational programs. Independent research backs up the value of their approach.

“Without the help we provided, these children probably would not have survived,” Cavnar says. “Thankfully, they now have a safe place to live, clothes to wear, plenty of food to eat, and they are able to attend school every day. Their suffering is over.”

Cavnar explains that life-saving programs like this wouldn’t exist without the support Cross Catholic Outreach receives from its generous Catholic donors in the U.S.

“Our Catholic benefactors are vital to the success of our work. Without them, we would not be able to support Catholic outreaches in Africa, Central America, the Philippines and elsewhere,” Cavnar says. “Our success is only possible because of their generous spirit. They are the heroes in this story.”

To make a tax-deductible contribution to Cross Catholic Outreach and its work with ministries overseas, use either the enclosed postage-paid brochure or send donations to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC00871, PO Box 9558, Wilton, NH 03086-9558.

How to Help:
Your help is needed for Cross Catholic Outreach to bring Christ’s mercy to the poorest of the poor. Use the enclosed postage-paid brochure to mail your gift or send it to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC00871, PO Box 9558, Wilton, NH 03086-9558.

Mercedes Nuez (below) lives on the outskirts of the dump, but she has higher hopes for her children and the other families who work there. One in three lack adequate shelter, while one in five don’t have clean water to drink. If an education can bring better conditions and opportunities, it is literally saving lives.
Indian vocations guided by spirit of St. Thomas, says CNEWA president

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Vocations to the priesthood and religious life in India’s two Eastern Catholic communities are strong and a sign that the missionary spirit of St. Thomas the Apostle flourishes, said the president of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA).

At multiple locations in southern India—in seminaries and houses of formation for men and women religious—Msgr. John E. Kozar said he was “blown away” by the quality and quantity of the candidates for religious life in the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Churches during his 12-day visit.

“The first impression when you walk into a huge seminary chapel or gathering hall is that you see 200, 300, 400 seminarians,” Msgr. Kozar told Catholic News Service on March 14 from his office in New York. “That in itself is a culture shock when you compare it to what you know here [in the United States].

“You’re welcomed with big smiles. You’re welcomed with songs and a warmth that reaches out and grabs you,” he said. “St. Thomas was the only Apostle to make his way to India and spread the Christian faith. After traveling through Syria and Persia, now Iran, he is believed to have sailed to India in A.D. 52, landing on the Malabar coast in what today is Kerala state. He was spared to death in A.D. 72 while praying.

CNEWA sponsors 2,134 seminarians and 857 men and women in formation for religious life in India. Hundreds more are in formation as well throughout the country.

With such a large number of men and women in formation, the two Churches are able to send priests and sisters on missionary service to other countries, which Msgr. Kozar said he found an inspiration for his ministry.

“It’s an ingrained part of the life of the Church there,” he said. “These two rites carry the missionary spirit today. To me, that’s very dynamic.”

Msgr. Kozar also said he found collaboration among the Eastern and Latin rites—especially among their leaders, the bishops—to be strong, resulting in meaningful service to children, people with handicaps and poor families.

Most touching during the visit, he said, was seeing children, some with severe physical handicaps that affected their mobility, full of joy as they danced, sang and greeted the CNEWA team.

Msgr. Kozar said he was impressed by the education standards upheld by the sisters, giving children a chance to move out of the dire poverty in which their families are rooted.

For that, he credited the sisters who oversee the institutions for creating an environment that upholds the dignity of each resident, without regard to physical ability, illness or family background.

Individual donors, through CNEWA, sponsor about 18,500 children in numerous educational and health and wellness programs.

“The children in many parts of the world of poor are really the jewel in their sincerity, their honesty, their simplicity. They are the reflection of the hope, the idealism, the love of that country, the best of that culture,” Msgr. Kozar said.

“You find that joy in the faces of the sisters. In their gentle hearts and loving way, they have given children this joyful environment. It’s contagious,” he added.

