In Lebanon, pope tells Christians to stay and foster reconciliation

BKERKE, Lebanon (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI urged young Christians in the Middle East not to flee violence and economic insecurity through emigration, but to draw strength from their faith and make peace in their troubled region.

The pope spoke on Sept. 15 to some 20,000 young people from several Middle Eastern countries gathered outside the residence of the Maronite patriarch in Bkerke during a celebration that included fireworks, spotlights, singing and prayer. The event was part of a three-day visit the pope made to Lebanon during which he signed an apostolic exhortation that reflected upon the 2010 special Synod of Bishops dedicated to Christians in the Middle East.

The visit concluded on Sept. 16 with an open-air Mass on Beirut’s waterfront, which drew approximately 350,000 people.

The crowd for the youth event began to form hours before Pope Benedict arrived in the popemobile a little after 6 p.m. After passing through the metal detector and the gates of Bkerke, visitors were greeted by fireworks, spotlights, singing and prayer. This set the tone for the rest of the high-mass.

As he was introduced, there was a chance to watch his show, but knows his television persona nearly all the time in front of the camera and in public interviews away from the show, in a rare moment he slipped out of character, admitting to the nearly exclusively student audience at the Jesuit university that he loves the Catholic Church despite its human flaws.

“I love my Church—warts and all,” he said.

Although the comedian maintains his television persona nearly all the time in front of the camera and in public interviews away from the show, in a rare moment he slipped out of character, admitting to the nearly exclusively student audience at the Jesuit university that he loves the Catholic Church despite its human flaws.

“I love my Church—warts and all,” he said.

When Cardinal Dolan, who is known for his gregarious sense of humor, took the stage, it was he who bowed and kissed Colbert’s hand. This set the tone for the rest of the high-mass.

Instead, Colbert explained that he sees the Catholic Church as teaching joy, which he called the “infallible sign of the presence of God.”

“The St. Thomas More Society—principle and the law connects faith and life—that has led to a resurgence in the residence of the Maronite patriarch in Bkerke. It is the official chaplain of Colbert’s show as well as culture editor at the Jesuits’ America magazine. Colbert is host of “The Colbert Report,” a pseudo-archconservative, faux news show. An active Catholic who teaches religious education classes to children in his parish, he said comedians often don’t understand how he could remain Catholic.

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People holding flags of Lebanon and the Vatican and images of Pope Benedict XVI as he arrives in the popemobile to celebrate Mass on the waterfront in Beirut on Sept. 16.

In Lebanon, Pope Benedict’s presence was the message.

BEIRUT (CNS)—When Pope Benedict XVI stepped off the plane in Beirut on Sept. 14, he said he had come to Lebanon, and to the Middle East in general, as a “pilgrim of peace.”

During five major talks over the next three days, the pope repeatedly called for peace and underscored the role of Christians in promoting it. Yet, his most eloquent message of hope to the troubled region lay not in the diplomatic language of his public statements, but in his very presence and the response it evoked from his hosts.

Throughout his trip, Pope Benedict limited himself to general statements of principle on the most contentious political issues, and he avoided some topics altogether. His insistence that religious freedom is a basic human right, and prerequisite for social harmony was a bold statement in the context of a region where most countries restrict and even prohibit the practice of any faith besides Islam.

But like the apologetic exhortation he came to Lebanon to present—a collection of his reflections on the 2010 special Synod of Bishops dedicated to Christians in the Middle East—the pope said nothing specific about where and how the region’s Christians are regularly deprived of that right.

The pope twice deplored the human cost of the civil war in neighboring Syria, but his only practical allusion to the subject in the statement that “authentic faith does not lead to death.”

Awareness of that furor no doubt heightened the caution with which the pope treated the most volatile topics during his trip. Ironically, the crisis may also have helped him to get his message across.

With turmoil over the movie spreading across the Middle East, the papal visit suddenly became a much more dramatic and thus more appealing story to the secular press, giving the pope another chance to put an end to violence in the region.

“Pope Benedict also offered a ‘take-home’ reminders on the walls—‘love’, ‘missionaries of peace’ and ‘pray’.”

In Lebanon, Pope Benedict’s ‘take-home’ reminders on the walls—“love”, “missionaries of peace” and “pray.”

Pope Benedict XVI waves as he arrives in the popemobile to celebrate Mass on the waterfront in Beirut on Sept. 16.

People holding flags of Lebanon and the Vatican and images of the pope wave along a parade route for Pope Benedict XVI’s arrival at the Baabda Presidential Palace southeast of Beirut on Sept. 16.

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New grant application process to make more funds available to parishes

By Sean Gallagher

Starting next month, a new grant application process for parishes across central and southern Indiana will be launched. It will make funds available twice a year through the St. Francis Xavier Home Mission Endowment Fund and the Growth and Expansion Endowment Fund. Additionally, new grants will also be made from the James P. Scott Endowment Fund.

In the past, the Home Mission grants were awarded only in the spring and the Growth and Expansion grants were awarded only in the fall. Now, funds from both will be distributed in the spring and fall.

A committee made up of parish leaders, archdiocesan staff members and lay volunteers will review the grant applications.

Grant applications for the fall review process are due on Oct. 31.

The James P. Scott grants will also be awarded twice a year at the same time as the other grants.

The Scott grants have been made possible by a generous gift from the late James P. Scott and will be used to support the capital needs in the archdiocese.

Stacy Harris, director of financial analysis in the archdiocese’s Office of Finance and Administrative Services, said that the new combined grant application process will give the grants a “bigger impact” on parishes in central and southern Indiana.

“It combines the dollars, and we can give more significant grants,” Harris said. “And, depending on the applications, that can be really important for some parishes.”

Each of the grant funds were established through endowments. Each year, a percentage of that endowment is distributed as grants.

In the case of the Home Mission grant, the funds from the endowment are increased by contributions made to parishes that exceed their goal for the “Christ Our Hope: Compassion in Community” archdiocesan appeal and choose to make additional new endowment funds.

