Priests who use humor in homilies say lessons in faith must be at heart of their message

By John Shaughnessy

It’s a fun story that includes electronic devices, touches of humor and an unexpected ending.

Bishop Christopher J. Coyne shares the story as his favorite example of the way he has used humor in a homily.

“One time, I used humor with a little show and tell,” recalls Bishop Coyne, apostolic administrator of the archdiocese. “My point was to focus on the need to pray, my cell phone and my laptop. As I started to talk about the expected ending.

“Then as I went back to my homily about unplugging and praying, my laptop spoke up, ‘You’ve got mail!’ Which I then answered in front of everyone. Told them it was my mother. Then back to the homily and suddenly I got tweeted on my iPad. Which I answered again. The community was shaking their heads and smiling and getting the point.

“So I thought I was done with my playfulness and was getting down to the main point about unplugging and praying when, without any prompting from me, someone’s phone went off in the community. We all started laughing. I told everyone, ‘It was not my doing, ’ to which the person with the phone yelled out, ‘It’s for you, Father! It’s God!’

‘ Couldn’t I have planned it better?’

That story shows the effective use of humor in a homily. The humor led people to laugh, but more importantly it helped them to focus on the point of the homily. That combination is the key, according to Bishop Coyne and three other priests in the archdiocese who have a reputation for using humor effectively in their preaching.

‘Humor in a homily is a means to an end,’ Bishop Coyne notes. ‘It should

See HUMOR, page 8

People lost ‘stuff’ in storm, but still have each other, New York priest says

ISLAND PARK, N.Y. (CNS)—
Sacred Heart Church in Island Park is in an area of the Diocese of Rockville Centre among the most devastated by Hurricane Sandy, but the pastor urged parishioners not to fret about the material goods they have lost.

‘Don’t be angry. We lost stuff. We will get other stuff.’ Msgr. John Tutone, pastor, told the congregation during his homily at Sunday Mass on Nov. 4. ‘We still have each other and the people we love. That’s the most important thing.

‘There are people on your block that need you. Knock on their doors and offer your help. We have to maintain our souls,’ he said. ‘We have to maintain ourselves by helping others.’

In the community of 10,000 people in the southwest corner of Nassau County, Long Island, 80 percent of the homes were flooded. The church also was flooded with about a foot of water, damaging the floor. Three feet of water was pumped out of the parish center, which is now being used for Masses.

Areas of New Jersey were hit hard by the storm as well.

As of Nov. 4, Island Park was still without electricity, and the village’s mayor, James Ruzicka, announced at the end of Sunday Mass that it would be at least another two weeks before power
STORM
continued from page 1
is restored.
Cellphones weren’t working.
Msgr. Tutone told Catholic News Service.
“The best thing is not having communication.”
He shared a story about a stranger’s generosity. After the hurricane, a man in his 70s, whom the priest did not know, drove up to the church and saw
Msgr. Tutone outside, not wearing his clerical garb. The man asked if he was the parish priest. After Msgr. Tutone said he was, the unidentified man handed him a bank envelope and told him to “rebuild your church” before driving off.
Msgr. Tutone later opened the envelope, he found $1,500 in cash inside.
In Long Beach, an island just south of Island Park that faces the Atlantic Ocean. 35,000 residents also were devastated by the hurricane, and left without electricity and a working waste disposal system. Portable toilets were spread throughout the city.
St. Ignatius Martyr Church is a sturdy, 88-year-old Lorraine Romanesque brick building that sits a block from the ocean.
The church survived the hurricane of 1938, the 1995 storm that hit Long Island until Sandy, but the super storm caused minimal damage to the church although the rectory basement was flooded to the ceiling.
Nearly 200 people gathered in the cold, dark church for the 10 a.m. Sunday Mass on Nov. 4 celebrated by Msgr. Donald Beckmann, pastor, wearing tennis shoes. A 5 p.m. Mass was celebrated the Sunday evening before. Two other Sunday Masses were canceled.
Chris and Dawn Hagen attended with their children, son, 7, and twin, 5.
Going to Mass “was important to restore some routine to our lives. We wanted to be with other people and places gives us comfort,” Chris said. “It’s good to come together and pray with people. It’s comforting to see our church is here and we can worship.
“We’re grateful we are alive and have each other,” said Dawn. “We’re praying for our friends and our family and our own recovery.”
“We’ll be fine,” added Chris.
Msgr. Beckmann is a chaplain for the Long Beach Fire Department. When the island was evacuated, he remained in the rectory, he said, because “the fire department stays.
“It was a scary time, especially watching cars float up and down Broadway, watching the water getting higher and higher before it stopped,” he told CNS.
“The support of the parishioners, the way they reached out to me, has been heartwarming.”
He described his most important tasks after Sandy.
“One is to continue the sharing of the sacraments and preaching the Gospel in as normal a way as possible. . .
A couple of people said to me. “It’s nice to come back here and see things as normal as possible.” To see the Church functioning is empowering. The second thing is to do whatever the Church can do to help the wider Long Beach community.”
He said he was “praying a prayer of thanksgiving for all who have survived. I’m also asking the Holy Spirit to show us the proper way to forward, our three parishes, the whole community and other religious institutions.
The three parishes are St. Mary of the Isle and St. Ignatius Martyr in Long Beach, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, which is in the Point Lookout community on the island’s east end.
Msgr. Beckmann has been sleeping at St. Agnes Catholic rectory in Rockville Centre, a six-mile drive, due north of Long Beach. He has been returning to his parish every day in a Toyota Camry hybrid, which comes in handy at a time when gas is scarce.
At St. Mary of the Isle Church, Bishop William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre addressed members of St. Mary and St. Ignatius parishes during Sunday Masses on Nov. 4, celebrated in the parish auditorium next to the church, which was flooded. Tables with prepared meals, donated clothing and cleaning supplies were located near the folding chairs set up for Mass.
Bishop Murphy expressed his concern for the situation and pledged his support, the support of the diocese’s other parishes and the support of Catholic Charities.
Rockville Centre Auxiliary Bishop Robert J. Brennan is the former pastor of St. Mary of the Isle, and has made regular visits to the Island Park and Long Beach parishes.
Father Brian Barr, the diocese’s vocations director, was installed as St. Mary’s pastor two weeks before Sandy.
“We have to address the spiritual and emotional needs of the people—give them hope,” he told CNS. “It’s important for the Church to be here, to be with the people in their struggle. You have to be present.
“We’ve had Mass every day (since the hurricane).”
He said he has been impressed by people’s gratitude “that they are alive. You lose things and that’s heartbreaking, but you still have life.”
“Events like this bring out the good and the bad. You see strangers saying, ‘I’ve got to help people in need. You see much more of that than the dark stuff’.”
(Editors’ note: Catholic Charities USA is accepting donations in its response to the victims of Hurricane Sandy. Donations can be made online at the Catholic Charities USA website at www.catholiccharitiesusa.org. Donations also can be made by calling toll-free 800-919-9338 or by mail to P.O. Box 17066, Baltimore, MD 21297-1066. To volunteer in relief efforts, log on to www.poundoffeet.org )
Archdiocesan Catholics give support for Church in Holy Land

By Sean Gallagher

“The place where Christ came into the world. The place where prophets and kings and the Messiah himself walked. The preservation of this land and the people [who live there] should be so precious to each and every one of us, especially to Catholics. And yet, it is often forgotten. And I think it is because people take it all for granted.”

These words were spoken by best-selling Catholic author and commentator Raymond Arroyo at a Sept. 29 fundraising dinner for the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) in Indianapolis.

