Cardinal Filoni, Patriarch Sako call for action to liberate Iraq

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis’ personal envoy to the suffering people of Iraq joined the Chaldean Catholic patriarch in launching an appeal to the international community on Aug. 18, pleading for help to liberate villages controlled by the Islamic State terrorists and to provide the displaced with international protection.

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, who has been in Iraq since Aug. 13 at the pope’s request, and Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Louis Sako of Baghdad said international action is necessary to provide the displaced with basic necessities like food and water, but also to guarantee the possibility of their survival in Iraq.

In their appeal, the cardinal and patriarch asked nations to “take their moral responsibility seriously” by helping to liberate villages in northeastern Iraq captured by the Islamic State militants.

The Christians, Yazidis and other minorities forced out of their villages because they would not convert to the militants’ idea of Islam just want to return to their homes and live in peace, the cardinal and patriarch said. “The hope of these people must not be allowed to die!”

During his Aug. 18 Mass for “peace and reconciliation” in Seoul, South Korea, Pope Francis offered special prayers for Cardinal Filoni and for Iraq. The cardinal, the pope told the congregation, “was supposed to be with us here,” but instead had been sent “to the suffering people of Iraq, to help the persecuted and displaced, and all religious.

800,000 watch during beatification Mass as Pope Francis moves 124 Korean martyrs closer toward sainthood

SEOUL, South Korea (CNS)—Pope Francis placed 124 Korean martyrs on the last step toward sainthood in a beatification Mass on Aug. 16 that brought elation to the 800,000 people in attendance.

The sun was scorching as Bishop Francis Ahn Myong-Ok of Masan, president of the commission for the beatification, asked the pope to pronounce the martyrs blessed. After hearing a brief collective biography of 124 of the original founders of the Catholic Church in Korea, Pope Francis pronounced the formula of beatification.

With his words, trumpets blared and a huge swath depicting a watercolor of the newly blessed martyrs in heaven was unfurled on the side of a large building facing the square where the faithful gathered. People laughed and cheered as the image also popped up on the giant video monitors along the more than one-mile stretch.

See MARTYRS, page 8

Pope Francis greets a child as he arrives to celebrate the Aug. 16 beatification Mass of Paul Yun Ji-chung and 123 martyred companions in Seoul, South Korea. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities: From ‘best kept secret’ to a leading agency in New Albany

By Natalie Hootter

NEW ALBANY—Until about four years ago, New Albany had a little-known treasure in its midst.

“When I started here [in April 2010], it was known as the best-kept secret in New Albany,” Leslea Townsend-Cronin admits.

But the secret is out, she says, and New Albany Mayor Jeff Gahan made it official: On June 30, he presented St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities agency director Mark Casper, third from left in the front row, cuts a ribbon on Oct. 10, 2013, marking the official opening of the agency’s new administration and social services building.

St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities Day. The official declaration was the city’s way of helping the organization recognize its 25th anniversary.

“There were four big things to celebrate,” says agency director Mark Casper of the special day. “We got the check, we opened our new 12-bed maternity home, the newest ASH [Affordable Supportive Housing] unit we bought opened, and the historical renovation of this social services building was finished with the windows being completed that week.”

Those four victories are not the only reasons to celebrate, says Townsend-Cronin, director of social services for the agency.

“We’ve really become a leading agency in this community with all the services we provide, particularly our shelters.”

“St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities, page 16

SEE PLEA, page 2

CARDINAL FILONI, PATRHIARCH SAKO

Cardinal Fernando Filoni
Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Louis Sako

St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities
949-7305
744 E. Main St.

In New Albany, St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities agency director Mark Casper, third from left in the front row, cuts a ribbon on Oct. 10, 2013, marking the official opening of the agency’s new administration and social services building. Built in 1950 as the rectory for the former Holy Trinity Parish, the structure’s historic preservation and restoration was completed during the last week of June. New Albany Mayor Jeff Gahan holds the ribbon at left.

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The Criterion
Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960
plea
continued from page 1

minorities who are suffering in that land. May the Lord be with him in his mission. ♠

Cardinal Filoni has been talking about his trip with Vatican Radio each day. He spent Aug. 15 with 450 Christians in a camp in Dahuk and meeting Yazidi community leaders. The Yazidi community is suffering terribly because of the death they have had, the kidnapping of their women and their houses being stolen. They don’t know where to go,” the cardinal said.

Chaldean Archbishop Amel Shamon Nona of Mosul, Iraq, told Vatican Radio the Islamic State militants “think that anyone who is different from them does not deserve to live,” which is why, under the threat of violence, they tell Christians and Yazidis to convert or flee. “They [militants] represent a great threat to humanity,” the archbishop said. “These groups do not just want to conquer a piece of territory and stay there. Their objective is the whole world.”

Cardinal Filoni spent Aug. 16 in Manghels with displaced Christians and Yazidis from Qaraqosh and other villages in the Nineveh Plain. The question the people raised over and over, he said, was “What have we done to deserve death?” ♠

—Chaldean Archbishop Amel Shamon Nona

Special U.S. collection urged to help those suffering in Middle East

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The president of the U.S. bishops’ conference on Aug. 19 asked Catholic bishops across the country to take up a special collection for humanitarian needs and pastoral support for Christians and other victims of violence in the Middle East.

Amid the ongoing crisis in what is “the cradle of Christianity,” the Catholic Church “mourns the terrible suffering of Christians and other innocent victims of violence in Iraq, Syria and Gaza who are struggling to survive, protect their children and live with dignity in dire conditions,” said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky.