“Approximately $200,000 is available annually through the Home Mission grants, which are awarded to parishes that cannot meet their ordinary needs or are experiencing an emergency need.”

The Growth and Expansion grants support archdiocesan parishes, schools and agencies that are growing or expanding. Their needs that can be met through the grants can include capital requests, staffing or programming.

Approximately $40,000 is available annually through the Growth and Expansion grants.

The new James P. Scott grants will provide matching grants or awards to support capital projects at archdiocesan parishes, schools or agencies that have the potential to have a significant influence within a local area or on the archdiocese as a whole. These grants can also fill a fundraising gap or provide an incentive to donors in a capital project.

Approximately $250,000 per year will be available through the James P. Scott grants.

Ellen Brunner, director of planned giving for the archdiocese, helped shepherd the bequest from the James P. Scott estate to the point where now grants will be awarded from it.

“We’re growing the funds available significantly by adding this additional new endowment fund,” Brunner said. “This gift will support many different ministries around the archdiocese in capital projects.”

She is glad to be able to see the positive influence that a planned gift can have for the Church in central and southern Indiana.

“You’re just reminded of how someone can have an impact after they’re gone from this Earth,” Brunner said, “and how we have the opportunity to be good stewards of that gift.”

Being a good steward in part means making the funds available as grants.

The real bonus is the chance to spend time with friends and family, Brunner said. “Combining them makes it easier for the parishes.”

The process does.

“Approximately $250,000 per year will be more easily available to parishes across the archdiocese, which Harris said the new combined application process does.

“It allows us to make larger, more impactful grants to the parishes,” she said. “Combining them makes it easier for the parishes. There have been several times over the past few years that applicants turned away or their grant request wasn’t awarded because it didn’t quite fit the criteria of one versus the other grant.”

“This kind of takes that guessing part out of the parishes. The committee will kind of do that,” she said. “We’ll steer them to the right grant.”

(For more information on the new combined grant process, log on to www.archindy.org/finance. Send an e-mail to Stacy Harris at starrh@archindy.org or call her at 800-352-9436, ext. 1535, or at 317-526-1535.)

SOCIETY

continued from page 1

Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. A dinner reception will follow at 6:30 p.m. at the Crown Plaza Hotel. During the reception, Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, apostolic administrator, is scheduled to present the society’s “Man for All Seasons” Award to Daniel Elsener, president of Marian University.

The liturgy is known as a “Red Mass” because it is the feast day of St. Francis de Sales, who is known as the patron saint of journalists and writers.

“I’m an advocate of the red Mass because it is a means to incorporate the laity into the liturgy,” said Alex Ogbuh, a maintenance worker at St. Rita Parish in Indianapolis, who is an attorney and a member of the St. Thomas More Society.

“It certainly brings a diversity to the liturgy,” Ogbuh said. “It’s a place where we come together to pray for the success of our civil work and our faith.”

The society has also had an impact on McKinzie’s life, work and faith.

“The St. Thomas More Society certainly reaffirms that I’m not the only one out there who takes their faith seriously,” says McKinzie, a member of the St. Thomas More Society.

“The society brings together men and women of all ages and demographics who want to practice our faith together and enjoy our faith together. It attracts from the heart.”

(For more information about the Red Mass and tickets for the dinner reception on Oct. 9, contact Ida Lamberti by phone at 317-236-1502 or by e-mail at ida.lamberti@hooverhull.com. For information about membership in the St. Thomas More Society, contact Stacy Ogburn at 317-822-4400, ext. 106, or by e-mail at polmiumre@hooverhull.com.)
Faith in the public arena

The Republican and Democratic national conventions have both come and gone, and we’re just about six weeks from election day, the day on which people across the nation—including millions of Catholics—will choose the man who will lead this nation during the next four years. In the various petitions that made up his prayers that concluded both conventions, Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York mentioned issues that Catholics in central and southern Indiana—as well as all of our brothers and sisters in faith across the country—should study, reflect upon, and pray about in these days leading up to Nov. 6 when they go to the polls. Indeed, these matters are relevant to our everyday lives and not simply the fodder for political debates.

Cardinal Dolan, who also serves as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, alluded to the poor and suffering, unborn and elderly, and the nurturing of life and community, “he prayed in Charlotte.

Just as important, the cardinal included a petition for government leaders, who undoubtedly need our prayers each day as they face the difficult challenges of leading our nation:

Oh God of wisdom, justice and might, we ask your guidance for those who govern us. President Barack Obama, Vice President Joseph Biden, Congress, the Supreme Court, and those, including Gov. Mitt Romney and Congressman Paul Ryan, who seek to serve the common good by seeking public office.

“Help them remember that the only just government is the government that serves it citizens rather than itself.”

It is not easy being a person of faith these days, especially since many in government are striving to make secularism the norm. May we all have the courage and connections of Cardinal Dolan, and not be afraid to bring up our lives of faith into the public square and in all that we say and do.

—Mike Krokos

Letters to the Editor

Reader wonders if history shows that Church promotes those great social evils—such as slavery, religious persecution and anti-Semitism. Is it really believable that the hierarchy is now equally mistaken on matters like contraception and gay marriage?

John Moore

Bishop Blaire’s article in the Aug. 31 issue of The Criterion deserves commendation. Once upon a time, labor unions were necessary to help workers gain a living wage and decent working conditions. Today, however, is not that time any more. Today, unions are more interested in membership numbers than in members themselves.

Over the past year, at least four cities in California have declared bankruptcy because they could not continue paying into the outrageous pension plans forced on them by the unions.

Economic renewal does not occur because of unions, but occurs when businesses, the heart of the opportunity sector, are allowed to thrive and create jobs. That is not happening today, and unions and government interference into the marketplace are the main reason why we have not contributed to our economic downturn and our skinnier economy.