Arroyo, however, was not “preaching to the choir.” The people at the dinner, most of whom were Catholics from across central and southern Indiana, don’t take the Church in the Holy Land for granted.

Through the FFHL (www.ffhl.org) and the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem (EOHSJ), many archdiocesan Catholics funnel a significant amount of spiritual and material support for the faithful there from year to year—a support that often far exceeds the relatively low Catholic population of the area.

Although many states in the U.S. have a larger and more affluent Catholic population than Indiana, only Catholics in New York and Texas are ahead of Indiana in support given to the FFHL.

That support by Catholics in Indiana for the Church in the Holy Land was highlighted by another event held the same weekend as the FFHL fundraising dinner. It was a regional meeting of the EOHSJ that featured the attendance of Patriarch Fouad Twal, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, who gave a keynote address and was principal celebrant of a Mass at which new members were invested into the organization.

The EOHSJ (www.holysepulchre.net) is a nearly 1,000-year-old Catholic association that supports the Church in the Middle East.

Franciscan Father Peter Vasko, FFHL president, said that the relatively low number of Catholics in Indiana may contrast to Hoosier Catholics’ strong support for the foundation.

“Sometimes a minority become much stronger than a majority who just take things for granted,” said Father Peter, a native of Catholic-strong Brooklyn, N.Y.

EOHSJ members are challenged EOHSJ members to take up the defense of the faith not just for the Church in the Holy Land, but here in the United States as well.

“We face our own issues here in the United States,” said Riley, a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.

“There is a real requirement for Christian leadership amongst the laity. And, as a knight, I feel a particular call to do my part to advance the cause of the Church and Christianity within our own nation.”

(Richard Santog will give a presentation on the challenges facing the Church in the Holy Land and ways that Catholics in central and southern Indiana can help preserve the Church there from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 15 at St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, 7525 Holliday Drive E., in Indianapolis. For more information, call 317-259-4773.)

William L. Coyne Jr. of Woburn, Mass., the father of Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, died on Oct. 29 after a brief illness. He was 99.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Nov. 3 at St. Barbara Church in Woburn, Mass. Interment followed at Calvary Cemetery in Winchester, Mass.

The son of the late William and Catherine Coyne, he grew up in Somerville, Mass.

He served in the U.S. Army during World War II, and saw action in the Rhineland and Central Europe from March of 1943 until March of 1946, a short time before Germany’s unconditional surrender.

For his courage and meritorious service in wartime, he was awarded the American Theater Campaign Ribbon, World War II Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal and European/African/Antarctic Asia Ribbon.

He married Rita M. Rose, and they raised seven children.

They celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary this year.

After the war, he worked as a mail carrier for the U.S. Postal Service for 25 years, mostly delivering mail in Burlington, Mass.

He enjoyed nature, walking, and serving his many friends and customers on his mail routes.

A humble man, he was proud of his children and enjoyed vacations with his family at Grand Beach in Scarborough, Maine, where he liked to walk along the beach and go boating or sailing.

He attended Mass daily, and supported his wife, children and 13 grandchildren with unconditional love.

Bishop Coyne, apostolic administrator of the archdiocese, said his father “leaves his family with a wonderful example of living a life of humility, decency, faithfulness and commitment.”

Surviving in addition to his wife, Rita, and son Bishop Coyne, are five children, Anne Marie Coyne of Woburn, Mass; Maureen Gillis of Franklin, Mass.; Patricia Silverman of New Milford, Conn.; Brian Coyne of Billerica, Mass.; and Daniel Coyne of Burlington, Mass.; as well as 12 grandchildren.

His son, Terrence Coyne, as well as three siblings and a granddaughter preceded him in death.

Memorial gifts may be sent to St. Barbara Parish, 136 Cambridge Road, Woburn, MA 01801.

By Sean Gallagher

Knights of the Holy Sepulchre wearing their distinctive white capes with a red Jerusalem cross stand during a Mass celebrated on Sept. 30 at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis.

Raymond Arroyo, best-selling Catholic author and commentator, gives a keynote address on Sept. 29 during a Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land fundraising dinner at the Marriott North Hotel in Indianapolis.
The new evangelization should focus on non-practicing Catholics

The Synod of Bishops’ meeting on the “new evangelization” has been completed and the Year of Faith is now underway. It began on Oct. 11 and will continue until Nov. 24, 2012. It’s hardly a secret why Pope Benedict XVI called for both of these events. As he under way. It began on Oct. 11 and will

be ridicule these days, especially by couples who already have been baptized, and

of Christ, strengthening the faith of those

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or more of its members could be considered
dynamic Catholics. If you’re wondering what
the four signs of a dynamic Catholic are, they
are, prayer, study, generosity and evangel-
ization. Kelly’s book devotes a chapter to
each of those four signs.

The Pew Forum might tell us
that Catholics continue to comprise
22 percent of the American population,
but the number of active Catholics, to say
nothing of dynamic Catholics, is far
lower. We are actually a contracting
Church in this country.

And yet, we’re doing far better than
the Catholic Church in Europe, where
weekend Mass attendance in Italy is
11 percent, in France 4 percent and in
Germany 12 percent. England, of all
places, where the Catholic Church was
persecuted for centuries, is the only
bright spot. For the first time since
Henry VIII, it is now the dominant
religion there.

So it isn’t surprising that
Pope Benedict has decided that we
must have a new evangelization. We need
something to fire us up. As the pope told
the bishops at the beginning of the synod,
“Being tepid is the greatest danger
for Christians. We pray that faith becomes
like a fire in us and that it will set
alight others.”

In his homily at the Mass that opened
the synod, the pope said that “the Church
to evangelize” by sharing
the Gospel with people who have never heard of
Christ, strengthening the faith of those
who already have been baptized, and
reaching out to those who “have drifted away from
the Church.”

It’s those who have drifted away from
the Church, either calling
themselves former Catholics or just
failing to practice their faith, that we
must make efforts to reclaim. We don’t
that, though, by watering down the
Church’s teachings.

Rather, we must try to make them
see that belief and adherence to
the teachings of the Church are the best ways
for people to find happiness—eternal
happiness in heaven, to be sure, but also
happiness here on Earth.

—John F. Fink

Imagine a deadly scenario like this—a
medical professional is asked to help
him heal after a severe car accident, using
powerful pharmaceutical means to
cause a medically induced coma.

A few days later, a business competitor,
wanting him dead, enters the hospital
and kills the comatose patient. During his
trial, when questioned about the murder,
the defendant truth teller, with
unpremeditated, unpremeditated,
unpremeditated,

Catholic Church as the largest
denomination because surveys show that
only 17 percent of Catholics attend Mass
every weekend. Even those who do
attend Mass weekly often have only an
elementary understanding of the
meanings of their faith. Many
are not practicing their faith.

It’s common for Catholic teachings to be
ridiculed these days, especially by secularized young people who attend a
great number of weddings in the Church has decreased alarmingly as
couples cohabit before marriage.

Matthew Kelly, who heads the
Dynamic Catholic Institute in
Cincinnati, has written a new book titled
The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic.
He writes that research has shown that
only 6.4 percent of registered parishioners
contribute 80 percent of the
volunteer hours in a parish, that only
6.8 percent of registered parishioners
donate 80 percent of financial
collections, and there is an 84 percent
overlap between the two groups.

He has rounded off the 6.4 percent and
the 6.8 percent to 7 percent, which he
counts the percentage of dynamic
Catholics in the United States.