Emphasizing “the extraordinary nature of this crisis,” he urged the bishops to have parishes in their dioceses hold the collection the weekend of Sept. 6-7 or Sept. 13-14, and to send the contributions as soon as possible to the Office of National Collections at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington. The Archdiocese of Indianapolis will hold its collection on Sept. 13-14.

Funds from the collection will be used by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the U.S. bishops’ overseas relief and development organization, and other Catholic agencies “working in partnership with the local Church” to meet the most urgent humanitarian needs of the three countries, he said in a letter to his fellow bishops.

The agencies also will use the money to help refugees who have fled Iraq, Syria and Gaza to neighboring countries.

“Our Christian brothers and sisters and other innocent victims of the violence in the Middle East urgently need the assistance of the Catholic community of the United States,” Archbishop Kurtz said.

CRS and other agencies “have well-established partnerships with the Catholic Church in the region which allow them to respond quickly and efficiently to victims in some of the hardest-to-reach areas,” he explained.

The collection money also will be used to support Church programs, to aid persecuted Christians and “to respond to rebelling needs of Catholic dioceses in the impacted areas,” he said, and asked for continued prayers “for the victims of this crisis.” ♠

Federal court says accommodation process on HHS mandate ‘a subterfuge’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A U.S. District Court on Aug. 13 ruled in favor of a Baptist-run college in its fight against the federal contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization mandate, and that the court that nonprofit employers who are not exempt from the mandate but who object to it must authorize a third party to provide coverage to employees.

Louisiana College in Pineville objects on moral grounds to the mandate, but does not fit the narrow criteria that would exempt it, so in order to refuse to provide coverage it finds objectionable, the college would have to comply with what the administration calls an accommodation for nonexempt employers.

Such an employer must fill out a self-certification form—known as EBSA Form 700—stating it is a religious nonprofit with objections to covering contraceptives and directing a third party, usually the manager of an employer’s health plan, to provide the coverage. Many religious employers, including Louisiana College, that have sued over the mandate argue that even filling out Form 700 makes them complicit in providing coverage they find objectionable.

The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana, based in Alexandria, sided with the college, calling the accommodation for Louisiana College and like entities “a subterfuge.”

In this case, we would go so far as to say that self-certification is vastly more than a mere ‘administrative act,’” the court wrote. “Rather, the challenged regulations and their application trigger a subterfuge requiring indirect action the regulations could not do if they applied to the entity directly.”

Kevin Theriot, senior counsel at Alliance Defending Freedom, which represented Louisiana College, said his client “simply wants to continue to operate as a Christian college as it has since its founding in 1906.”

“The court did the right thing in striking down the Obamacare abortion-pill mandate as it applies to the school’s health insurance coverage, he said in a statement. An Aug. 15 news release on the ruling in the college’s case noted that another alliance client, Conestoga Wood Specialties in Pennsylvania, won a U.S. District Court order on Aug. 14 that permanently enjoined the federal government from enforcing the mandate against the company.

The U.S. Supreme Court June 30 ruled 5-4 that Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Woods, both owned by Christian families, were protected under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act from having to provide coverage to which they object on religious grounds.

Under the Affordable Care Act, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requires nearly all employers to cover contraceptives, sterilizations and some abortion-inducing drugs for all employees in their company health plan. It includes a narrow exemption for some religious employers that fit certain criteria.

Aug. 22 is the deadline for the Obama administration to release an alternative to the third-party accommodation that is drafting for Catholic and other religious nonprofit employers to opt out of the contraceptive mandate.

The proposal will be an “interim final regulation,” so before it is finalized, there will be a comment period set by the government. ♠

Pope asks prayers after great nephews, their mother die in car crash

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis asked people to join him in prayer on Aug. 19 after he learned that two of his little great nephews and their mother had died in a car crash in Argentina and his nephew was in critical condition.

The dead were identified as the wife and two young sons of Pope Francis’ nephew, Emanuel Horacio Bergoglio Valeria Carmona, 39, Amantino Bergoglio, 8 months, and Joseph Bergoglio, 2 years.

According to Argentine news reports, the 35-year-old son of the pope’s late brother Alberto Bergoglio underwent emergency surgery and was on a respirator.

The crash occurred in the early morning hours on the highway between Rosario and Cordoba. ♠
Pilgrimage takes seminarians to Catholic high schools

By Sean Gallagher

For more than a decade, the seminarians of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis have gone on pilgrimage just prior to the start of a new academic year. They’ve usually visited historic parish churches or shrines in central and southern Indiana.

This year’s pilgrimage was a departure from the past as more than 20 men in formation for the priesthood visited three Catholic high schools in Indianapolis on Aug. 12—Cathedral, Roncalli and Providence Cristo Rey.

Father Eric Augenstein, archdiocesan vocations director, said it was important for the future priests of central and southern Indiana to be exposed to Catholic schools since they are a significant part of the life of the archdiocese, and because some of the young men haven’t been students at them.

He also noted that it is good for Catholic school communities in the archdiocese to get to know the seminarians.

“Some of them could be there one day as well.”

Seminarian Casimiero Samano-Reyes is a graduate of Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School in Indianapolis. He will be a freshman at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis this fall.

“He said that the presence of priests and seminarians in Catholic high schools can help students be open to vocational discernment in their own lives.

“It will help the students to have seminarians come to their schools,” said Saman-Reyes, a member of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis. “It kind of gets that thought going, an interest in the seminary or priestly life.”

Transitional Deacon Adam Ahern is entering his final year of priestly formation, and expects to be ordained a priest next spring.

He said he hoped the seminarians’ visit to Catholic high schools would help broaden the students’ understanding of a priest’s ministry.