The bishop mentions immigrants and their families being especially vulnerable. Does he mean immigrants or does he mean illegals? Those not going through proper channels when entering the United States are not immigrants. I am a granddaughter of immigrants and am offended by this.

Be Our Guest/Fr. William J. Byron

Catholic students are caught in the crossfire of a battle of differing values

We tend to forget that all of our actions, attitudes and feelings are culturally conditioned. The values that predominate our secular culture influence all of our thinking, acting and feeling within that culture.

So, a very practical question that all Catholics, especially young ones, should be considering these days is: Whose values or which values dominate my thoughts, actions and feelings? Do Catholic values dominate my life?

Culture and its dominant values are transmitted socially, not genetically. Learning is therefore important if a shared way of life—a culture—is to be preserved. Formal education is part, but only part, of the process of enculturation. Entertainment, recreation, imagined and observed observation also play a big role.

John Lennon was harshly criticized when he remarked that The Beatles were more popular with Jesus. But he did have a point. Catholics can find themselves caught in a crossfire between the influence of Catholic values and secular cultural forces that are hostile to those Catholic values. Although she did not have Catholics in mind when she wrote the following words, the famed anthropologist Margaret Mead recognized that there are hostile forces at work against the preservation of culture and she posed the problem this way:

“In small societies, children learn by imitating their parents, relatives and neighbors. In our huge society, we use our mass entertainments to instruct our children on how they should express their emotions and what values they should have. … We are showing our youngsters exactly the opposite of what we want them to imitate. We are showing them men who brutally attack others when angry. We show people who murder because of hatred and evilness. We show the love is expressed only by hunger for another’s body and we show them little else.”

The word “show” or “showing” is used by McLeod five times in that brief scan of the forces that shape the minds and actions of the young. Obviously, “showtime”—on stage, television, music on computer monitors, handheld digital devices and, by extension, “radio shows”—is an element to be examined when evaluating the question of the formation of values.

In a very real sense, “showtime” is in competition with Catholic education, the issue of conveying and preserving Catholic culture looms all the larger.

Catholic college students should be encouraged to ask themselves in the face of magazines, television and online advertising not, “What does this ad invite me to buy?” but rather, “What does this ad presume me to be?”

Behind the ad stands a value waiting to be contrasted by the values that define one’s Catholic culture. The young are indeed caught in a crossfire. Without realizing it, they are on a battleground.

Our free market should be open to change, of course, but only for the better. They should be perceptive enough to avoid being seduced from their Catholic values and then to see the thoughts, actions and feelings that their Catholic values might reasonably be expected to produce.

And all of us should want to be sure that those Catholic values are getting through in the first place.

Dear Father William J. Byron is university professor of business and society at St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia. He can be contacted by e-mail at wbyron@sju.edu
practicing on the old field, which became Avon. As a football player, he remembers the field, according to senior Bryan Schmidt of Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis. “When people select a school, academics is the most important part for many people. And we always emphasize the difference that our faith approach makes. But people also look at facilities,” Perkins says. “With the new field, which has already been used extensively for football practices, girls’ and boys’ soccer games, and Catholic Youth Organization sporting events. “There have been a lot of parents who come up to me and say, ‘I just can’t believe it! This is fabulous!’” Perkins recalls. “It’s a feeling of, ‘This can happen,’ it happens. We’re very proud of our place.”

That pride also extends to the school building where improvements in recent years have included a new chapel, library, band room, art room and updates in lighting, carpeting, furniture and air conditioning to many classrooms. “When people select a school, academics is the most important part for many people. And we always emphasize the difference that our faith approach makes. But people also look at facilities,” Perkins says. “With our athletic field, we’re able to use it for a lot of activities. The band practices on it. The physical education classes are on it. CYO will use it for football, soccer and track, she exudes joy when talking about the new facility. “They don’t say much, but you can see it in their faces,” says Perkins, the president of the Indianapolis West Deanery inter-parochial high school. “There’s a sense of excitement and pride in protecting their home turf.”

Perkins has noticed that same sense of pride and excitement in the voices of the parents and alumni who have seen the new facility, which has already been used extensively for football practices, girls’ and boys’ soccer games, and Catholic Youth Organization sporting events. “They don’t say much, but you can see it in their faces,” says Perkins, the president of the Indianapolis West Deanery inter-parochial high school. “There’s a sense of excitement and pride in protecting their home turf.”

As a track athlete, he recalls running on the old cinder track. “From last year to this year, you’d think it was a miracle,” Bryan says. “Last year, you would worry about getting a rock in your elbow. This year, it’s just some turf in your cleats. It’s nice to play on. It’s a big change.”

He has also noticed the effect the field has had on student-athletes in other sports. “Before we had this field, we didn’t have home games for soccer,” Bryan says. “They like playing at home. You have a little more pride when you play at home. Overall, it just makes the school look even better than it did before. It really stands out.”

Another point of pride is that the athletic field project was originally supposed to be done in 2014 as a key part of the school’s Create Campaign, a four-year fundraising effort that started in 2010. The campaign also has the goals of raising money for financial aid, teacher compensation and technology improvements.

One reason the field was completed two years ahead of schedule is because of the savings from a cooperative approach between Cardinal Ritter and Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis, which also unveiled its new athletic complex this summer. The schools saved money by sharing supplies and using some of the same vendors, Perkins noted.

“It was very beneficial for both of us,” he says. “We both saved money and using some of the same vendors, Perkins noted. One of the people most pleased by Cardinal Ritter’s new athletic field is longtime physical education teacher Mary Crum. After enduring years of dust, mud and cinders from the previous field and track, she exudes joy when talking about the new facility.

“The students are unbelievably proud, and even past students are excited when they see it,” she says. “It’s a feeling of, ‘This is my high school and look what they are doing.’ It’s awesome.”

The longtime cinder track and grass field at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis are just memories now as the school replaced them this summer with a new nearly $1 million turf field and track.