Making Sense out of Bioethics/ Fr. Tid Pacholczyk

Abortion cannot be justified by lack of consciousness in unborn babies

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Panel: Understanding role of faith in society essential to U.S. diplomacy

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Understanding a country’s culture has always been a key part of diplomatic training, but for decades the religious community has pushed the State Department to pay more attention to the role of faith in society.

“Many places around the world, understanding faith is imperative to understanding the local society,” explained a recent report from the State Department-created Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group.

When four out of five people on the planet believe in a higher power, it said, “religious faith and adherence is often a source of conflict that contributes to global instability and undermines long-term U.S. interests.”

However, the paper continued, those same faith forces “contribute much good to civil society, and when properly engaged can promote human progress and peaceful coexistence on a global scale.”

Ignoring such religious impulses or minimizing their role “because we are uncomfortable with them, or do not have time or interest to understand them in context, is no longer an option for U.S. policy,” it said.

Paul Miller, foreign aid adviser at Catholic Relief Services and one of two CRS members of the working group, said in the Nov. 1 interview that the State Department has made progress in recent years in including religion in diplomacy over the past 20 years or so. But there is still plenty of room to improve.

He served on a subcommittee of the working group that focused on foreign aid partnerships. The entire working group consisted of dozens of religious and community leaders.

Executive director Carolyn Woo, of Catholic Relief Services and one of two CRS members of the working group, said in the Nov. 1 interview that the State Department has made progress in recent years in including religion in diplomacy over the past 20 years or so. But there is still plenty of room to improve.

As an example of areas that need work, Miller explained that the U.S. government requires agencies that partner with it—which CRS does around the world—to submit personal data about all the people working with them, including subcontractors. That information is used to screen for possible terrorist threats.

Miller said he understands the security need but, because he requested for data comes through CRS, that could put CRS employees or their in-country partners at risk. In some places, CRS might, for example, partner with a local religious organization that has ties to another organization considered to be a potential terrorism risk.

“How do you work in an area controlled by a group that’s on the terrorist watch list?” he asked, citing some past partnerships in Syria, for example. Security screening should not be channeled through the entities that might have to develop relationships with local religious organizations, Miller said.

New guidance adopted by the State Department in October is intended to address some of those concerns, which were part of a recent set of recommendations by the working group, one of several formed by the agency as part of its Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society.

The guidance to diplomatic and consular posts is aimed at helping diplomatic staff understand some basic principles of interaction with faith-based civil societies, “and to ensure that misconceptions do not unnecessarily limit their outreach,” it says. The guidance encourages employees to “engage with faith-based civil society on the entire range of issues relevant to U.S. policy priorities.”

The Atlantic Community: Just what are we doing and how do we do it?

U.S. bishops set up council study groups

The U.S. bishops have formed a council of lay theologians, which is charged with examining the role of faith in society and how it relates to the U.S. bishops’ efforts to engage with religious leaders and religious organizations that have ties to other organizations considered to be potential terrorism risks.

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. Here are some of the items found in the Nov. 9, 1962, issue of The Criterion.

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VATICAN CITY—Discussion of possible changes in the Mass highlighted the 11th, 12th and 13th general meetings of the examination of conscience, with the second meeting to be held Dec. 8.

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November 9
St. Monica Parish, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis.

November 10
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis.

November 10
Calvary Cemetery, Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis.
Veterans Day Mass, 11 a.m. Information: 317-547-8898.

November 10
St. Monica Parish, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis.

November 11
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis.
Displaced Carmelites Sesquicentennial meeting, noon. Information: 317-547-7681.

November 11
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, 1752 Scheller Lane, New Albany. “Encountering the Divine,” parish mission, 6-11 p.m. $30 per person includes dinner, children under 16 years old free when accompanied by adult. Information: 317-622-0610 or slovenmindy@gmail.com.

November 12
St. Paul Parish, 202 E. Washington St., Greenscastle.
“Christmas Bazaar,” decorations, crafts, baked goods, chili lunch available, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 765-653-6911.

November 12
St. Roch Parish, Family Life Center, 3603 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Single Seniors meeting, 1 p.m., age 50 and over. Information: 317-784-4207.

November 12
St. Maurice Parish, 3623 W. State Road 229, Napoleon. “Pampered Pets,” 4-7 p.m. Information: 812-852-4394 or geobl@erzevan.com.

November 12
St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Ave Maria Guild, Mass for deceased members, 11 a.m., meeting, 12:30 p.m. Information: 317-885-1098.

November 12
St. Gabriel the Archangel Church, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis. “Catholicism” video series by Father Robert Barron in English. 7-8:15 p.m. Information: offhhs@archindy.org.

November 14
Columbus Bar, 322 Fourth St., Columbus. Theology on Tap, “The 21st Century Catholic-Living the Faith in Modern Times,” 7 p.m. Information: 812-379-9353, ext. 241, or tracanelli@yahoo.com.

November 15
St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, 7575 Holiday Drive E., Indianapolis. “What Exactly is the Church’s Teaching on Family Planning, Brain Death and Organ Donation?” Dr. Paul Byrne and Mercedes Arzil Wilson, presenters, 6:30 p.m. Information: 317-259-4733.

November 15
St. Joseph University Church, 113 S. 5th St., Terre Haute. Pro-Life Mass, 5:15 p.m. Information: 812-944-1184 or Sponsored by the Church’s Teaching on Precious Infants, pro-life Mass, Father Todd Goodson, celebrant, 8:30 a.m., followed by rosary outside abortion clinic and Benediction at church. Information: Archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, 317-236-1569 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1569.

November 16

November 16
Theater at IUPUI, 800-382-9836, ext. 1586, or irongergo@iupui.edu.

November 16
St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. Helpers of God’s Precious Infants, pro-life Mass, Father Todd Goodson, celebrant, 8:30 a.m., followed by rosary outside abortion clinic and Benediction at church. Information: Archdiocesan Office for Pro-Life Ministry, 317-236-1569 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1569.

November 16
St. Michael Parish, 11600 Farmers Line N.E., Bradford/Greenville. “Christmas Bazaar” and spaghetti supper, 4-7:30 p.m. Adults $8 per person, children ages 5-12 $4 each. Information: 812-364-4289 or merjevon@ed.com.

November 16
St. Mary of the Knobs Parish, Floyd County, fundraiser at Huber Family Farm, Starlight. “Harvest of Abundance,” 4-7 p.m. auction, dance, live and silent auctions, $40 per person. Information: 812-223-0311.

November 18

November 18
St. Gabriel the Archangel Church, 600 W. 34th St., Indianapolis. “Catholicism” video series by Father Robert Barron in Spanish. 7-8:15 p.m. Information: tphos@archindy.org.

November 18
Oldenburg Academy of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Twister Circle, Oldenburg. Open house, 1-3 p.m. Information: 812-933-0737, ext. 244, or kmessinger@oldenburgacademy.org.

November 18
Catholic Community of Richmond, 701 N. “A” St., Richmond. Charismatic prayer group, 7 p.m. Information: dcriscerson@parishrx.org.

Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion are needed at hospital
Deacon Patrick Bauer, who ministers at St. Barnabas Parish and Methodist Hospital, both in Indianapolis, is seeking new volunteer extraordinary ministers of holy Communion to distribute the Eucharist to hospital patients.
Potential Communion ministers would be asked to serve a half day once a week or on a biweekly basis. Bilingual ministers are especially needed. Substitute ministers would also be accepted. Potential ministers would receive training by hospital and chaplaincy staff members. They are not required to be a Communion minister at their parishes.
Scheduling is flexible and parking at the hospital is provided. For more information, contact Deacon Bower by e-mail at webmaster@archindy.org or call him at 317-313-8010.