“It’s vital,” he said. “As a parish priest, a lot of times you’re the only [priest] there at a parish. You come home to an empty house at your rectory at night. At this convention, we form the community with our fellow seminarians. It will sustain us in the lonely times when we’re off by ourselves.”

During the academic year, the seminarians have few chances to be with our fellow seminarians. It will sustain us, and introduce the archdiocese to the seminarians,” Father Augenstein said. “There are a lot of ways that we do that. But these pilgrimages are one of the best ways that we have to do that in different places.”

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, log on to www.HearGodsCall.com.)

Pontifical North American College in Rome and Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

At the start of this academic year, there are 26 men in formation for the priesthood for the archdiocese, one less than at the start of the 2013-14 academic year. Ten seminarians are in formation at Bishop Bruté; 14 are at Saint Meinrad; and two are at the North American College. Although the seminarians are spread out across the world during the years of priestly formation, coming together for their annual convocation and pilgrimage is an important way for them to be formed for priestly ministry in central and southern Indianapolis.

One of the greatest things that our offices can do is introduce our seminarians to the archdiocese and introduce the archdiocese to the seminarians,” Father Augenstein said. “There are a lot of ways that we do that. But these pilgrimages are one of the best ways that we have to do that in different places.”

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(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, log on to www.HearGodsCall.com.)
Persecution of Christians in Iraq

“The hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering worship to God!” (Jn 16:1).

Jesus told his disciples frequently that they and his Church would endure persecution, and the above quotation is one of many we could cite. So we shouldn’t be surprised that, according to demographers of religion David Barrett and Todd Johnson, there have been 70 million Christian martyrs since the time of Christ. 45 million in the 20th century alone. The persecution of Christ’s Church continues.

Today it is happening, among other places, in Iraq where Islamic State jihadists have overtaken parts of the country and are carrying out the barbaric practice of infibulation“ (female genital mutilation).

The persecution of Christians is the major unintended consequence of America’s war against Saddam Hussein. While Hussein was president of Iraq, there were about 1.4 million Christians. Today there are fewer than 300,000.

The Muslim fanatics who are chasing all non-Muslims out of Iraq make no secret of their intention to restore the caliphate (an Islamic state based on sharia law) that was abolished in 1923 by Kamal Ataturk, founder of modern Turkey. The leaders of the uprising first called themselves the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). They are now called the Islamic State, and the group is composed of Sunni Muslims who are opposed to the Shiite Muslim government of Iraq and the government in Syria headed by Bashar al-Assad.

They think that Christians are the enemy. They believe they are offering worship to their God when they kill the followers of Christ. Thus the quotation that we chose to begin this editorial.

However, Pope Francis has the answer to this. “One cannot generate hatred against God’s name,” he said. “One cannot make war in God’s name.”

Most of the Iraqi Christians are trying to escape to the Kurdistan part of Iraq. Most Kurds are Muslims. However, some Kurds converted to Christianity in the ninth century and their descendants are still there. It’s believed that today there are tens of thousands of Christians in Kurdistan.

The beauty of the marital embrace and the common life of a husband and wife and the couple is a mystery; it challenges for us to accept the cross of loving and being loved, even as it offers us an opportunity to bring the divine sacrifice into the setting of the marital embrace.

The Catholic Church addressed this matter in a document called “Donum Vitae” (“The Gift of Life”), noting that whenever a technical means “facilitates the conjugal act or helps it to reach its natural objectives, it can be morally acceptable. If, on the other hand, the procedure were to replace the conjugal act, it is a significant sin (licitum even est)”. Artificial insemination as a substitute for the conjugal act is prohibited.”

Interestingly, at the present time, there do not seem to be any real-world examples of impersonating technologies that facilitate the conjugal act. Hence, while the statement above is true in a theoretical way, in practice there does not seem to be any specific technical methods to which the statement would in fact apply, so the claim of some Catholics that an artificial substitute for homologous artificial insemination does not appear to be correct.

The core problem remains that even if sperm could be collected without semen, the subsequent steps of introducing a sample into a woman’s reproductive tract, through a cannula or other means, would invariably involve a substitution or replacement of the conjugal act, which would not be morally acceptable.

To procure sperm without masturbation, a couple could use a so-called “sacred dust” (see the link). The pregnancy itself would be brought about by a new and different set of causes, whereby the mechanical actions of a technician would substitute for, and thus violate, the intimate and exclusive bond of the marital act.

The Catholic Church has long recognize artificial insemination, in the final analysis, does not facilitate the natural act, but replaces it with another kind of action. The Church says that the withdrawal of the spouses in marriage, and the right of the child to be conceived in the intimate and sacred setting of the marital embrace.

The beauty of the marital embrace and the noble desire for the gift of children can make it challenging for us to accept the cross of infertility and childlessness when it arises in marriage, even as it offers us an opportunity to bring the divine sacrifice into the setting of the marital embrace.

Party’s support of Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood is evident, reader says

This is regarding your “Be Our Guest” column of Aug. 1 regarding Democrats embracing abortion.

The letter writer quotes from a Democratic platform to the effect that the Democratic Party does not “embrace abortion.” May I quote from the same platform, notably the three sentences preceding hers, from 2012:

“The Democratic Party strongly and unapologetically supports Roe v. Wade and a woman’s right to make decisions regarding her pregnancy, including a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay. We oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right. Abortion is an intensely personal decision between a woman, her family, her doctor, and her clergy; there is no place for politicians or government to get in the way.”

The Democratic Party works in good faith with Planned Parenthood who, according to Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond of New Orleans, noted that for every 100 abortions that Planned Parenthood performs, they facilitate only one adoption referral.