New athletic field increases pride at Cardinal Ritter

By John Shaughnessy

Greg Perkins has noticed a different look in the eyes of the student-athletes at Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis when they stride onto the school’s new nearly $1 million athletic field and track.

“They don’t say much, but you can see it in their faces,” says Perkins, the president of the Indianapolis West Deanery inter-parochial high school. “There’s a sense of excitement and pride in protecting their home turf.”

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5th Annual St. Vincent de Paul FRIENDS OF THE POOR® WALK

Saturday, September 29, 2012

Please join us for this fun and charitable event as we help heighten national awareness of the challenges faced by the nation’s poor and raise significant funds for our valuable services. All funds raised locally will be used locally.

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Distance: 1 mile
Register: Online at www.SVDPFriendsOfThePoorWalk.org, or print paper registration and pledge form at www.SVDPindy.org (scroll to the bottom of the homepage)
St. Francis Health sponsors memorial walk and events to remember babies who died

Franciscan St. Francis Health will host its 27th annual “Walk to Remember” on Oct. 8. The walk begins at 11 a.m. at Holy Name of Jesus Church, 89 N. 17th St., in Beech Grove and proceeds to nearby Sarah T. Bolton Park. The program at the park lasts about 90 minutes. Participants are encouraged to bring blankets, chairs and a picnic lunch. The event is a chance for hundreds of families from central Indiana who have lost children through miscarriage, stillbirth or newborn death to gather and remember their babies. The service includes music, poetry, a reading of the infants’ names and a balloon release.

Repro伟大Franciscan St. Francis Health will be available to discuss ways to cope with infant loss and explain the hospital’s “Memories to Hold” support group for grieving families.

For more information, call 317-528-5109. To register for the memorial service, log on to www.franciscanhealth.org and search for “Walk to Remember.”

September 21
Northside Knights of Columbus Hall, 2106 E. 71st St., Indianapolis Catholic Business Exchange, holds its annual Fall Meeting, “The Road Less Travelled.” James Danko, president of Butler University in Indianapolis, 6-30-8 a.m., 4:15 p.m., $20 non-members.

September 22
St. Rita Parish, 1733 Dr. Andrew Borg Ave., Indianapolis. “Taste of St. Rita,” 6-10 p.m., food, silent auction. $30 per person. Information: 317-632-9439.

St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 4218 E. Michigan Road, Shelbyville. Knights of Columbus, pork chop supper, 3:30-6:30 p.m., $10 adults, $6 children 6-12. Information: 317-392-3082 or weimar534@mac.com

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Blessing and ribbon cutting ceremony for rectory addition, 2 p.m., reception to follow. Information: 317-788-3781 or birs@archindy.org

September 23

St. Michael Parish, 11400 Farmers Lane, N.E., Bradford. Parish picnic, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m., dunking booth, silent auction. Information: 317-624-6446.

September 26
Parishioners of St. Mary Parish, 777 S. 17th St., Mitchell. “Eucharistic Rosary Rally for the Protection of Our Religious Liberties” is scheduled on Sept. 30 at Marian University in Indianapolis. A procession will begin at 2 p.m. from the Bishop Chartrand Memorial Chapel in Marian Hall followed by adoration of the rosary and a living Divine Mercy chaplet at 3 p.m.

Before those events, a Mass will be offered at 11:30 a.m. in the chapel then adoration will follow until the time of the procession.

The speaker for the event will be Father Jerry Byrd, associate pastor of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis. Father Byrd was named the newest priest and was ordained in June.

Participants are welcome to bring images of Our Lady to carry in the procession.

“The offer my sincere encouragement to you in this endeavor, and thank you for the work that you are doing to pray for and support religious freedom,” said Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, apostolic administrator.

For more information about this event, call 317-888-0873.

Eucharistic Rosary Rally for Religious Liberty is Sept. 30

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What was in the news on Sept. 21, 1962? An archbishop warns about the threat of government programs intruding on the work of private charities

By Brandon A. Evans

This week, we continue to examine what was going on in the Church and the world 50 years ago even through the pages of The Criterion.

Here are some of the items found in the Sept. 21, 1962 issue of The Criterion:

• Chicago daily paper asks government and archdiocesan schools
• Rural life official: Urges establishment of world food bank
• Threat of government intrusion in private charities criticized

FROM THE CRITERION:

CINC, N.Y.—Archbishop John J. Krol of Philadelphia spoke out here against the threat of government encroachment on private charities. ... The growth of public programs at the expense of private charities was one of the several “disturbing trends” in the charities field noted by the Archbishop. They focus all attention on the physical and material needs of the recipient, but ignore his spiritual needs as well as those of all the people who contribute or are engaged in volunteer work. He cautioned against ignoring ‘the essential fact that Christ’s commandment of love was a twin commandment—the first and greatest of which was to love God—which there can be no true or enduring love of neighbour.’ He also warned that unless developments which menace private charities are halted, ‘there is a danger that, while we

Ⅳعرجى في حضيّة لل⪅نَٰمٌيَكَيَةٍ طِلَالتَمَّةِ لَعِنْتَانِ تَلَصُّتًا لِلْمِنْمَلِحَةِ الْأَمْيَلِيَّةِ فِي الْمُنْحَنَّةِ الْأَمْيَلِيَّةِ لَعِنْتَانِ تَلَصُّتًا لِلْمِنْمَلِحَةِ الْأَمْيَلِيَّةِ فِي الْمُنْحَنَّةِ الْأَمْيَلِيَّةِ لَعِنْتَانِ تَلَصُّتًا لِلْمِنْمَلِحَةِ الْأَمْيَلِيَّةِ فِي الْمُنْحَنَّةِ الْأَمْيَلِيَّةِ لَعِنْتَانِ تَلَصُّتًا لِلْمِنْمَلِحَةِ الْأَمْيَلِيَّةِ F