Memorial Mass for deceased clergy is Nov. 20 at Our Lady of Peace Cemetery
November is traditionally a month in the Church when Catholics pray in a special way for the faithful departed.
In the spirit of that tradition, a memorial Mass for the deceased archbishops, bishops, priests and deacons of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will be celebrated at 4 p.m. on Nov. 20, at the chapel of Our Lady of Peace Cemetery, 9001 N. Haverstick Road, Indianapolis.
Father Gerald Kirchoff, archdiocesan vicar for priests’ advocacy, will be the principal celebrant for the Mass.
Prior to the Mass, priests, deacons, friends and relatives of the deceased clergy, and all others are invited to participate in the liturgy.
For more information on the services, call 317-236-1589 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1589.
Spires, Gothic look are features of church named for Blessed Teresa

LIMERICK TOWNSHIP, Pa. (CNS)—The country roads of Limerick wind past modest homes, small churches and businesses, as in many a Pennsylvania town. But now high spires poke out of the Montgomery County landscape, marking where members of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Parish now worship God—their new church.

Philadelphia Archbishop Charles J. Chaput dedicated the 22,000-square-foot Gothic edifice on Oct. 27.

The church contains artistic and architectural elements of five closed Catholic churches and a Catholic hospital. The most striking features are a towering 37-foot-high main altar piece from St. Boniface Church in the sanctuary and priceless stained glass windows from St. Clement Church. St. Boniface, in North Philadelphia, closed in 2006. St. Clement, in Southwest Philadelphia, closed in 2004. It might seem as though a church was plucked from the 19th century and nestled into the former sod farm that is the 30-acre parish campus, but parishioners have watched as the modern steel construction church has risen over the past 38 weeks, thanks to mostly dry, favorable weather this year.

“Teresa of Calcutta, Mother of the Poor” will be placed in the parish. A bronze statue by artist Tony Visco called “Teresa of Calcutta, Mother of the Poor” will be placed in the daily Mass chapel. When completed, the statue’s two hands will reach out to visitor of the chapel, whose name is inscribed on the base. The statue’s open hands are to beckon and surround, with burden taken away by its touch.

“The new church with its stone facing and twin spires makes a statement, according to the pastor. “We are here, and we are Catholic,” Father Paul Brandt said. “There’s no question this is a Catholic Church.”

Nowhere is this sense more apparent than in seeing the church on the inside, where worshippers “have no sense of space or time. You could be in a 19th-century church,” the pastor said.

The narthex, the area immediately welcoming people inside, features a baptismal font and a large colored glass and mahogany wall in the Gothic style. The wall and font are from St. Boniface Church, founded in 1866 by German immigrants but recently razed, the site made into a parking lot because of the church’s neglected stonework was a falling hazard.

Gothic touches abound in the church, reflecting the parish’s namesake also has a prominent presence at the church on the inside, where worshippers “have no sense of space or time. You could be in a 19th-century church,” the pastor said.

The parish’s namesake also has a prominent presence at

God’s house.”

and design modifications.

“Some people said it would never happen, but it got done,” he said. “They got to watch this being built from the ground up. There’s great excitement, and it’s about continued support of parishioners, the pastor said, who added that they were involved in every stage of planning and more on, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry

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always serve the Catholic message the preacher is trying to communicate with his audience. It should not be just a "throw in." Whenever someone comes up to me after Mass and says, "Bishop, that was a great story, it was a great laugh," if I have a chance I like to ask, "Thank you, but what was the point?" If they can't remember the point of the homily, then the use of the joke or story has failed.1

Father Glenn O'Connor understands that "walking-the-tightrope" connection between humor and homilies. He even has a humorous story about tightrope-walking that he has used in a homily.2

"This guy walked on a tightrope, and he got really good at it," begins Father O'Connor, pastor of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield. "He went farther and farther, and pretty soon he took the net away. Then he pushed a wheelbarrow across the tightrope. And next he put a person in the wheelbarrow and pushed it across the tightrope.

"A guy saw him and was so impressed that he offered him a half a million dollars to walk across Niagara Falls on a tightrope pushing the wheelbarrow. He did it successfully, and he came back to get his money. He asked the guy who was paying him, 'Did you believe I could do it?' The guy says, "Yeah, I believe, I just saw you do it.' He asked again, 'But did you really believe I could do it?' The guy said, 'Yeah. So he says, 'Well, good then, get in the wheelbarrow this time.'"

Father O'Connor waits for the laugh, lets the story sink in and finally makes his point, "It's a story of faith. Get in the wheelbarrow and trust God."

Known for his wit and storytelling skill, Father O'Connor still preaches cautions about the use of humor in homilies. "Everyone has a style, and humor comes into that," he says. "There's a place for humor, but not for telling a lot of a joke if it isn't the right time. We can't take ourselves too seriously all the time."

He also shares the best advice he has heard on humor and homilies, advice he was given while he received priestly formation at the former Saint Meinrad College and at Saint Meinrad School of Theology from 1973 to 1980.

"If you listen to your parishioners tell a funny story, you are on the word of God and the only thing they remember is the humor or the story," Father O'Connor says. "If it overshadows the word of God, you've gone too far."

Mrgr. Joseph Schaedel shares the advice that Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buechlein gave to priests about using humor in homilies. "He always said a preacher should not attempt to use humor unless he's the kind of person who jokes around anyway," says Mrgr. Schaedel, pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. "I think he's probably right. I generally joke around about a lot of things."

Mrgr. Schaedel often uses humor at the beginning of his homilies as a way to get people's attention.

Father Kevin Morris, pastor of the Richmond Catholic Community parishes of Holy Family, St. Andrew, and St. Mary, and chaplain of Seton Catholic High School in Richmond, has a humorous story about tightrope-walking that he has used in a homily.3

"If I can get people to look at certain areas of their life and laugh about it instead of condemning it, I think that's the better way to go," he says.

I recently used humor to make a point about people thinking the grass is always greener for someone else. I told how a single lady put an ad in the paper. It said, 'Husband wanted.' She got 300 replies, and they all said the same thing: "You can have mine."

"We always want somebody else's life. But the crosses in life that we all have, that God gives us, are the crosses he thinks we can bear. We don't have to look for other crosses."

Father Kevin Morris is also known for using humor to make a point about faith.

"I don't mind telling a story about myself or my family," says Father Morris, pastor of the Richmond Catholic Community parishes of Holy Family, St. Andrew and St. Mary, and chaplain of Seton Catholic High School in Richmond. "There are some things in life that are funny. People think, 'Well, this happened to me, too.' If you get them thinking about 'us,' then the community grows. Then the ownership of the community falls into place. He also sees another possible benefit of a humorous story that helps make a point about faith.

"Who knows, maybe they'll tell that story to someone at work and it will connect with them, and they'll come to church or back to church," Father Morris says. "You plant a seed."

In a recent homily, Father Morris talked about the joy and honor he gets from meeting with couples who are planning to get married.

"They take a test, and I go over the results of the test with them," he says. "Almost always, they agree with the statement, 'We'll have no conflict as long as we love each other.' I check back that I tell them, 'You'll be surprised about what you'll go to war over.'"