Thus a pro-life, pro-family woman Peloxy’s reception of the Margaret Sanger Award in March of this year? Remember President Obama’s speech at Planned Parenthood’s annual gala where he invoked God’s blessings on their continued work? Doesn’t that mean they are getting their blessing from a woman who says she respects the dignity of life and to whom God’s blessings from their continued work? Don’t you see the contradiction there? After all, who is saying that the하신 놀?—Dr. Kermit Gosnell and the nearly 56 aborted babies that he killed?

The Democratic Party platform also specifically endorses embryonic stem-cell research, human life at its very earliest.

The definition of embrace is “to take up or adopt, to accept readily.” Does it fit?
Holy Spirit is inviting us to think globally, act locally

In one of my earlier columns, I commented on the lack of international news on television and in our newspapers. In fact, there is very little “news” in our contemporary media, and the analysis provided is too often partisan (rather than objective) and ideological (rather than informative). This is a serious problem for us as citizens of a nation that is increasingly dependent on economic, political and cultural interaction with the global community. It’s also a serious concern for those of us who are members of the universal Church.

My ministry in the Redemptorist congregation gave me a unique perspective on the “small world” that we live in. It also helped me better understand the Church’s role as a force for good in the world, and as a partner with other religious and cultural organizations in combating some of the gravest problems facing our sisters and brothers in other regions of the world.

I raise this issue in the context of the question I have been asking for the past year and a half: What do we need to be doing now in order to call us to open new doors in central and southern Indiana? Could it be that we are being asked to move beyond our “comfort zones” in order to develop a global perspective on world affairs and on the evangelizing mission of our Church?

You’ve heard the expression: Think globally, act locally. This is not a bad slogan for the challenge we must accept as Catholics who are members of a worldwide Church, but who live our faith in local faith communities. As the slogan suggests, we need to be aware of what is happening in the world around us, but the actions we are called to take will ordinarily find their expressions through our parish, our archdiocese or agencies such as the Catholic Campaign for Human Development or Catholic Relief Services. Of course, we also have opportunities to act through our support for religious congregations that do missionary work throughout the world.

As an expression of their pastoral ministry, the bishops of the United States act in concrete solidarity with the poor and defenseless. As part of its ministry, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops engages in advocacy and action related to the defense and empowerment of poor and vulnerable communities in the United States and across the globe. Here at home, and throughout the world, the Church is committed to the defense of human life, to religious liberty, to strengthening marriage and family life, to caring for migrants and refugees, and to justice, peace and human development.

The bishops’ concern extends to ending the suffering of those experiencing violent conflicts. We strive to reduce global poverty through effective international assistance, health programs, debt relief for the poorest nations, and just trade policies.

We seek to apply Catholic social teaching to the promotion and development of public policy that strengthens and builds resilient families and communities. This includes advocacy on behalf of the poor and vulnerable on a range of matters related to human dignity, family life, the dignity of work and workers, poverty elimination, access to adequate nutrition and health care, and the integrity of creation.

Much of our Church’s work at the national and international levels is “behind the scenes.” It is rarely reported in the news media—except when it can be connected with some other controversial issue such as “family planning” or economic theory. Pope Francis received some harsh criticism for his statements in the fourth chapter of “The Joy of the Gospel” that the wealth of some countries is predicated on the poverty of other nations.

How well do we understand the pope’s message? Do we depend on what we hear on talk radio or read in the secular media, or have we developed a global perspective of our own? Is our experience of the Church entirely local, or do we live our faith in solidarity with our sisters and brothers throughout the universal Church?

I believe that the Holy Spirit is inviting us to think globally and act locally. This means we have to be better informed about the big issues. It also means that we need to have access to concrete opportunities to make a difference here in Indiana and in diverse regions of the world.

Pope Francis has challenged all of us to see ourselves as “misionary disciples” called to proclaim the joy of the Gospel to all our sisters and brothers everywhere. As we engage in pastoral planning here at home, I will continue to probe how our archdiocese can be more effective in developing a global perspective and in providing Catholics in central and southern Indiana with the means to think globally and act locally.

El Espíritu Santo nos invita a pensar a escala mundial y a actuar localmente

E s una de mis primeras columnas escritas acerca de la ausencia de noticias internacionales en nuestra televisión y nuestros periódicos. De hecho, en los medios de comunicación que nos llegan aparecen muy pocas “noticias” y los análisis proporcionados muy a menudo son partidistas (en vez de objetivos) e ideológicos (en lugar de informativos). Esto constituye un grave problema para nosotros, como ciudadanos de un país que depende cada vez más de la interacción económica, política y cultural con la comunidad internacional. También es un motivo de preocupación importante para aquellos de nosotros que pertenecemos a la Iglesia universal.

Mi ministerio en la congregación redentorista me brindó una perspectiva única en cuanto al “pequeño mundo” en el que vivimos. También me ayudó a comprender mejor el papel que desempeña la Iglesia como fuerza positiva en el mundo y como colaboradora, junto con otras organizaciones religiosas y culturales, en la lucha contra algunos de los problemas más graves que enfrentan nuestros hermanos y hermanas en otras regiones del planeta.

Saco a colación este asunto en el contexto de la pregunta que he venido planteando durante el año y medio anterior. ¿Qué oportunidades nos brinda el Espíritu Santo en el centro y el sur de Indiana? ¿Acaso se nos está pidiendo que nos salgamos de nuestra “comodidad” para crear una perspectiva global en cuanto a los asuntos internacionales y a la misión evangélica de nuestra Iglesia regional y local?