Msgr. Kozar was particularly struck by a 15-year-old boy at one location who rolled down hallways and up steps to get to a welcoming ceremony for the CNEWA visitors. The boy had no limbs, but remained mobile.

Msgr. Kozar said that other children had similar, if less-serious physical conditions, but still managed to get to where they had to go on their own.

“Some would say it’s horrible they had to do that,” Msgr. Kozar said. “No, they were mobile. They were abled differently. That was part of the dignity they received. Otherwise, they would have been warehoused, put into a corner of their home, almost like a leper, and not have any social interaction.

“They are not handicapped. They have the beautiful dignity, and they are joyful.”

It is just such stories that Msgr. Kozar said he will share in the coming months.

“The children just fired me up,” he said. “That’s the importance in what we do in these institutions, these sponsorships, these partnerships. We are bringing to them the joy that Christ is offering.”

(Msgr. John Kozar’s full blog posts on his trip can be found online at www.cnewa.org/blog.aspx?ID=21&koeuvreID=33 &sitecode=HQ)†
Unique program at Butler helps students deepen their faith

By John Shaughnessy

She knows how easy it can be for college students to slip away from their faith.

He knows how they can get so caught up in tests, papers, and concerns about their futures and college costs that their relationship with God suffers.

So Father Thomas Baima, a Catholic couple from Indianapolis—decided to help establish a program that would encourage college students to deepen their faith and live out their values in faith-related settings.

For the past two years, the couple has been a major contributor to the Fund for Discernment in the Catholic Tradition at Butler University in Indianapolis.

So has Father Thomas Baima, a 1976 Butler graduate and priest of the Catholic Tradition at Butler University in Indianapolis.

The couple’s association with Butler developed through Trizpac serving on the university’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Board of Visitors. Both doctors work for Eli Lilly and Company. She is a senior medical fellow in neuroscience research while he is a global development leader of the psychiatry and pain disorders team.

Dr. Paula Trzepacz and Dr. Robert Baker, a Catholic couple from Indianapolis, have contributed to a program at Butler University that provides paid internships to students in Catholic agencies and organizations as a way to deepen their faith.

The criterion for the students in the internship program.

They are trying on work being done in Catholic teachings and seeing that people can make meaningful lives in these faith-based work places,” says Ceuba, a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis.

“The students are considering that it is possible to serve others through their faith lives while they make a living. A whole new kind of work is available on the campus and in the community. The couple also encourages other Catholics to support this kind of effort, whether it’s at Butler or any other college.

“There’s nothing about this idea that has to be just Catholic or just Butler,” Baker says. “We’d like to see it get bigger.”

“The connection with the college students has had an impact on the faith journeys of the two doctors, who are members of both SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood and St. Agnes Parish in Nashville.

“Even though we’re older and have a better sense of our own faith, we get busy with our own jobs and slip,” Trzepacz says. “To get involved with these young people strengthens our resolve. They’re a witness to us. I imagine they’re a witness to the people they work with, too. Everyone needs to be refueled in their faith.”

Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. The following list of services were reported to The Criterion.

Batesville Deanery
March 27, 3 p.m. for St. Nicholas, Ripley County; St. Anthony of Padua, Morris; and St. Louis, Batesville, at St. Louis, Batesville.
March 28, 6:45 p.m. for St. John the Evangelist, Clark County.
March 28, 7 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County.
April 1, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. for St. John the Baptist, Dover; St. Martin, Yorkville; St. Paul, New Alsace; and St. Joseph, St. Leon, at St. Joseph, St. Leon.

Bloomington Deanery
March 25, 3 p.m. for St. John the Apostle, Bloomington; St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington; and St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington.
March 27, 7 p.m. for St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, and St. Mary, Mitchell, at St. Mary, Mitchell.

Covington Deanery
March 29, 7 p.m. at St. Rose, Knightstown.

Indianapolis East Deanery
March 27, 6 p.m. for St. Rita.
March 27, 9 p.m. for SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral and St. Mary of the Knobs.