• Hits “narrow mentality” about welfare program
• West Side Story: Plight of the Latin immigrant
• 4,500 baptisms a year: St. Peter’s Basilica has ‘busy
• Stresses charity on global scale
• Vatican precate urges just pay for farmers
• Catholic psychologists discuss religious life
• Pontiff gives advice on seminary training
• Won’t use segregated park
• Stresses charity on global scale
• Catholic and Anglican prelates at dedication
• Ask couples to volunteer for missions
• Catholic psychologists discuss religious life
• Pontiff gives advice on seminary training
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• Catholic and Anglican prelates at dedication

Ⅳعرجى في حضيّة لل⪅نَٰمٌيَكَيَةٍ طِلَالتَمَّةِ L

(Read all of these stories from our Sept. 21, 1962, issue by logging on to our archives at www.CriterionOnline.com)
Modern-day followers of St. Francis step into action

By Maureen Daly

Genesis begins with a lesson on the goodness of creation. On each of the six days of creation, Genesis repeats, “God saw that it was good” (Gn 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25). All creatures, not just humans, receive a blessing from God at creation. Male and female humans, created in the divine image, also receive a charge to care for creation: “Fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth” (Gn 1:28).

Last, God provides food, not just for the humans, but also for all creatures (Gn 1:29-30). The first creation account ends, “And so it happened. God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good” (Gn 1:30-31).

St. Francis of Assisi is the saint most closely associated with this praise of the goodness of creation and concern for all creatures.

His love of creation is first described in print in 1229, just a year after the saint’s canonization and less than three years after his death, in Thomas of Celano’s First Life of St. Francis.

The biographer wrote, “Who would be able to tell of the sweet tenderness he enjoyed while contemplating in creatures the wisdom, power and goodness of the Creator? Those who know the full of the spirit of God, never stopped glorifying, praising and blessing the Creator and Ruler of all things in all the elements and creatures... He used to call all creatures by the name of ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ and in a wonderful way, unknown to others, he could discern the secrets of the hearts of creatures like someone who has already passed into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”

In modern times, those who aim to follow Francis’ example keep on track with this character defining trait, of the Franciscan order’s founder by taking action. To carry Francis’ example keep on track with this of the children of God.”

The program of six sessions begins with “teaching the Franciscan story,” a look at the order’s perspectives on relationships with creation. The “opening the book of creation” and “hearing the cry of the poor” sessions present the perspectives on environmental issues of today, such as climate change, environmental health and clean water, and their effects on humans, especially the poor.

The last three sessions, “speaking in the public square,” “reading the signs of the times” and “doing what is now ours to do,” present a Franciscan ‘ecosocial’ analysis tool, discuss processes of civic engagement and suggest ways to put faith into action by caring for God’s creation.

With prayer, storytelling, science and Scripture, the program seeks to engage people in environmental justice work, nurture growth in ‘ecospirtuality’ and increase awareness about the “ecological vocation” in the Franciscan tradition. The storytelling includes selections from Scripture, Catholic tradition, Franciscan history and personal experience.

Other efforts include the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development convened in Brazil in June.

Franciscan International, a non-governmental organization, attended the conference and, along with other Catholic groups and religious orders, issued a critique of the conference recommendations.

They wrote, “We reaffirm the importance of Principle 1 of the Declaration of Rio which states: ‘Human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.’ We also recognize that all human beings are part of an ecosystem comprising all living beings on earth, therefore both humans and nature must be at the center of our attention when we work for sustainable development in a sustainable way. All living beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with each other.”

Policies of sustainable development must be guided by principles of justice and the common good, including a floor of support for the poor of the world, the religious orders said.

A true “green economy” would focus less on economic growth and more on “equity and shared benefits,” they said. They noted that “in the context of a liberal market ideology, everybody works for his/her own interest primarily. Some will profit and many others will not. As long as free markets and maximization of profit are the only agreeable basis for a market economy, greed and non-solidarity are necessary prerequisites for its functioning.”

We call for all states to ensure that the shared benefits of the economy assure the common good and are not merely for personal profit,” the religious observers wrote.

(Maureen Daly is a freelance writer in Baltimore and a former editor at Catholic News Service.)

St. Francis of Assisi’s care for creation can help us today

By Fr. Lawrence E. Mick

On or near Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, many parishes celebrate a blessing of pets. People bring all kinds of pets to church for the blessing—dogs and cats, gerbils and hamsters, birds and horses, sheep and potbelly pigs.

Parishes do this because St. Francis is remembered for having a special way with birds and animals. He is said to have preached to the birds and to have removed a thorn from the paw of a wolf terrorizing the Italian town of Gubbio.

While this custom is a good one, we would do well to remember that Francis’ concern for creation extended far beyond pets. He had a deep sense of connection to all of creation. In his famous “Canticle of the Sun,” he praises God for brother sun and sister moon, for brother wind and sister water, for brother fire and mother earth, for the gift of life, for dusk and dawn, for touch and scent and song.

Francis did not see himself as over creation, but as part of the ecosystem. It was not surprising that Blessed John Paul II in 1979 proclaimed Francis as the “heavenly patron of those who promote ecology.”

The pope went on to say, “He offers Christians an example of gratitude and deep respect for the integrity of creation. As a friend of the poor who was loved by God’s creatures, St. Francis invited all of creation—animals, plants, natural forces, even brother sun and sister moon—to give honor and praise to the Lord.”

Pope Benedict XVI has repeated some of Pope John Paul’s teaching on ecology in various speeches and documents. His message for the World Day of Peace in 2010, was titled, “If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation.”

In it, he insisted that “we are all responsible for the protection and care of the environment. This responsibility knows no borders.”

In 2011, he also called for an international response to the dangers of climate change.

Francis saw continuity between the natural world and the transcendent, sacred order of creation. He saw every creature as sacred because it was created by God and could reveal God to anyone. This led to his sense of oneness with creation for humans also were created by God and can reveal God’s presence.