Seguramente habrán escuchado la expresión: pensar a escala mundial y actuar localmente. En general, esto significa tener un buen lema para el desafío que debemos aceptar como católicos pertenecientes a una Iglesia mundial, pero que vivimos en el mundo que nos rodea pero las acciones que estamos llamados a tomar normalmente se manifiestan a través de nuestras parroquias, nuestra arquidiócesis o agencias tales como la Campaña Católica para el Desarrollo Humano (Catholic Campaign for Human Development) o los Servicios de Auxilio Católico (Catholic Relief Services). Por supuesto, también tenemos oportunidades para actuar mediante el apoyo a las congregaciones religiosas que realizan obras misioneras en todo el mundo.

Como expresión de su ministerio pastoral, los obispos de Estados Unidos actúan en concreto solidaridad con los pobres y los indefensos. Como parte de su ministerio, la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de EE. UU. participa activamente en apoyo a cuestiones relativas a la defensa y el fortalecimiento de las comunidades pobres y vulnerables en Estados Unidos y en todo el mundo. Aquí y en todas las partes de la Iglesia tiene el compromiso de defender la vida humana, la libertad religiosa, fortalecer el matrimonio y la vida familiar, velar por los inmigrantes y refugiados, promover la justicia, la paz y el desarrollo humano.

La labor de los obispos abarca poner fin a la pobreza en el mundo mediante la asistencia internacional eficaz, programas de salud, la combinación de donaciones para los países más pobres y políticas comerciales justas. Procuraríamos aplicar las enseñanzas sociales del catolicismo para promover y crear una política pública que fortalezca y construya familias y comunidades que resistan los embates de la vida. Esto incluye defender a los pobres y a los vulnerables en una serie de aspectos relacionados con la dignidad humana, la vida familiar, la dignidad laboral y de los trabajadores, la erradicación de la pobreza, el acceso a una alimentación y atención médica adecuadas, y a la integridad de la creación.

La mayoría de las obras de nuestra Iglesia se encuentran a escala nacional e internacional ocurre “tras bastidores.” Raramente se escucha acerca de esto en las noticias de los medios de comunicación, a no ser que quiera hablar de algún asunto controvertido como la “planificación familiar” o la teoría económica. (El papa Francisco fue duramente criticado por sus aseveraciones en el capítulo cuarto de “Evangelii Gaudium” (“La alegría del Evangelio”)) de la que la riqueza de algunos países se basa en la pobreza de otras naciones.

¿Hasta qué punto entendemos el mensaje del Papa? ¿Dependemos de lo que escuchamos en los programas de radio o en los debates de aquellos partidistas, o hemos desarrollado una perspectiva global por cuenta propia? ¿Es nuestra experiencia con la Iglesia localmente un vicio, nuestra férula en solidaridad con nuestros hermanos y hermanas de toda la Iglesia universal?

Creo que el Espíritu Santo nos invita a pensar a escala mundial y a actuar localmente. Esto significa que debemos estar mejor informados acerca de las cuestiones importantes. También significa que tenemos que tener acceso a oportunidades específicas para hacer la diferencia aquí en Indiana y en distintas regiones del mundo.

El papa Francisco nos ha desafiado a todos a venimos como “discípulos misioneros” llamados a proclamar la alegría del Evangelio a nuestros hermanos y hermanas en todas partes. A medida que participamos en la planificación pastoral en nuestras localidades, continuaremos sondeando de qué forma la arquidiócesis puede ser más eficaz para crear una perspectiva internacional y proporcionar a los católicos del centro y el sur de Indiana los medios necesarios para pensar a escala mundial y actuar localmente. (Traducido por: Daniela Guanipa)
August 22-23

August 23

September 1
St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. Faithful Citizens Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. www.oneagleswings5k.com. 8:30-11 a.m., $22 for Run/Walk and Kids’ Fun Run. Registration 8 a.m. or online at www.oneagleswings5k.com.

September 2

September 5
St. Joseph School, 1337 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, 5692 N. Central Ave., Indianapolis. www.oneagleswings5k.com. 8:30-11 a.m., $22 for Run/Walk and Kids’ Fun Run. Registration 8 a.m. or online at www.oneagleswings5k.com.

September 6
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 4773 E. Morris Church St., Morris. Labor Day Picnic, chicken dinner, games, food. 10 a.m. Information: 812-934-6218.

September 7
Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, 9995 E. Base Road, Indianapolis. Serra Club Mass for Vocations, 8:30 a.m. All invited to Mass to pray for vocations and learn about the Serra Club. Information: 317-850-1382.

September 8
St. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1307 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Charismatic Mass, praise and worship 7 a.m., Mass 7-9 a.m. Information: 317-846-0705.

September 9-10
St. Augustine Hall, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Founders of Catholic Radio Indy, 90.9 FM, is to spread the Catholic faith on the airwaves. Information: 317-244-9002.

September 10
Mount St. Francis Retreat Center, 101 St. Anthony Drive, Mount St. Francis. Parish Picnic. 10 a.m.-1 p.m., chicken dinner, games, quilts. Information: 812-923-8817.

September 11
St. Catherine of Siena Parish, 9995 E. Base Road, Indianapolis. Serra Parish Festival, Fireside Inn fried chicken and roast beef dinners, beer garden, games 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Information: 812-934-2880.

September 12
The Slovenian National Home Picnics, 812-306-1311. Avon Slovenian Festival, 10 a.m.-11 p.m., gates open 10 a.m. Mass at noon and drinks for purchase starting at 1 p.m., 2 p.m., live music, no coolers or outside beverages, parking available at the Westfield West Hope North parking lot with shuttle to event. Information: 317-632-0619 or slovenianstyle@gmail.com.