Indianapolis South Deanery
March 25, 3 p.m. for Good Shepherd.
March 29, 7 p.m. at St. Ann.

Indianapolis West Deanery
March 27, 6:30 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield.
March 27, 9 p.m. at Marian University.
March 28, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph.
March 31, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at St. Michael the Archangel.

New Albany Deanery
March 26, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph, Clark County.
March 28, 7 p.m. for St. Mary, Navollet, and St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd's Knobs, at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd's Knobs.
March 29, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradf ord.

Seymour Deanery
March 28, 6 p.m. at St. Patrick, Salem.
March 29, 6 p.m. at American Martyrs, Scottsburg.
April 2, 7 p.m. for St. Ann, Jennings County; St. Mary, North Vernon; and St. Joseph, Jennings County, at St. Joseph, Jennings County.

Tell City Deanery
April 1, 2 p.m. at St. Paul, Tell City.

Lenten activities available online

Be sure to visit The Criterion’s Lenten Web page at www.archindy.org/lent.
The page consists of links to daily readings, archived Lenten columns by Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buehlein, a full list of communal penance services taking place at parishes and other features.
Vatican office says SSPX response to basic doctrinal principles is ‘insufficient’

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:

What was in the news on March 23, 1962? Orthodox bishops speak out on East-West differences, and editor urges laity to minimize differences

This article was published in The Criterion on March 23, 1962.

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, with the approval of Pope Benedict XVI, has defined as “insufficient” the position of the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX) on certain basic doctrinal principles and criteria for interpreting Church teaching.

In a formal communiqué published after the meeting, the Vatican said it states some doctrinal principles and criteria for the interpretation of Catholic doctrine necessary to guarantee fidelity” to the formal teaching of the Church, including the doctrine of the Church’s Constitutions.

Bishop Fellay delivered the society’s official response in January, the Vatican said, and it was “placed under the examination of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and successively under the judgment of the Holy Father.”

“In compliance with the decision of Pope Benedict XVI,” the Vatican said, “John Paul II, having signed by Cardinal Levada explaining that “the position he had expressed is not sufficient to overcome the doctrinal problems that are at the basis of the fracture between the Church and the society.”

The Vatican spokesman would not give examples of the doctrinal differences he has gone too far, Mr. Sherry cautioned that Catholic between Liberal and Conservative Catholics lead them to ‘work side by side always more closely with our mission.’

Pamphlet on Communism draws official statement

Lilly fund gives $50,000 to Brebeuf

Church’s role social thought has role for government

Mr. Hyde loves communists, hates communism

Asks for more laity in social justice work

William Conley named to direct study of Catholic

Modern Church architecture has no room for ‘kitsch’—priest says

All cardinal deacons to be elevated

Red tyranny ends?

Claims that the doctrine of the Church’s Constitutions describes a “rape, something very serious for the Church.”

“All the cardinals were asked to further clarify their response to a “doctrinal preamble” that the Vatican asked them to study last September.

The text of the preamble was not made public, but the Vatican had said it states some doctrinal principles and criteria for the interpretation of Catholic doctrine necessary to guarantee fidelity” to the formal teaching of the Church, including the doctrine of the Church’s Constitutions.

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Faith Alive!

If we falter in our Lenten resolutions, God will help us back up

By Louise McNulty

Although they may commit to extra acts of self-denial or good works, most Catholics don’t see Lent as a more difficult time to resist temptation than at any other time of the year.

“During Lent, we are more conscious of our weaknesses and failings and are thinking about what will take us away from God, but I don’t think temptation happens more often,” said the Rev. James O’Connor, coordinator of religious education at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in South Greens Falls, N.Y., summed it up recently.

He acknowledged, however, that good Lenten intentions do have a way, like New Year’s resolutions, of falling by the wayside.

“So sometimes we just forget [our promises], but the important thing is not to beat ourselves up over it, but just to get back on track,” he said. The best way to do that, he recommended, is “to find a prayer practice that works for you and try to sustain it.”