This oneness with all of creation is the basic principle of ecological awareness.

As early as 1971, Pope Paul VI noted that “by an ill-considered exploitation of nature [man] risks destroying it and becoming in his turn the victim of this degradation.”

We face unprecedented challenges because of abuse of the environment. There is much work to do if we are to change our destructive ways. St. Francis has much to teach us about respecting all the works of God’s hand.

(Father Lawrence E. Mick is a priest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.)
Biblical readings: Second half of the Book of Ezekiel

The biblical readings in the Office of Readings next week are from the second half of the Book of Ezekiel. As Ezekiel prophesied, each week, the first half of the book included Ezekiel's prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. That happened in 587 B.C. After that, Ezekiel continued to prophesy the restoration of Judah. Chapters 25-32 are oracles against Israel's neighbors and Ezekiel's account of these goes right to Chapter 34 on Monday.

This chapter contains the parable of the shepherds. The idea of kings as shepherds was new to Ezekiel. They remained in the books of the prophets for generations. Others associated with a prophecy concerning the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem. The final reading is the first verses of Chapter 47, and Ezekiel's vision of a wilderness child who speaks the truth.

This chapter contains the parable of the sheep, bringing them from the foreign lands. They have never seen professional football or movies. Once, I belonged to a parish that had a perpetual eucharistic adoration chapel. What should do at any moment of my day. But do I pause and wait in the silence for God's beckoning silence with my chatter so I can hear. Meanwhile, I use my prayer time to spiritual masters guide me away from my own sophistries and crack open my heart. She reminds me to “pay attention.” That is sometimes the hardest thing. I work, the political, the world, the arousal, the turmoil in my life, and I let them fill my mind. I invite them. In fact, I lavishly entertain them while God waits unambiguously for his patient in a busy doctor’s office at day’s end. Meanwhile, I invite the good to come and sit with me and listen to the silence and I listen for God's answer.

I believe in the power of prayer. To do it, I must ask God for prayer and to learn the truth about myself. I have a child’s faith that God will come into my life, my faults, my worries, I let them fill my mind. I don’t want to live in fear. The abilities of those younger than us are not to be taken for granted. In many ways, that’s true. A college student today doesn’t think twice about streaming a film on Netflix or downloading this film to those who are older, I say embrace, and do not fear, the abilities of those younger than you. That’s not the time. Those who don’t have skills that you take for granted, the Class of 2016, I leave you with this. You are the most advanced college freshman class in the history of the world. You are the first College of 2016, I leave you with this. You are the most advanced college freshman class in the history of the world. You are the first in the line.

The poet Mary Oliver wrote, “Praying, which I sometimes use as I begin my prayer. She reminds me to “pay attention.” That is sometimes the hardest thing. I work, the political, the world, the arousal, the turmoil in my life, and I let them fill my mind. I invite them. In fact, I lavishly entertain them while God waits unambiguously for his patient in a busy doctor’s office at day’s end. Meanwhile, I invite the good to come and sit with me and listen to the silence and I listen for God's answer.

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Some toys, such as Tickle Me Elmo.

In four years, when these students graduate, they will find jobs. Some of those bosses will be those about whom the Class of 2016, I leave you with this. You are the most advanced college freshman class in the history of the world. You are the first in the line. That speaks the truth. Some of those bosses will be those about whom the Class of 2016, I leave you with this. You are the most advanced college freshman class in the history of the world. You are the first in the line. That speaks the truth.
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Sept. 23, 2012

- Wisdom 2:12-17, 20
- Proverbs 3:16-19
- Mark 9:30-37

The Book of Wisdom provides this weekend with its first reading. This book is one of several in the Old Testament that has been classified as “Wisdom Literature.” It is one of the books that were attempts made by pious Jews several centuries before Christ to affirm the reasonableness of their ancient religion. They felt the need to assert this reasonableness because of the surroundings in which they found themselves. They were not in the Holy Land, having left their ancestral homeland to find better living conditions elsewhere. But living elsewhere meant that they were in the midst of pagans. These nations had all the advantages, and were firmly in control of everything. They were the sophisticated people, the achievers and the smart people. Arguing with them about their pagan philosophies was not easy. The Jews seemed absurd, but still they held firm to their belief in the One God of Israel. They insisted that, considering everything, their belief in God made sense while paganism made none at all.

So the Jews wrote these books called the Wisdom Literature. Incidentally, many of these books do not appear in all editions of the Bible. At the time of the Reformation, scholars of the new Protestant traditions turned to quite rigid standards to judge the validity of Scriptural works concluded by Jewish divines as far ago as the first century A.D. Because some of these books were written in Greek, a language other than the sacred Hebrew, and they were written outside the Holy Land, the land given by the God to the Chosen People, they simply did not qualify for inclusion in the Bible.

This weekend’s reading very clearly illustrates the struggle between good and evil. Evil has no place in the presence of God. Evil is the enemy of good. Evil is the opposite of God’s love. Nothing is evil itself. But evil comes as a result of sin and human pettiness. Jesus reminds His people that, in the midst of pagans, they are not in the Holy Land, having left their ancestral homeland to find better living conditions elsewhere. But living elsewhere meant that they were in the midst of pagans. These nations had all the advantages, and were firmly in control of everything. They were the sophisticated people, the achievers and the smart people. Arguing with them about their pagan philosophies was not easy. The Jews seemed absurd, but still they held firm to their belief in the One God of Israel. They insisted that, considering everything, their belief in God made sense while paganism made none at all.

For the second reading, the Church turns to the Letter of St. James. This clear and frank message speaks of the evil persons. He also declares that, after the Crucifixion, in three days will come the Resurrection. He will prevail. Important in this reading, as was so often described in all the Gospels, Jesus gathers together the Apostles as special students and special companions. They have been called to build the Church. Still, they are humans, vulnerable to sin and human pettiness. Jesus reminds them that each Apostle must be a servant to all. Success is through humility, and through living in the model of Jesus.