"I connected it to the Gospel where Jesus and the Apostles were on the way to Capernaum. Jesus asked them, 'What were you arguing about?' They were arguing about who is the greatest among them. The Apostles all went silent. It makes you think, especially when we're arguing with the people we love the most and who love us the most."

It's all part of the serious business of connecting people to the word of God, the priests say. Leaving them laughing is fine, but only if it leaves them thinking more about their faith.

With that goal, Father O'Connor gets a twinkle in his eyes as he shares the story of perhaps the shortest homily ever given—a homily that used humor and made its point in just two words. He heard about the clever homily when he was associate pastor of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville from 1980 to 1982.

"The parishioners told me about this one homily that was given like back in the 1940s," Father O'Connor says. "The temperature was 95 degrees that day, and there was no air conditioning in the church. The priest got up, read the Gospel, shut the book and said, 'Hell's worse.' Then he sat down. No one ever forgot that."

Catholic-owned Michigan company wins injunction against HHS mandate

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (CNS)—A federal district court judge in Ann Arbor granted a preliminary injunction on behalf of Legatus, an organization for Catholic business leaders, to stop the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) contraceptive, sterilization and abortifacient mandate.

The judge on Oct. 31 also dismissed a lawsuit filed by a nonprofit Catholic group, Legatus, because he said the religious organization qualified for the Obama administration's temporary "safe harbor" from having to comply with the mandate. But he also stipulated the federal government must provide monthly updates on the status of the process for amending final regulations covered by the safe harbor.

Mrgr. Mersono, lead council for Thomas More Law Center, a national public interest law firm based in Ann Arbor, which represented the plaintiffs, told Catholic News Service on Nov. 2 that he was "happy with the court decision," and described both decisions as "straight win for us."
By John Shaughnessy

His words were a tribute to the way that Catholic schools try to make a difference in the lives of students.

The words of Bishop Christopher J. Coyne also spoke to the heart of the three people who were honored during the 2012 Celebrating Catholic School Values Awards event on Oct. 30 at Union Station in Indianapolis.

“Our Catholic schools serve so many Catholic children, but they also serve a lot of children who don’t share our Catholic faith,” Bishop Coyne, apostolic administrator of the archdiocese, said. “We’re committed to not only building up our Catholic community, but also building up the communities they serve, especially committed to educating children to be good citizens in the fullness of what that means.”

As this year’s recipients of Career Achievement Awards, Providence Sister James Michael Kesterson and Dennis Sponsel have been educating at-risk kids for more than 60 years as a Catholic educator in the archdiocese. Sister James Michael has always directed her focus to honoring God and serving others, especially children. In her 83 years of life, she and her husband, Mr. Michael, were also a teacher at the former St. Andrew the Apostle School in Indianapolis.

She has continued that approach toward children and the faith even after retirement. She teaches in the after-school religious education program at St. Anthony Parish in Indianapolis. Sister, on the planning committee for the 175th anniversary celebration of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. And she volunteers part time in the archives department of the archdiocese.

“You have to stay active,” said Sister James Michael, who also was a teacher at the Catholic School Values Awards event has raised more than $5.5 million to help students in need of archdiocesan students passed state testing assessments in English/language arts while 91 percent of archdiocesan students passed the state tests for math.

“I’ve never let go of my passion as chairman of Catholic Schools Week. It’s something that I never stop. And now it’s more important than ever,” Byrnes told the audience. “It’s something that I believe in and I love the archdiocese, and I love being with all of you. I love the archdiocese, and I love being with all of you.”
VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Standing in the Sistine Chapel under Michelangelo’s famous ceiling frescoes, people are reminded that the world was created by God in a supreme act of love, Pope Benedict XVI said.

“With a unique expressive intensity,” the pope said, Michelangelo depicted the power and majesty of God the Creator in a way that proclaimed “the world is not the product of darkness, chaos or absurdity, but derives from intelligence, freedom, a supreme act of love.”

Pope Benedict made his remarks on Oct. 31 during an evening prayer service marking the 500th anniversary of the prayer service led by Pope Julius II in 1512 to celebrate Michelangelo’s completion of the ceiling paintings.

Up to 30,000 people visited the Sistine Chapel each day as part of their tour of the Vatican Museums, but “the chapel contemplated in prayer is even more beautiful, more authentic. It reveals all its richness,” the pope said.

With a small group of cardinals, Vatican employees and guests joining him for the prayer service, the pope asked them to try to imagine what it must have been like 500 years ago to look up and see those famous paintings for the first time.

The ceiling, measuring 134 feet by 43 feet, has nine principal illustrations of events recounted in the Book of Genesis, including the various stages of creation and the great flood. The most famous of all the scenes is God creating Adam and transmitting life to him through an outstretched finger.

“All of the chapel’s paintings recount stages in the history of salvation,” the pope said, but “in that encounter of the finger of God and the finger of man, we perceive a contact between heaven and Earth. In Adam, God entered into a new relationship with his creation,” a relationship in which a creature is created in God’s image and called into a direct relationship with God.

Pope Benedict noted that, 20 years after Michelangelo finished the ceiling, he concluded work on the massive wall fresco of the “Last Judgment.”

Illustrating humanity’s origin on the ceiling and its ultimate destiny in the “Last Judgment,” Michelangelo painted “the great parable of the journey of humanity,” which leads to “the definitive encounter with Christ, the judge of the living and the dead,” the pope said.

“Praying this evening in the Sistine Chapel—surrounded by the story of God’s journey with humanity, marvelously represented in the frescoes above us and around us—is an invitation to praise,” he said.

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‘Gaudium et Spes’ is the capstone of Vatican II

By Marcellino D’Ambrosio

The Second Vatican Council was intended to be a "pastoral" council. It did not set out to define new dogmas. Its goal was to equip the Church to restate the Gospel in such a way that the secular world could recognize it as relevant to its deepest needs.

This is why many council fathers believed that the longest document of the council, the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" ("Gaudium et Spes"), was Vatican II’s crowning achievement. It was addressed not just to Catholics or even Christians in general but, for the first time in conciliar history, to all men and women of good will.

An important theme of the document comes from the Gospel of Matthew by way of Blessed John XXIII—the Gospel of the Kingdom of God not as lying at the heart of the threats to human dignity and the perfect man, becomes himself more of a man" (#41).

The key theme uniting all the parts of this extensive document is respect for human dignity as the foundation of all politics, economics and culture.

After all, what is the foundation of human dignity? It is the biblical truth that human beings are made in the image and likeness of God, and that God actually became man, further ennobling human nature.

The council provides an unshakably religious and Christ-centered answer to humanity’s quest for self-discovery. It is only Jesus who reveals to us who we are as human beings. In "Gaudium et Spes," the document lays out a true humanism that can never have recourse to abortion, infanticide or artificial contraception.

In economics and culture, human dignity and solidarity dictate the protection of private property. But these truths also impose the obligation to eliminate barriers to the cultural and economic development of poor individuals and nations, and disallow the concentration of the world’s wealth in the hands of a select few.

When it comes to war and peace, human dignity forbids the use of weapons of mass destruction, and human solidarity obliges us to find effective structures to guarantee international dialogue and a way of peacefully resolving disputes.

"Gaudium et Spes" models for us what the late Blessed Pope John Paul II later labeled “the new evangelization”—a loving, respectful sharing of Christ as the answer that sheds liberating light on every practical problem of modern life.

(Marcellino D’Ambrosio is co-founder of Crossroads Initiative—www.crossroadsinitiative.com—an apostolate of Catholic renewal and evangelization.)