For some people, that could mean saying a rosary. For others, meditative prayer, adoration or attending Mass could work.

“God is always present in our lives [and ready to help us]. It’s just a matter of our paying attention,” Gorman said. Judith Hoyt, advocacy coordinator for Right to Life of Northeast Ohio, said when temptation strikes, “I turn to Jesus and Mary, and say the Our Father or Hail Mary. Or I say the prayer to St. Michael. He cast Satan, the father of lies, into hell so I believe [St. Michael] is on my side.”

She said she doesn’t emphasize giving up food or drink for Lent. The way to accomplish a goal, she said, is “to keep God in the forefront of my mind and then do things for him.”

During Lent, prayer helps especially, she said. “I try to say extra rosaries and go to confession once a month. That keeps you on the straight and narrow—thinking that when you go [to confession] you’ll have to admit to doing something wrong.”

Sally Scudder, a colleague of Jim Gorman at St. Michael Parish in New York, is the parish’s music minister. She said she doesn’t emphasize giving up things during Lent, but focuses on doing more positive deeds.

“Whatsoever I choose to do, it’s something outside of my comfort zone,” she said.

“Last year, I begged forgiveness of those who had hurt me, approaching people in person or writing to say [that] I forgave them, and asked if I had done something to trigger their action. Sometimes I didn’t get an answer, but that was an answer, too,” she said.

She said that she is “not a hospital person,” and only visits friends when they are in the hospital or goes there to distribute Communion. But one year, during Lent, she received a request from a local hospital chaplain and decided to visit the sick.

For instance, she offered to give up chocolate for life, and she did so “little by little” during Lent about 20 years ago.

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Even if she is out doing good deeds, Scudder said it is good for her to go out of her comfort zone in choosing what to do because there is always the temptation to not venture into the uncomfortable.

She counteracts that by trying to spend more time in silence with God, especially during Lent, she said.

“I’m in the music ministry,” she said. “I make noise. It may be a joyful noise, but it’s still noise. So giving up making my own noise some time every day keeps me more centered on the journey toward the Resurrection.”

(Louise McNulty is a freelance writer in Akron, Ohio.)

The psalms help us better understand Christ’s suffering and death

By Nancy de Flon

A sculpture, “Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross,” is part of a group of sculptures from Zamora, Spain, that were used in the Stations of the Cross during the Aug. 16-21, 2011, World Youth Day in Madrid. Several psalms have helped Christians through prayer to better understand Christ’s suffering and death.

The psalms revered as the “Passion psalms” and used in the Passion liturgy.

The psalms revered as the “Passion psalms” have been incorporated into the Gospel Passion accounts either as details of the Crucifixion or as Jesus’ last words on the Cross.

The Jewish people would not have understood all of these passages as a prediction of the Messiah’s suffering. Peter had reason to be shocked.

But the early Christians, who were Jews and thus steeped in the Hebrew Scriptures, would have interpreted them retrospectively in light of their faith in the Jesus who had suffered, died and risen again.

They prayed the psalms every day, and they tapped these beloved prayers to help them come to understand more deeply Jesus’ Passion and resurrection.

The psalms revered as the “Passion psalms” in the Christian tradition are Psalms 22, 31 and 69. Jesus, in Matthew and Mark, quotes Psalm 22 for his cry of seeming despair, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” (Ps 22:23).

The last words of Jesus in St. Luke’s Passion account, “Into your hands I commend my spirit!” (Lk 23:46), are a quotation of Psalm 31:6.

We have all experienced occasions when a well-known prayer came spontaneously to our lips in times of great emotion. For Jesus, a devout Jew, the psalms were those beloved prayers.

Other elements in the horrific drama of the Crucifixion that come from the Passion psalms include the Roman soldiers casting lots for Jesus’ garments (Ps 22:19), the vinegar they gave him to drink (Ps 69:22), and the mockery and scorn of the crowd in all three psalms.