September 13
St. Francis of Assisi Parish, 1375 S. Mckley Ave., Indianapolis. First Friday exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, rosary and Benediction, 4-6 p.m., Mass, 5:45 p.m. Information: 317-244-9002.

September 20
Labor Day Picnic, 11 a.m.-midnight, Picnic Buffet, 10 a.m.-11 p.m., country style chicken dinner, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m., $20, 2 p.m.-7 p.m., $25, games. Dinner reservations begin Aug. 1. Information and reservations: 812-663-3670.

September 21
St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 4773 E. Morris Church St., Morris. Labor Day Picnic, chicken dinner, games, food. 10 a.m. Information: 812-934-6218.

September 22
Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Solo Seniors, Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced. New members welcome. 6:30 p.m. Information: 317-243-0777.

September 25
St. Joseph Parish, 1375 S. Mckley Ave., Indianapolis. First Friday exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, rosary and Benediction, 4-6 p.m., Mass, 5:45 p.m. Information: 317-244-9002.

October 31
All Saints Parish Ladies Slovenian National Home, 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Slovenian National Home Festival, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., games, Fri. 5 p.m.-1 a.m., Sat. 5-11 p.m., Sun. 3-11 p.m., Clinton $jualan Club. Information: 317-244-9002.

November 1
St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 4773 E. Morris Church St., Morris. Labor Day Picnic, chicken dinner, games, food. 10 a.m. Information: 812-934-6218.

Retreats and Programs
September 5
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. Movie Night: “Philomena.” 6:30-9 p.m., freewill donations accepted, popcorn and lemonade. Information and RSVP: 812-933-6437 or email center@oldengroof.com.

September 6
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, Oldenburg. Italian Night Under the Stars—Wine and Antipasti Tasting, Mike Muller Catering, live music, raffles, 6:30 p.m.-5:45. Information and RSVP: 812-933-6437 or email center@oldengroof.com.

(For a list of retreats scheduled for the next eight weeks, log on to www.archindy.co/retreats.)

Saint Meinrad Archabbey welcomes two new novices
In a brief ceremony at the monastery entrance, Charles Peñalosa and John Avery II were clothed in the Benedictine habit on Aug. 5 at Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. They now begin a year of monastic formation, including study of the Rule of St. Benedict and monastic history.

Novice Charles, 22, is a native of the Philippines. Most recently, he has Health West Hospital in formation for the priesthood at the Archdiocese of Indianapolis at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology.

As novices, they will take a year off from formal studies and travel. The novice is a time of prayer and learning intended to help a novice discern his vocation as a monk.

At the end of this year, a novice may be permitted to profess temporary vows of obedience, fidelity to the monastic way of life and stability in the community of Saint Meinrad.

Novice John Avery, 28, attended North Central High School and was a member of St. Pius X Parish, both in Indianapolis.

He graduated from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., in 2008 with a bachelor’s degree in music, and then served five years in the Foreign Legion as a medic for the 1st French Legion in India.

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Founders of Catholic Radio Indy to speak at Marriage on Tap on Sept. 13
Bob and Sharon Teipen, founders of Catholic Radio Indy, will speak on “Marriage, Faith and Catholic Broadcasting” at Another Broken Egg Cafe, 9435 N. Meridian St. in Indianapolis, from 7-9 p.m. on Sept. 13.

The Teipens—both lifelong Catholics—will share how, after taking many leaps of faith, they founded Catholic Radio Indy on Ash Wednesday of 2004.

The mission of Catholic Radio Indy, which broadcasts on 89.1 FM and 90.9 FM, is to spread the Catholic faith through evangelization and catechesis.

Above, students at Our Lady of Providence Jr.-Sr. High School in Clarksville hustle to classes on Aug. 7.

( Photo by Natalie Hoeter)

Right, Jorge Lopez teaches a geometry class on Aug. 12 at Providence Cresto Rey High School in Indianapolis.

( Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Dylatsha Stark, left, and Johiel Austin, both freshmen at Providence Cresto Rey High School in Indianapolis, work together during a geometry class on Aug. 12.

( Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Seniors participate in a meet and greet during English class on July 31 at Our Lady of Providence Jr.-Sr. High School in Clarksville. Seniors wore black under their eyes to show their school spirit on the first day of school. Seated in the front row, from the left, are seniors Jack Bullington, Halie Vaught and Kathryn Frazier. Seated in the back row are Collin Rauck and Delaney Goss. (Submitted photo by Chinya Haywood)

Right, students at St. Mary School in Rushville were greeted by religion teacher Tom Giesling, who was dressed as Willy Wonka, and new principal Sheri Kirschner (not pictured) during the first week of school. A Willy Wonka-themed event led to every child receiving a “golden ticket” invitation at home prior to the first day. Each child received a specially wrapped chocolate bar in exchange for their ticket. Besides the candy bars, several lucky students received a special treat and lunch later that week. The event was a team effort with contributions from the principal, teachers and parents. (Submitted photo)

Seniors participate in a meet and greet during English class on July 31 at Our Lady of Providence Jr.-Sr. High School in Clarksville. Seniors wore black under their eyes to show their school spirit on the first day of school. Seated in the front row, from the left, are seniors Jack Bullington, Hallie Vaught and Kathryn Frazier. Seated in the back row are Collin Rauck and Delaney Goss. (Submitted photo by Christa Hoyland)

Everyone Invited!