Vatican II taught that the Church is missionary by its nature

By Frank Maurovich

Mission is something that Catholics take for granted. Popular notion still regards mission as the Church’s work overseas carried out by foreign missionaries helping mostly poor people in underdeveloped countries. However, the 2,500 bishops at the Second Vatican Council said, in effect, “Stop and take another look.”

The council’s “Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity” asked the people of God—from pope to layperson—to use mission as a prism to re-examine the Church’s origin, and recognize the challenge of all baptized Christians to spread the Gospel of God’s unconditional love for all.

The decree states, “The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father” (#2).

Mission is in the mission of God. Jesus, God the Father’s missionary, tells his followers, “As the Father sent me, so I send you” (Jn 20:21). The mission of God is—or should be—the Church’s highest priority.

During the council discussions, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, at the time an auxiliary bishop of the New York Archdiocese and active member of the conciliar Commission on the Missions, explained that this Trinitarian nature of mission is not a new theological discovery, but the recovery of an old one.

“Nowhere in the New Testament,” Bishop Sheen said, “is any mention made of a distinction between the Church and its missionary activity.”

It is worth noting that the decree on the mission activity of the Church was approved by Pope Paul VI during the last working day of the council on Dec. 7, 1965, after an overwhelming vote of the bishops—2,394 in favor and only five against.

The implications are enormous. If God’s mission takes priority, then mission is not “over there,” but everywhere. Mission is not the sole responsibility of professional missionaries like Maryknoll priests and sisters or other groups.

Now, the pope, bishop, pastor and parishioners need to primarily be mission-minded followers of Jesus. Dominican theologian Father Yves Congar said, “Missionary activity wells up from the Church’s innermost missionary nature.”

Obviously, much more education on mission awareness needs to take place, but Vatican II’s call to mission is already being heard.

The current issue of Maryknoll magazine reports how more than 40 parishes in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati have a “twinning” relationship, one in which one parish helps other parishes overseas and in poorer regions of the United States.

Recently, I visited a parish in Raleigh, N.C., which had more than 1,000 lay ministers involved in 100 ministries within and outside the parish. More examples of dioceses and parishes could be cited, but not nearly enough to claim that the council’s teaching on mission has taken hold universally.

(Frank Maurovich, former editor of Maryknoll magazine, now writes for the Athonite magazine, a publication of the Holy Name Province of the Franciscan Friars.)

A group of Haitian children look at the bimocula of U.S. architect Alan Dooley in Petite Riviere de Nippes, Haiti, in 2008. Dooley and other representatives of the Parish Twinning Program and the Visitation Hospital Foundation, both based in Nashville, Tenn., traveled to Haiti for the dedication of the new Visitation Clinic. The Second Vatican Council taught that all the Church’s faithful have a duty to carry out its mission of evangelization.
null
The Sunday Readings

Sunday, Nov. 12, 2012

1 Kings 17:10-16
Hebrews 9:24-28
Mark 12:38-44

The First Book of Kings furnishes this weekend’s first reading from the Scriptures. Political governance, in the minds of the ancient Hebrews, was not the chief function of their kings. Rather, assuring the nation’s faithfulness to God and to the law of God given through Moses was their kings’ primary duty. Since this religious function was so vital, it is not surprising that many stories in the Books of Kings do not revolve around the monarchs, but are instead the prophecies who were active at the time.

Such is the case this weekend. The central figure in the story is Elijah, the prophet. In this story, Elijah appears at the gate of a city, and encounters a woman collecting twigs and branches to use as firewood. She obviously is quite poor. She must forage for fuel. She needs food to provide for her son. The impression given is that she is a widow, and her son is a child. In fact, she is so poor that she tells Elijah that after she and her son consume whatever she can bake using the meager amount of flour and oil on hand, they will die of starvation because there is no more food for them to eat the next day.

Elijah tells her that she and her son will not die. He says that if she will feed him, and give him water to drink, God will provide for her son. The story ends by relating how she prepared food for Elijah. Because of her faith in God, the prophet then God will provide for her son. The impression given is that she is a widow, and her son is a child. In fact, she is so poor that she tells Elijah that after she and her son consume whatever she can bake using the meager amount of flour and oil on hand, they will die of starvation because there is no more food for them to eat the next day.

The widow’s mite is a Scripture story that has been beloved by Christians for generations. It is a story of generosity. Even sinners, however, at times can be generous. This widow’s generosity is a sign of her trust in God and her understanding that the work of God on Earth—such as the worship provided through the religious treasury—was entitled to her cooperation. Trusting in God has its challenges. The times may be uncertain, leading us to fret about warnings and dire possibilities in the future. As in everything, the world, the flesh and the devil distract us. The wise place their trust in God. We can never fully control our futures in this world. Reversals may, and usually do, come at some time in our daily lives. But we can assure for ourselves a place in eternity by never failing to love God and obey God. 

My Journey to God

Autumn’s Glory

Hills resplendent in shades of scarlet and gold and coral. For its second glory, the Church this weekend gives us a passage from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews. During the reigns of ancient Jewish kings, the author writes about Jesus in the most soaring language. The reading declares that God has ordained that all people must die, but God also has ordained that all people may live if they turn to Jesus. This is possible because of the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary, and because of the reality of Jesus as a human and as the Son of God in the mystery that theologians call the Incarnation. St. Mark’s Gospel offers us the last reading. It is a familiar story, appearing also in the Gospel of St. Luke, but not in St. Matthew’s Gospel. In the story, the Lord speaks quite sternly about scriptures. Scribes were able to read and write in an era when religious knowledge mattered more than anything else, and they were specialists in interpreting the Law of Moses, but he looks upon them as a very barren thing, and the fact that they do not believe the Law of Moses, but calls attention to the self-satisfaction and even sinful pride of thescribes. He presents a contrast. At the time, in that culture, widows could be very vulnerable. The poor widow who gave a small donation to the temple, which was a great sacrifice for her in her poverty, is the paragon of love for God and trust in God. Jesus spoke of her as such.

Reflection

The ‘Lord’s Prayer’ includes a petition to God to spare us from temptations. Q uickly, the catechism clarifies, “This presumes that the priest asked to celebrate the funeral Mass is familiar with the Latin language and rubrics of the earlier rite.”

The ‘Dies Irae’ foretells the second coming of Christ as the frightful “day of wrath,” a second coming of Christ as the frightful “day of wrath,” a day when the Judge his seat attaineth and each individual will stand before him to receive eternal life or eternal damnation. The “Dies Irae” is used for the Catholic funeral ritual. In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI issued an apostolic letter (“Summorum Pontificum”), which specified rules for offering Mass according to the 1962 Roman Missal, in the form known commonly as the Tridentine Mass. Sacred Liturgy,” the council had called for the removal of “texts overemphasized judgment, fear and despair” so had been replaced by “texts urging Christian hope and arguably giving more effective expression to faith in the Resurrection.”

A leading figure in the postconciliar reforms, Archbishop Annibale Bugnini, listed the “Dies Irae” as one of the texts that had “smacked of a negative spirituality inherited from the Middle Ages,” and had “overtly emphasized judgment, fear and despair” so had been replaced by “texts urging Christian hope and arguably giving more effective expression to faith in the Resurrection.”

The ‘Dies Irae’ still remains in the “ordinary form” of the funeral ritual in the Church, and is offered according to the Second Vatican Council. In its “Confirmation on the Sacred Liturgy,” the council had called for the funeral rites of the Church to “express more clearly the parochal character of the death of a Christian.”