Our Catholic tradition recognizes the importance of the Passion psalms by incorporating them into the Good Friday liturgy.

Again, it is important to remember that the Passion psalms’ role as foreshadowing the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy to foretelling the suffering Messiah only began to be understood in retrospect when the early Christians realized that these passages applied to Jesus.

They also apply to the human condition in general. And it is good for us to remember that the Passion psalms all end with expressions of certain faith that God will save us.

The horrors of life don’t have the last word, either in Jesus’ life or ours.

(Nancy de Flon is an editor at Paulist Press and the author of The Joy of Praying the Psalms.)
A sense of humor, education needed to restore unity and peace

Helen Keller, an American author and first deaf and blind person to earn a bachelor of arts degree, once said, “The highest result of anything human is to laugh.” I’m not talking about school. Earning an A in school does not make a person educated. A sense of humor is needed when we view an issue from many sides, when we are open-minded, docile and admit we don’t know something. We are educated when we have cultivated introspection, when we don’t jump to a conclusion. Author W. Somerset Maugham pointed to another aspect of tolerance. “You might not agree with me, but you should laugh at your humor teacher tolerates.”

Expanding on this idea, the renowned theologian Father Romano Guardini wrote, “One other thing is required by kindness, something of which we rarely speak—a sense of humor. It helps us to endure more things easily. Which is why we must get along without it. The person who sees man only seriously, only morally or pedagogically, cannot endur him for any length of time. We must have an eye for the oddity of existence. The highest result of anything human is to laugh.”

Despite what the world tells you, nobody else can ever judge your worth based on the makeup you put on, the clothes you wear or what people say about you on YouTube or Twitter. You don’t need the opinions of the world—as changeable as they are—to be beautiful and special.

One of the best ways to be happy is to recognize ourselves as beautiful and special no matter what others say. My best advice is to keep away the outer layers of style and artifice, and really acknowledge the wonderful person inside.

But if we put our self-worth into the hands of others who don’t care about our hope, we have nothing to lose. It is what we want to be.

After all, there is one standard of beauty that transcends culture—the person who is truly comfortable with and confident in who he or she is. 

(Karen Osborne writes for Catholic News Service.)

Cominng of Age/Karen Osborne

Self-image in the age of YouTube

You are special and beautiful. This is something we tell ourselves often enough. In our cynical world, we often echo the words from the movie The Incredibles when the character Elastigirl says, “If everyone is special, then nobody is.”

It is a temptation to think of ourselves like that—as big fat novelties, as one more name on a teacher’s attendance sheet, as just another face in the crowd. For those who shine bright and shine on the magazine covers and television screens, it is easy to think of ourselves as fat, stupid and ugly.

Combine that with the negative words of classmates in hallways and on the Internet, and a low self-image is virtually a guarantee for many teenagers today.

That view couldn’t be further from the truth. All of us are so incredibly special, individual, bright, beautiful moments in time that no one can ever pluck out of history of the universe and will never be repeated.

That’s why a recent rash of YouTube videos saddened me. Over the past few years, girls and boys of all ages, shapes and sizes have uploaded videos to YouTube where they ask complete strangers on the Internet if they are pretty or ugly, beautiful or repulsive, gorgeous or grody.

I have seen dozens of these videos and, in every single clip, teenagers talk about how awful it makes them feel that other people in their school say they are ugly or fat or not beautiful. “Am I really ugly?”

By posting online, they hope others will lift their spirits by saying the magic words—that they are beautiful, that they are special.

Instead of boosting their self-image, they give over their control on the subject to complete strangers. But in the end, with a little humility, you really do find a good source on what is truly beautiful. Every person in every culture has a different idea of what that means.

The ideal, beautiful woman of the Italian Renaissance would probably consider herself ugly. In the Kayan Lahwi culture from South Asia, women use brass rings to stretch their earlobes. People from the Italian Renaissance would consider these Westerners shocking. In Jamaica, the government had to ban women from taking chicken-hormone pills in their search to gain weight, something that most American women would find shocking.