St. Catherine of Siena
77th Annual Church Picnic
Enochsburg
Sunday, August 31, 2014
“Famous Fireside Inn Fried Chicken”
also, Roast Beef Dinners starting at 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Canteens Available
Beer Garden • Mock Turtle Soup • Homemde Pies
Sandwiches • Prizes • Quilts • Variety Stands • Games
Country Store • Music by Eureka Band (2:00-3:00 p.m.)
Take New Point exit 143 off I-74, go north on County Road 850 E.
¼ mile, turn right on Eade Road, go 3 miles
License #134757

Back-to-school basics … and some sweet treats, too

Dytatsha Stark, left, and Johiel Austin, both freshmen at Providence Cresto Rey High School in Indianapolis, work together during a geometry class on Aug. 12.

( Photo by Sean Gallagher)
MARTYRS

continued from page 1

“It was very great to see Pope Francis,” Sophia Moon, 26, told Catholic News Service. “He was very touching to us because in Korea there have been very hard times and there were [people who became martyrs].” The 124 were killed for their beliefs, setting off a 100-year period in the 18th and 19th centuries when the Korean government went after about 10,000 faithful who pledged filial piety to God, not the king of Joseon. Among those who attended the Mass were about 300 U.S. military personnel and 400 family members of the victims of the Sewol ferry accident, which left more than 300 dead in April.

The Sewol group had been protesting at the square for weeks, demanding a special law be passed for an independent investigation into the accident. They were determined to remain during the beatification Mass in hopes of an encounter with the pope. After days of negotiations, the committee handed over the pope’s visit granted access, and they got their wish. At the beatification Mass, Pope Francis swung by on the popemobile, many called out to him, pointing at the family members and one grieving father who had been a hunger strike for more than a month.

Kim Young-oh, father of a teenage girl who died in the capsized ferry, told CNS she had the pope grabbed his hands and, because a fence separated them and he could not hug the pope, he laid his forehead twice on the pope’s hands. Kim said he asked to give him a letter, and the pope nodded and tucked it into his cassock.

“I was really prepared to meet the pope and [spell] out that there is a strong need for this bill, and we’re really fighting for this bill,” said Kim through an interpreter. “And after this long time on this [hunger] strike, I kind of succeeded [by] meeting the point person. I saw real hope.”

Pope Francis delivers a homily at the beatification Mass of Paul Yun Ji-chung and 123 martyred companions in Seoul, South Korea, on Aug. 16. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Pope tells Asians to witness to Christ in all aspects of life

SEOSAN, South Korea (CNS) — Pope Francis told young Asian Catholic leaders to witness to Christ in everything they do.

During his homily on the muddy grounds of Haemi Fortress, Pope Francis urged more than 40,000 people—including young Catholic leaders from 22 Asian countries—to “reflect God’s love.” He reminded them it was their “right and duty to take part in the life of [their] societies.”

“They cannot be afraid to bring the wisdom of faith to every aspect of social life,” the pontiff said. He also urged them to discern “what is incompatible with your Catholic faith and what aspects of contemporary culture are sinful, corrupt and lead to death.”

Young people are always choosing their social lives over other things, and this makes it complicated to “grow up in their faith also,” said Montira Hokjaroen, a youth coordinator in Thailand’s Udon Thani Diocese. She said it was especially hard for young Thai Catholics to practice their faith in a predominantly Buddhist country where less than half of 1 percent of the population is Catholic.

Hokjaroen, 34, was one of 20 participants who had lunch with Pope Francis on Aug. 15. She told Catholic News Service it was good he nudged the youth leaders to evangelize “because I think the people will learn [about] Jesus through us.”

Rain threatened the Aug. 17 closing Mass for Asian Youth Day, which, unlike the massive international World Youth Day events, focuses more on youth leaders. At one point, the wind whipped off the pope’s cap.

Pope Francis emphasized the theme of this year’s gathering, “Asian Youth Wake Up, the Glory of the Church’s present,” in his homily.

It’s no good when I see young people who sleep,” said the pontiff. “No! Wake up! Go Go!”

Haemi Fortress was where thousands of Catholics were killed during a 100-year period in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the 1700s, laypeople formed the Church based on the whimsical writings that they got ahold of from China. The original founders pledged loyalty to God rather than the Korean king, which was socially unacceptable. The government pursued them for carrying out Catholic rites and baptisms, killing 10,000 faithful in the century beginning in 1791.

A day before the closing Mass, Pope Francis beatified 124 of the founders of the Catholic Church in Korea, moving them a step closer to sainthood.

Michael Hwang of Seoul said being on those grounds was “exhausting emotionally” because his ancestors were among those executed. But he told CNS he was glad to be a part of Asian Youth Day because it brought him closer to other Catholics from Asia.

“The pope said to wake up and a lot of people can come together, and we could be like one nation,” said Hwang, a 17-year-old high school student.

Hwang said his friends are not Catholic, “but I think Catholicism is a great thing and I can tell to my friends about how [being] Catholic is great, and this event will be a great background to teach or tell other people.”

Stephen Borja of Manila, Philippines, told CNS the founding of the Church in Korea “is such a unique story, and it really touched me. How passionate they were about receiving the faith, standing up for it, even giving up their lives for it.”

Borja, 34, works with the youth commission of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines. He said the pope’s words inspired him to show his faith to others, which is still a challenge in his predominantly Catholic country.

The three characteristics the pope identified for the Church in Asia are “holier, more missionary and humble,” he said. “Those are words I would carry with me and also with my work in the Church.”

Pope Francis celebrated Mass at an altar made up of 16 wooden crosses that locked together like wooden blocks and were decorated by the youth. Readings and intercessions were in Filipino, Indonesian, Korean and other languages.

“As young Christians, whether you are workers or students, whether you have already begun a career or have answered the call to marriage, religious life or the priesthood, you are not only a part of the future of the Church, you are also a necessary and beloved part of the Church’s present,” said the pope.