Reflection

Through the biblical readings at Mass in recent weeks, the Church has explained that, after the Crucifixion, in three days will come the Resurrection. He will prevail. Important in this reading, as was so often described in all the Gospels, Jesus gathers together the Apostles as special students and special companions. They have been called to build the Church. Still, they are humans, vulnerable to sin and human pettiness. Jesus reminds them that each Apostle must be a servant to all. Success is through humility, and through living in the model of Jesus.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a process of education, faith-sharing and rituals for welcoming new members into the Catholic Church.

The answer to the question “How long does it take?” is “It depends.” Adults interested in joining the full communion of the Church or completing their Christian initiation are at varying stages in their understanding of the Catholic faith and in their spiritual readiness so, as much as possible, the program of preparation must be tailored to suit the individual.

The RITA process embraces two major groups:

- First, those people who have never been baptized. They are called “catechumens.”
- Second, those people who have been baptized in another Christian community. They are referred to as “candidates.”

The RITA process is normally offered in a group setting. This opportunity for faith-sharing develops bonds among the catechumens and candidates, and can result in small Christian communities, which continue to meet long after reception into the Church. Although the RITA is structured for the three distinct groups mentioned above, initiation in parish setting and the number of catechetical volunteers often results in a “one-size-fits-all” program of instruction and formation.

The RITA is intended for catechumens to be a 12-month process. However, they typically run for about nine months, usually with weekly meetings. Some programs begin in September and end at Pentecost in the late spring. The first few months of study focus on learning the Gospels and are considered as simply a period of inquiry. The discussions and practices are the subject of the next several months with a view toward making a firm commitment to Christ and to the Church.

The next period coincides with Lent, and is devoted to prayer, fasting, reflection and continued learning, culminating in the Easter Vigil with the sacraments of baptism for those who need them, confirmation and first Communion.

Finally, over a seven-week period after Easter, deeper reflection is given to the sacraments and the Catholic life. Although the nine-month program may be the “core program,” parishioners can and do adapt its length to suit individual needs.

A woman who is married to a Catholic man and has been attending Mass with her husband for many years may need only a few individual sessions with a priest or adult education director before being ready to receive the sacraments.

On the other hand, a catechumen with practically no familiarity with Catholic faith and practice may require an extended inquiry phase of two or three years before feeling ready to commit to being received into the full communion of the Church.

People have different starting points and have their own journey to make, and parish religious education staff members do well to be flexible in sponsoring and guiding that faith journey.

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the “My Journey to God” column. Our reflection columns are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, Interaction, Inc., PO Box 2160, St. Louis, MO 63166 e-mail to criterion@archstl.org

The Criterion Friday, September 21, 2012

Daily Readings

Monday, Sept. 24
Proverbs 3:27-34
Psalm 15:2-5
Luke 8:16-18

Tuesday, Sept. 25
Proverbs 21:1-6, 10-13
Psalm 119:1, 27, 30, 34-44
Luke 8:19-21

Wednesday, Sept. 26
St. Cosmas, martyr
St. Damian, martyr
Proverbs 30:5-7
Psalm 119:29, 72, 89, 101,104, 163
Luke 9:1-6

Thursday, Sept. 27
St. Vincent de Paul, priest
Ecclesiastes 1:2-11
Psalm 90:3-6, 12-14, 17
Luke 9:7-9

Friday, Sept. 28
St. Wenceslaus, martyr
St. Lawrence Ruiz, martyr
Psalm 144:1-6, 2abc, 3-4

Saturday, Sept. 29
St. Michael the Archangel
St. Gabriel the Archangel
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
or Revelations 7:7-12a
Psalm 138:1-5
John 1:47-51

Sunday, Sept. 30
Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Numbers 11:25-29
Psalm 19:8, 10, 12-14
James 5:1
Mark 3:9-43, 45, 47-48

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults process is tailored to individual needs

Q: would like to know the appropriate duration for the instructions in the Church’s Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program. Some people have told me that it is three years, but other people say that it is less. (Ibadan, Nigeria)

The RITE process embraces two major groups:

- First, those people who have never been baptized. They are called “catechumens.”
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The RITE process is normally offered in a group setting. This opportunity for faith-sharing develops bonds among the catechumens and candidates, and can result in small Christian communities, which continue to meet long after reception into the Church. Although the RITE is structured for the three distinct groups mentioned above, initiation in parish setting and the number of catechetical volunteers often results in a “one-size-fits-all” program of instruction and formation.

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People have different starting points and have their own journey to make, and parish religious education staff members do well to be flexible in sponsoring and guiding that faith journey.

(questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle, frdoyle@gmail.com or April Hopewell St., Albans, VT 05444)

Seasonal Reflections

We have seen the cold, wintry days of winter
And the beauty of spring,
And the long, hot days of summer
As God touches everything.

The gray, long days and evenings
When what’s been sown, we reap
The twilight of autumn
When the flowers and trees sleep.

A light comes, as if to say goodbye
To all things in the past
Because it’s fall again,
And our lives won’t forever last.

By Linda Ricke

(Linda Ricke is a member of St. Mary Parish in Greensboro. As summertime fades to autumn, an intricate spider web graces a planter filled with rust-colored chrysanthemums on Sept. 3 in Lebanon, Ind.)

My Journey to God

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Cardinal Dolan traces historic role of religious freedom in U.S.

WASHINGTON (CNS)—To the enthusiastic reception of an audience of John Carroll Society members on Sept. 10, New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan traced the historic origins of U.S. religious freedom in light of a current battle with the government over those rights.