We all want to be beautiful, special and unique. In the search for beauty, though, we are sacrificing what makes us truly beautiful.

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The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 25, 2012

• Jeremiah 31:31-34
• Hebrews 5:7-9
• John 12:20-33

The Book of Jeremiah provides this weekend’s first reading.

A common theme runs through all the written prophecies of ancient Israel. It is that despite human sinfulness and treachery, God always is merciful. He also requires the people to reform their errant ways.

This reading underscores the role of Jesus, the Son of God, in the divine plan to redeem the lost. His suffering on the Cross, affirmed and verified perfect obedience to the Father. In this obedience was eternal redemption. †

Jesus prays to the Father and is answered. Jesus is the only figure in the outpouring of divine everlasting love. The self-sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary is the perfect act of divine love. God’s love is never restricted or limited. In the first verse of this Gospel reading, Greeks wished to see Jesus. New life awaits all those who simply turn to the Lord. The key is wholeheartedly to turn to the Lord. Obedience is a vitally important part of the lessons this weekend.

Jeremiah called the people to obedience. The Book of Hebrews and the Gospel of John extoll the obedience of Christ, our only model and Lord. Such unqualified obedience is demanding, to say the least, but nothing else will suffice. We must obey God as Jesus obeyed God.

In our absolute, uncompromised obedience to the Father is our personal redemption. †

Reflection

Next weekend, the Church will celebrate Palm Sunday, also called Passion Sunday. In not too many days, the Church will call us to mark this year’s Holy Week with its magnificent and compelling Triduum.

Two consoling lessons emerge from this weekend’s Gospel reading. One is about the intimacy between the Lord and God the Father. The Father declares that the Father will bless true disciples, true servants of Jesus. The Lord is the perfect teacher. He is the bearer of God, however, saves sinners from their plight.

The Epistle to the Hebrews supplies the second reading.

This epistle is rich in Jewish symbolism, and it abundantly proclaims the most profound of Jewish beliefs, namely that God, however, saves sinners from their plight.

In the early Church, when this Gospel was written, the Apostles were very, very important. They literally had known the Lord. They were the Lord’s special students.

They were chosen to be the Lord’s representatives. They acted and spoke with the very authority and explicit commission of Jesus.

Jesus brings an ominous overture to this reading. He predicts death. He then implies that the Cross will result in life for all. He speaks of a grain of wheat falling to the ground, lifeless and tarry. However, the Lord notes, from this small piece of reality, the mustard seed, new life springs forth.

Finally, Jesus speaks of giving so totally that it is the gift of a person’s life.

The Gospel reveals the intimacy between Jesus and God the Father, and between the Lord and his disciples. In this intimacy between the Lord and the disciples must be a disciple’s will to follow the Lord despite the costs. Discipleship may not be easy.

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**Lady Liberty**

A depiction of the Statue of Liberty in mosaic tile is part of a larger piece in a side chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

**Providence Sister Alice Louise Potts served as a teacher, principal and hospital chaplain**

Providence Sister Alice Louise Potts died on March 9 at Union Hospital in Terre Haute. She was 87.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on March 14 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Sister Alice Louise Potts was born on Aug. 3, 1924, in Indianapolis. She graduated from the congregation of the Sisters of Providence on Feb. 2, 1943, and professed her first vows on Aug. 15, 1945, and her final vows on Aug. 15, 1956.

Sister Alice Louise graduated from St. Mary’s College in Indiana, and Illinois for 23 years. In the archdiocese, Sister Alice Louise taught at the former St. Ann School in Terre Haute from 1945-48, the former St. Joseph School in Indianapolis from 1950-53 and the former St. Leonard of Mary School in West Terre Haute from 1955-57.

From 1955-56, she taught at St. Mary’s School in Mary, Indiana as a chaplain at the 1940s-1950s.