That hymn was removed from the 1962 ordinary form of the funeral rite in the Church, and is offered according to the Second Vatican Council. In its “Confirmation on the Sacred Liturgy,” the council had called for the funeral rites of the Church to “express more clearly the parochal character of the death of a Christian.”

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It should also be noted, however, that the “Dies Irae” still remains in the “extraordinary” 1962 form of the Roman funeral rite. The “Dies Irae” still remains in the “extraordinary” 1962 form of the Roman funeral rite.


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 and other persons whose obituaries 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.


Dr. David Schwartz was unwilling to say “no” to Salma. A 13-year-old girl from Kenya, she had the worst case of scoliosis he had ever seen. Without surgery, Salma would likely have developed short and long problems that could end her life.

Dr. Schwartz had Salma flown to Indianapolis for surgery at Peyton Manning Children’s Hospital at St. Vincent. The operation involved the curvature of her spine from 170 degrees to 70 degrees, and Salma grew 10 inches overnight.

“My hope is to help Salma be a kid again,” said Dr. Schwartz. “By bringing her here, we were able to save her life. When you can change the course of a life, that’s what it’s all about.”

Rest in peace
Tradition and family are at heart of 175-year-old Holy Family Parish

By Jennifer Lindberg
Special to The Criterion

OLDENBURG—The brick church and other buildings of Holy Family Parish sit in the heart of Oldenburg, a historic village in southeastern Indiana. The location of the parish campus suggests the importance of the Catholic faith to the town throughout the parish’s 175-year history.

One can’t drive into town without knowing that it’s a place steeped in Catholic tradition. The skyline alone brings one’s mind to God as Holy Family Parish’s church steeple stretches 187 feet into the sky.

Across the street, the motherhouse church of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg also has a tall steeple, giving the town its nickname of “The Village of Spires.”

Even the architecture of homes and buildings beckons of a long ago village life that has managed to be preserved by residents.

To celebrate the 175th anniversary of the parish, Holy Family Parishioners hosted their annual festival on Oct. 7 and will take part in Oldenburg’s “Holiday under the Spires” festival scheduled on Dec. 1.

Since their founding, the historic town and parish have defined the scenic Franklin County community located just off Interstate 74 in southeastern Indiana.

People can’t talk about the Catholic Church without talking about the town, and they can’t talk about the town without talking about the parish because the two are so intimately intertwined in their history.

“Holy Family speaks for itself,” said longtime resident and Holy Family parishioner Jeff Paul.

“All the people who live here join together like one big family,” Paul said. “There is a big family spirit, and when it comes to volunteers there is never a lack of resources for what the town needs. The spirit of family is really significant and it really stands out to me.”

Paul, owner of a local grocery store, has longtime family roots in the town and parish. His store sits just at the foot of the hill on which Holy Family Parish Church is built. And even though it’s a grocery store, it fits into the Catholic history quite easily. Paul worked there as a boy before buying the store from the previous owners.

Franciscan friars who minister in the parish used to earn money by unloading the freight trucks that delivered groceries. One night, the friars came with their candles and crosses to bless the store and present St. Anthony of Padua statue to the owner. That same statue sits proudly in Paul’s office, a visual reminder of how the Catholic faith is intertwined in village life.

Oldenburg was first settled in 1817 by the George brothers, who came from Pennsylvania. But it was the German immigrants from the Duchy of Oldenburg—who had first settled in Cincinnati—that made the town into what it is today when they started settling there in 1836.

Father Joseph Rudolph, who came to Oldenburg in 1844, is credited as the “father of the town” for his far-reaching goals and plans.

Longtime residents still call him ‘Father Father’ when talking about his history, and his grave is underneath Holy Family Church. A stone marker sits by the side altar of the Virgin Mary where his body is buried.

Father Rudolph established many of the traditions that are still carried out today at Holy Family Parish, such as the Corpus Christi procession dating back to 1846.

Each Corpus Christi Sunday, the town joins together as the Blessed Sacrament is carried through the streets and adored at various chapels that sit along the route.

The ongoing presence of Franciscan sisters and friars ministering in Oldenburg is also rooted in Father Rudolph’s vision for the town and Holy Family Parish.

For years, he sought to bring religious sisters to the area to teach the children. In 1850, his pleas were finally heard by the cardinal protector of the Franciscans in Rome, who gave him permission to found the convent. But finding the sisters to staff it was difficult. A priest in New York who was going to Europe made the connections for Father Rudolph in Vienna with Franciscan Sister Theresa Hackelmeier.

Mother Theresa arrived with three other sisters shortly before Christmas in 1850. The Franciscan sisters still minister in the town and in various places across the archdiocese and the nation.

Father Rudolph also insisted that Franciscan friars take charge of administering the parish after his death. That same tradition has carried on since.

Over the years, newer families who moved into the town and became members of the parish have helped to continue the longtime Catholic presence there.

Franciscan Father David Kobak, Holy Family’s current pastor, said many new families are moving to the area currently. There are 636 households who call Holy Family Parish their spiritual home.

Father David calls it a grace of God to be able to minister in Oldenburg.

A friar from a long line of Franciscans who have served the parish from their motherhouse in Cincinnati, he appreciates the family theme of the parish, which takes its namesake from the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

“The way we run it here is that 99.5 percent of the time you are going to hear laughter coming from here,” said Father Kobak. “We run it like a family here.

Catholics who have lived their life at the foot of Holy Family Church’s altar—and received the sacraments of baptism, first Communion, confirmation and maternity in the church—said they also plan to die in Oldenburg. They want to be buried in the parish’s historic cemetery just a short stroll from the church down the road past the tall brick wall that surrounds the convent of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis.

“This is my town,” parishioner Cheryl (Lamping) Webber said. “I don’t care where I live in life. This will always be my town. If you ask for something here, it will be done. I never gave this town a thought as I grew up here, but it wasn’t until later in life that I saw how unique it was.”

For more information about Holy Family Parish in Oldenburg, log on to http://holyfamilyparisharchindy.org/"

Classified Directory

For information about rates for classified advertising, call (317) 236-1548.

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Members of Holy Family Parish in Oldenburg participate in a Corpus Christi procession on May 24, 2006, along the streets of the southeast Indiana town. The procession has been an annual tradition of the parish since 1946.
Relic called reminder of Cristero martyr’s courage in preaching Gospel

GALLUP, N.M. (CNS)—When the Gallup Diocese received a relic of the body of St. Jose Maria de Robles Hurtado, a priest martyred in 1927 in Jalisco, Mexico, during the Cristero Rebellion, Bishop James S. Wall knew it was a spiritual intervention.

In 2011, the diocese received a relic from the body of St. Jose Maria de Robles Hurtado, a priest martyred in 1927 in Jalisco, Mexico, during the Cristero Rebellion. Bishop James S. Wall was reminded of the period of 25 Cristero martyrs canonized by Blessed John Paul II in May 2000, St. Jose is known as the "Grandfather of the Sacred Heart," because he promoted greater devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through his preaching, personal example and great devotion to the Eucharist.

The diocesan officials learned they could not more properly be the recipient of a first-class relic of a martyred saint of the Church, Bishop Wall said. “There’s a reason why we got this special gift.”

The relic was a gift from Cardinal Francisco Robles Ortega of Guadalajara, Mexico. Bishop Wall was surprised to receive the relic of a saint long ago in a country predominately Catholic, the Church was essentially outlawed, Bishop Wall noted.

Not unlike the ignorance that fueled the religious wars of the late 16th century, the Church might have accepted the martyrdom. But something was missing.