The cardinal, who earned a doctorate in history, said in his speech that the purpose of his reflection was to put the American Revolution through the abolition, temperance, and societal trends. The 74-foot marble display outside the entrance of the A 74-foot marble display outside the entrance of the New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan speaks to an audience of John Carroll Society members on Sept. 10 in Washington at the Newseum, a museum of news. Cardinal Dolan traced the historic origins of U.S. religious freedom in light of a current battle with the government over those rights.

WASHING Do not hallucinate. 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 native of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.


COOKSON, Jack Louis, 75, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Sept. 6. Husband of Pam Cookson. Brother of Lourena Richie and Robert Cookson.


RIDER, Katherine F. (Burke), 94, St. Paul Herman, Beech Grove, Sept. 8. Aunt of several.


RULON, Jane Marie, 59, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Aug. 22. Sister of Elizabeth Korte. Aunt of several.


WENDENBEVEL, Donald E., 81, St. Barbara, Indianapolis, Aug. 23. Husband of Edith Vondenhuevel. Brother of Patricia Patersons, Chester, Richard and Thomas Vondenhuevel.


CARDINAL Dolan traces historic role of religious freedom in U.S.

—Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan

In nearby Maryland, Cardinal Dolan said Catholic leaders were an important part of the nation, including John Carroll, the first bishop of Baltimore and founder of Georgetown University, and his cousin, Charles, the only Catholic to sign the Declaration of Independence.

Maryland was itself established as a place of religious diversity and freedom, and was the only colony with “a notable Catholic population,” and one which “provided the laboratory” for religious freedom, he said.

“Your ancestors here were shepherds,” he said. “They did not want any favored status for either their beloved Catholic faith or any other religion. Nor did they want their faith, however normative it was, to have an institutional input in the colonial government. Mainly, they just wanted to be left alone. Left alone . . . to practice their faith, and follow their properly formed convictions in the public square.”

The cardinal spent little time describing the current specific concerns, making note only of a trend toward secularism overwhelming religious voices in public space, and the “direct intrusion of the government into the very definition of a Church’s minister, ministries, message and meaning.”

He said the “widespread and interreligious overreach into our health care systems is a direct invasion of church, contraceptive and abortion-inducing drugs—instead of the well-meaning outreach from our opponents—but upon the raw presumption of an intrusive federal government to define a Church’s minister, ministry, message and meaning.”

“For the complete text of Cardinal Dolan’s speech to the John Carroll Society, go to http://blog.archindy.org/images/2012/09/Let-Freedom-Ring-JCS1.pdf /”

For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry

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Perry County parish celebrates 175 years of faith

By Patricia Hapel Cornell
Special to The Criterion

LEOPOLD—Members of St. Augustine Parish in Leopold celebrated the 175th anniversary of their Perry County parish on Sept. 16 with a special Mass followed by a dinner and displays of historic photographs. The parish, founded in 1837, is five years older than the town.

Retired Benedictine Archabbot Lambert Reilly of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad was the principal celebrant at the Mass. Father Brian Esarey, current pastor, and Father Mark Gottemoeller, former pastor, concelebrated. Benedictine Father Julian Peters was master of ceremonies.

The parish was established when Father Julian Benoit built a log church and rectory in 1837. The parish will certainly be “on the map.” “We are all on the road to heaven,” Archabbot said. “The answer is in the Know-Nothing Party decided there was rebellion in Leopold, and people ridiculed in 1840 by Father Auguste Bessonies, who from southern Belgium, who came to America after their region under came to Catholic immigrants from60 households, and Holy Cross Parish in St. Croix with 60 households. The parish is one of its previous pastors.

The pastor described his parishioners as “very kind and selfless people. If you ask them to help with something, they will. They are very dedicated to the town and to their community. There’s a great sense of community here.”

Debbie Kelly, 60, a St. Augustine parishioner since she was 18, is the mother of six children. “I taught fifth-grade catechism for about 10 years,” she recalled. “My sister-in-law did, too. And my daughter started teaching catechism this fall. We’re trying to get the next generation involved.”

“By the time the town is 175 years old,” she added, “we hope to have a big history book completed. It’s amazing how much history is in this town.”

(Patricia Hapel Cornell is a freelance writer and a member of St. Joseph Parish in Corydon.)

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HUMOR

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comments short because Father Martin “has given me only 10 minutes, which could be the best joke of the evening—to think that a bishop would be so brief.”

Sticking a serious note, he told Colbert, “Part of my admiration for you is that, while you often tease and joke about your faith and the Church, there’s no denying that you take your faith seriously, and look to the Church as your spiritual family.”

Cardinal Dolan said his assignment was to share “what you might call the theological reasons for laughter. Why would a person of faith be cheerful? Why is a crabby believer a contradiction?”

“The reason for joy—the cross. You heard me right—the cross of Christ!” he said.

When Jesus was crucified “on that Friday strangely called ‘Good,’ literally the ‘lights went out’ as even the sun hid in shame. … Jesus, pure goodness, seemed bullied to death by undiluted evil; love, jackbooted by hate; … life itself, crushed by death. It seemed we could never smile again.”

But then came “the Sunday called Easter” when the Son “rose from the dead” and God had the last word, Cardinal Dolan said. “Hope, not despair; faith, not doubt; love, not spite; life, not an eclipse of the sun; life, not the abyss of death.”

“Consubstantial?” Colbert asked incredulously. “It’s the creed … not the SAT prep,” referring to the national university entrance examination.

After the presentation, Father Martin said in an interview that the evening at Fordham “wildly exceeded anyone’s expectations. It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime event, and I think that the crowd sensed that as soon as the two men walked out on stage.”

“I thought that the energy of those 3,000 students was going to lift the roof off of the Fordham gym.”

Afterward, several students remarked that they were especially moved because Colbert and Cardinal Dolan were honest and open about their deep love for the Catholic faith.

Father Martin added that toward the end of the evening, as Fordham’s president, Jesuit Father Joseph McShane, “was thanking Mr. Colbert, the cardinal leaned over to me and said, ‘This is the new evangelization.’ Amen to that.” †