Sister Alice Louise served as a chaplain and religious education for a high school in Terre Haute, and she was at the St. John’s School in Terre Haute.

**Mid-Atlantic Congress aims to strengthen Catholic pastoral ministers**

Baltimore (CNS)—Hundreds of Catholics gathered at the inaugural Mid-Atlantic Congress for Pastoral Leadership to learn about strengthening pastoral services and to connect with one another.

The congress opened in Baltimore on March 8 with Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Ariz., encouraging the nearly 3,000 people to be present to share their faith and to pray for the hope that only Jesus Christ can give.

"We are trying to work in a world that is in a crisis, but yet seems so far from an encounter with Jesus Christ," Bishop Kicanas, chairman of the board of directors of the Mid-Atlantic Congress, said during the conference.

"We are among those who are called and chosen, loved and blessed, and if you hold onto that, you can never be discouraged, you can never lose hope," he said.

The three-day conference is designed to strengthen pastoral leaders from across the region in their ministry and in the Church. It offered classes, trend sessions and nearly 100 breakout sessions. The theme was "Witness Hope!"

Nearly 70 dioceses and archdioceses were represented at the conference, which is expected to draw more than 1,000 people to the conference, according to the Archdiocese of Baltimore’s Department of Evangelization and the Association of Catholic Publishers.

The next conference is scheduled for March 7-9 in Baltimore.

Kathy Moore, pastoral associate of St. Katherine Drexel Parish in Frederick, said Bishop Kicanas’ speech inspired her.

"I came to the conference because I am now a pastoral minister, and I was inspired," Moore said. "I think Bishop Kicanas’ speech was inspiring. It gave me hope and joy from the fact that I am chosen, blessed and loved."

Jesuit Father James Martin, the unofficial chaplain to the Colbert Report, is a member of the parish council at a parish in Virginia, said that Father Martin’s presentation was to the point, highlighting the importance of the human person in life and culture.

"We are so academics. We’re so academics. We’re so thinkers and so there’s no good enough to have good intentions," Mr. Woo said. "A business is a force for good and, of course, hope. When we talk about hope, we have to understand the good news. It depends on the moral energies of people to make it happen."

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


SAHM, Suzanne Marie. Sister of Mary and Elaine Blunk, Don and Larry Saum, and Brenda and John Laugle. Grandmother of three.

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YOUNG, Guy, 90, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, March 9 at the inaugural Mid-Atlantic Congress for Pastoral Leadership, to learn about strengthening pastoral services and to connect with one another.

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Pauline Father John Hurley, co-chairman of the congress and director of the Archdiocese of Baltimore’s Department of Evangelization, said in his homily during the March 9 liturgy that coming together is a gift. He encouraged the Providence Sisters, Chapter 1 and nontraditional take on the 14 Stations of the Cross, with multimedia presentations and testimonies from Catholics who had experienced suffering recalled in events out of the Stations.

Kevin M. Rudzicki, Archdiocese of Baltimore’s coordinator of adult and sacramental formation and the creative director for the Way of the Cross, said it celebrated the Stations of the Cross.

"Growing up, I would see Catholics come together to celebrate the Cross on Fridays in Lent. However, it never seemed like a true celebration," Rudzicki said in an e-mail. "Celebration doesn’t need to have clapping, dancing and an overwhelming amount of joy. Most of the way, we understand the Cross: it’s the greatest good of all.”

Sharon DeSipio, director of religious education for a high school in Terre Haute, said she knew it would be different from traditional Stations;

"it has to sink in."

**Rest in peace**
Palestinian Joseph Haboun, 46, poses with his children, Lena, 12, Yazeen, 14, and Layal, 16, at their apartment in East Jerusalem on Feb. 28. For 17 years, Haboun is from Bethlehem, West Bank, has been living with his family in Jerusalem without a permanent Israeli residency permit.

Veronica wiping Jesus’ face, which is not mentioned in the Bible.