Bishop Wall said that missing link came to him about 495,000. †

In April, the diocese received a gift from Cardinal Jose Francisco Robles Ortega of Guadalajara, Mexico. Bishop Wall had it placed in a marble plate inserted in the altar of the diocese, Bishop Wall said.

The relic was a gift from Cardinal Jose Francisco Robles Ortega of Guadalajara, Mexico. Bishop Wall had it placed in a marble plate inserted in the altar of his private chapel to be venerated each time he says Mass there.

“I come in to pray here around 5:15 a.m. every day seeking the intercession of St. Jose,” Bishop Wall said. “I have the relic of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to proclaim the light of the Gospel, which is so important in the world that has been darkened by secularism.”

Some months before the cardinal’s gift arrived, Bishop Wall began working with the Gallup Knights of Columbus to try to locate a relic from one of the Cristero martyrs, many of whom were Knights. The bishop himself is a fourth-degree Knight.

Work began with the Knights officials at the organization’s headquarters in Connecticut. Ten months later, the diocesan officials learned they would receive the relic of St. Jose, who was hanged after being found celebrating Mass in the home of a family who was hiding him.

But you could say the quest for such a relic began after Bishop Wall’s installation in Gallup three years ago. He began renovation on the chapel in his private residence, a restored decor of soft plastered walls, terra cotta ceramic tile floors and viga beams on the ceiling. The wood facade surrounding the small room is adorned with stained-glass images of saints and the Holy Family.

But something was missing. Bishop Wall said that missing link came to him through the Holy Spirit while he was celebrating Mass during Lent in 2011.

“The Sacred Heart image came to me during the consecration,” he said. “It was prompted by the Holy Spirit that I needed that image.”

An image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was painted below the altar, but Bishop Wall felt one last finishing touch was needed, thus came the search for a relic.

As a history major while attending Arizona State University, Bishop Wall became enthralled with the Cristero rebellion of the 1920s, which saw Catholic clergy and laypeople defy the Mexican government’s systematic repression of the Church and to defend religious freedom. Thousands died in death squads in Mexico before the uprising was quelled in 1929.

“It is fascinating to think that less than 100 years ago in a country predominately Catholic, the Church was essentially outlawed,” Bishop Wall noted.

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Fifty years after the Second Vatican Council launched a new Catholic commitment to interreligious dialogue, work continues on understanding and respecting other religions.

While some Catholics still look on with disdain or discard other religions, some believe Vatican II taught that all religions are equally valid and God and to the fullness of truth. The new preface of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith recently said both extremes are wrong.

Archbishop Gerhard L. Muller, the Vatican’s doctrinal chief, gave a speech in Assisi in late October in which he tried to explain the differences between Catholic respect for every religion’s honest search for God, and the error of thinking Christianity has nothing essential to add.

Not believing that Christ’s death and resurrection make Christianity unique among religions in this, in essence, the equivalent of denying God became human in Christ of saying that Christ’s divinity is “a poetic metaphor, beautiful but unreal,” the archbishop said.

For decades, popes and Vatican officials have taught that the aim of interreligious dialogue is to come to some sort of agreement on religions or even moral principles that everyone in the world can accept. For Catholic leaders, the goal of such dialogue is for people firmly rooted in different faith traditions to explain their beliefs to one another, grow in knowledge of and respect for one another, and help one another move closer to the truth about God and what it means to be human.

A societal consequence of such dialogue should be respect for each individual’s conscience, more social peace and joint efforts to defend human dignity and help those in need.

Among Church leaders, concerns for dialogue are not simply academic, and the obstacles to dialogue are not simply erroneous theological positions.

For instance, several members of the Synod of Bishops on the new evangelization, held at the Vatican in October, described on-the-ground Catholic-Muslim relations in terms that ranged from true friendship and collaboration to efforts to restrict the freedom of Christian minorities or to exert spiritual pressure on Muslims who practice their faiths not to convert to Christianity.

Synod members responded with a formal resolution calling on Christians to persevere and to intensify their relations with Muslims according to the teaching of the Vatican II document, “Nostra Aetate,” the Vatican II document that expressed “eusemus” for Muslims, particularly because of their belief in the one God, and their devotion to submitting themselves completely to his will.

In his address on Oct. 29, Archbishop Muller said Christians enter dialogue with members of other religious traditions with the expectation that the Church has “for the natural religious sensibility,” and the intellectual desire for truth that all human beings share.

The human person is religious by nature, the archbishop said. All people, at some time in their lives, wonder about the creation of the world and their place in it, and—particularly in times of trial—seek solace from some form of providential being or power. In addition, he said, the human intellect naturally tries to seek truth.

In dialogue, he said, Christians must recognize the challenge of taking the search for truth seriously. Too many people, Archbishop Muller said, seek truth from their own religious perspectives without feeling obliged to act on the truths that faith and reason require.

The Catholic Church’s commitment to interreligious dialogue and its affirmation of questions that seek deeper understanding, texts and does not leave room” for questions that seek deeper understanding, the value of the individual conscience is diminished, he said. And where a religion is imposed, violently or not, personal freedom is denied.

Recognition that faith is a gift of God and that Christianity is based on a freely chosen, additional relationship with Christ excludes any attempt by Christians to pressure or coerce another to embrace Christianity, the archbishop said.

However, because dialogue presumes an atmosphere of respect for the truth and what they believe, he said, interreligious dialogue can “create a context where it also is possible to witness to faith in Jesus Christ.

“It would be lying,” he said, to hide one’s faith in Jesus “in the name of a ‘politically correct’ dialogue.”

The Criterion  Friday, November 9, 2012

Respect and difference: Focusing on interreligious dialogue since Vatican II

A painting by Mexican artist Martha Orozco features six priests who were members of the Knights of Columbus and canonized by Blessed John Paul II on May 21, 2000. The priests were among 25 martyrs of Mexico’s anti-Catholic persecution during the 1920s proclaimed saints by the pope that day. Depicted clockwise from top are Sts. Miguel de la Mora de la Mora, Jose Maria Robles Hurtado, Mateo Correa Magallanes, Luis Baltz Sainz, Rodrigo Aguilar Alaman and Pedro de Jesus Maldonado Lucero. The painting is part of the permanent collection at the Knights of Columbus Museum in New Haven, Conn. A first-class relic of St. Jose Maria Robles Hurtado was earlier this year acquired by the Gallup Diocese.

‘A weakness of this otherwise extraordinary text has gradually emerged. It speaks of religion solely in a positive way and it disregards the sick and distorted forms of religion which, from the historical and theological viewpoints, are of far-reaching importance.’

—Pope Benedict XVI in an essay about ‘Nostra Aetate’

And explain why Christians for centuries had been mostly critical of other religions.

Archbishop Muller, in his Assisi speech, said that “to respect the religious conscience of humanity, in fact, does not mean forgetting that historical religions also present obstacles, as well as sick and distorted forms of religion.

In a religion that gives prevalence, in an unquestioning way, to the letter of its texts and does not leave room for questions that seek deeper understanding, the value of the individual conscience is diminished, he said. And where a religion is imposed, violently or not, personal freedom is denied.

Recognition that faith is a gift of God and that Christianity is based on a freely chosen, additional relationship with Christ excludes any attempt by Christians to pressure or coerce another to embrace Christianity, the archbishop said.

However, because dialogue presumes that participants, in an atmosphere of respect for the truth and what they believe, they said, interreligious dialogue can “create a context where it also is possible to witness to faith in Jesus Christ.

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