In 1985, Blessed John Paul II began asking people to compose Via Crucis meditations for his Good Friday prayer service rather than using traditional texts. Over the years, he asked bishops and theologians and priests to participate — and in 2002 — an international group of journalists who were covering the Vatican. The 2005 meditations, used just a few days before Blessed John Paul’s death, were written by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict.

Pope asks married Italian couple to compose Via Crucis meditations

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In 1985, Blessed John Paul II began asking people to compose Via Crucis meditations for his Good Friday prayer service rather than using traditional texts. Over the years, he asked bishops and theologians and priests to participate — and in 2002 — an international group of journalists who were covering the Vatican. The 2005 meditations, used just a few days before Blessed John Paul’s death, were written by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict.

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Catholic students from George Washington University lead the rosary outside the White House to show support for religious freedom that they say is threatened by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services mandates on contraception.

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A group of 12 students from the Newman Center at George Washington University prayed the rosary on March 3 outside the White House as a prayerful witness for the religious freedom they believe is threatened by a federal contraception mandate.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has issued a requirement that health insurance plans include free coverage for sterilizations, contraceptives and abortifacients.

“The event is important to raise awareness about the government threat to our religious liberty of a specific group of people,” said Michael Russo, student president of the Newman Center, who is studying history and classics. “It’s [the students’] witness attaches faces to the issue. It shows people that health insurance plans include free coverage for sterilizations, contraceptives and abortifacients. It’s not hate. Starting with a Mass, and teaching is rooted in love. It’s not bigotry. This is our tradition and our law since the Constitution, and I don’t think the government has any right stepping into that,” he said.

As the students walked closer to the White House, Kara Danford, a political communications major, said, “[It’s] important for us at the Newman Center, as college students, to get involved in issues that are important to our future as Catholics in the United States. Particularly on this issue, it’s important for us to send a message that it’s not just bishops and priests who care about this HHS mandate, it’s us as college students. We realize this encroaches on our liberties as practicing Catholics.”

Danford said the fact their witness was centered on prayer is critical.

“We’re trying to show is all Church teaching is rooted in love. It’s not bigotry. It’s not hate. Starting with a Mass, and ending with a rosary, we can show it. We’re not out there screaming with signs,” she said.

Justyna Felusiaik, who is studying political science, said, “I just feel like everyone has the constitutional right to religious freedom. This is beyond me being Catholic. It’s what our country was founded on, and why people came here. It’s been our [trait] tradition and our law since the country started.”

She, too, emphasized the importance of prayer in the effort. “As a Catholic, I feel that’s a great solution to many situations and problems.”

Joining the students was Bryce Garber, a law missionary from the Fellowship of Catholic University Students who is serving at the Newman Center. “I believe in the freedom of religious expression laid out in the Constitution, and I don’t think the government has any right stepping into that,” he said.

Then the group arrived on the sidewalk in front of the White House, and they quietly prayed the rosary together as tourists walked by and some people took photographs of them. About a block away, protesters highlighting an international issue used a loudspeaker to direct their message toward the White House.

After they prayed the rosary, the students and their friends walked together back to campus.

Christina Longofono, a history major, emphasized the importance of prayer in the effort to protect religious freedom.

“Jesus said, ‘I am the vine, and you are the branches. Apart from me, you can do nothing’ [Jn 15:5]. It’s very important that we not only acknowledge God, but involve him in our efforts to protect our right to worship him,” she said.

On Tuesdays, she joins other Catholic students in praying the rosary outside an abortion clinic on campus, and sometimes people curse at them so Longofono said she wasn’t worried about what reaction their prayer vigil would provoke.

“Using our religious freedom will help us take a stand against [the religious freedom] rights of one people, it can take away everyone’s rights.”

As she walked with her friends back to campus, she added, “Culturally, this is not a popular issue. It’s important that we do what’s right even when everyone is not on our side.”

Students pray rosary for religious freedom in front of White House

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