He told young Asians to build “a Church which loves and worships God by seeking to serve the poor, the lonely, the infirm and the marginalized.”

Bishop Peter Kang U-il of Jeju, president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Korea, noted that this was the first Asian Youth Day attended by a pope.

“The young Asians may have experienced an extraordinary moment of grace, and they also may have acquired the seed of courage and hope for their future, because Your Holiness shared a great affection and intimacy with them,” he told CNS at the Mass.

Young people pray as Pope Francis celebrates the closing Mass of the sixth Asian Youth Day at Haemi Castle in Seosan, South Korea, on Aug. 17. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)
Charity, forgiveness keys to Korean reunification, says pontiff

SEoul, South Korea (CNS)—Pope Francis told Korean Catholics that the reunification of their divided peninsula as well as the harmony of South Korean society depend on the practice of Gospel virtues, especially charity and forgiveness.

“God’s promise to restore unity and prosperity to ‘a people dispersed by disaster and division ... irrevocably tied to a command: the command to return to God and wholeheartedly obey his law,’” Pope Francis said.

In a homily following Mass Sunday Aug. 18, during a Mass for peace and reconciliation at Seoul’s Myeongdong Cathedral, Pope Francis said Jesus asked people “to believe that forgiveness is the door which leads to reconciliation.”

But he admitted his decision to call off a planned June 27 visit to Rome’s Gemelli Hospital, one of several appointments he had canceled due to illness, came after “very demanding days. Now I should be a bit more prudent.”

The pope showed little concern for his longevity, however, predicting with a laugh that his pontificate would last “two or three years, and then to the house of the Father.”

In the meantime, to guard against the temptation of pride in his immense popularity, “I try to think of my sins, of my mistakes.”

Asked about other foreign travel, besides officially announced trips to Albania in September and Sri Lanka and the Philippines in January, Pope Francis said he had received invitations to Spain and Japan but that nothing had been decided yet.

The pope said he would gladly visit China “tomorrow,” even though the Vatican has not had diplomatic relations with Beijing since shortly after the China’s 1949 communist revolution. The two sides have struggled over issues of religious freedom, including the pope’s right to appoint bishops, and Chinese authorities have frequently arrested Catholics who reject government control of the Church.

The pope said he respected the Chinese people.”

The pope said the church asks only the liberty to do its work, “no other condition.”

He noted that clear communication the Church should not accept a rigid separation between religion and politics. On four of his five days in South Korea, he wore a yellow ribbon pin remembering the approximately 300 people killed in the April sinking of the Sewol ferry, a gesture some interpreted as support for demands by victims’ families that the government appoint an independent investigation of the disaster.

The pope praised the government and the Korean Catholic Church for offering a home to the pope during the visit, which occurred “after ‘very demanding days. Now I should be a bit more prudent.’”

The pope suggested the need for reconciliation lay “not only between South Korea and the communist North, which have been divided since the end of the Korean War in 1953, but within South Korea itself, the world’s 13th-largest economy, where prosperity has brought increased inequality.

“God’s urgent summons to conversion also challenges Christ’s followers in Korea to examine the quality of their own contribution to the building of a truly just and humane society,” he said.

The pope urged Korean Catholics to “show evangelical concern for the least fortunate, the marginalized, those without work and those who do not share in the prosperity of the many,” and to “firmly reject a mindset shaped by suspicion, confrontation and competition.”

“Let us pray, then, for the emergence of new opportunities for dialogue, encounter and the resolution of differences, for continued generosity in providing humanitarian assistance to those in need, and for ever greater recognition that all Koreans are brothers and sisters, members of one family, one people,” he said.

Before the Mass, Pope Francis met with Buddhist, Orthodox, Lutheran and other Protestant leaders. He asked them to pray for him, and said “I believe that we have to walk together with other brothers and sisters in the presence of God. And so I am sincerely grateful for all of the leaders of various religions. It is a path that we walk together.”

Bishop Peter Kang U-il of Jeju, president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Korea, said the bishops held a small farewell party for the pope before he left for the airport to return to Rome. He said the last thing Pope Francis said to the bishops was “Please pray for me.”

Seoul Auxiliary Bishop Basil Cho Kyu-man said when he watched Pope Francis, he thought, “Oh this is how Jesus Christ approached the poor in the past.” He said he believed the pope had planted a seed of faith that the bishops need to nourish.

The pope recalled: “I took [the pin] out of solidarity with them, and after half a day, somebody came up to me and said, ‘You should take it off; you need to be neutral.’ I answered this way: ‘Listen, with human pain you can’t be neutral! That’s how I feel.’”

The pope said he “would like” to attend the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in September 2015. He also noted that Obama and the U.S. Congress have invited him to Washington, D.C., and that the secretary-general of the United Nations has invited him to New York.

“Maybe the three cities together, no?” he said, adding that he could also visit the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico on the same trip—but “it is not certain.”

Asked about the beatification cause of the late Archbishop Romero of San Salvador, an outspoken advocate for the poor who was killed in 1980 during his country’s civil war, the pope said theologians still need to clarify if he was killed because of his faith.

“For me, Romero is a man of God,” the pope said. “But the process must go ahead, and God must give his sign. If he wants to do so, he will.”

Pope Francis also reported progress on a future encyclical on ecology, saying that Father Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, had delivered a draft a few days before the pope’s departure for South Korea.

The pope said the draft encyclical was about one third longer than the 50,000-word apostolic exhortation “Evangelii Gaudium,” but that it would be shortened by removing the more debatable scientific hypotheses or references in the draft.

“An encyclical like this, which must be magisterial, must rely only on certainties,” he said. “Because if the pope says something, the center of the universe is the Earth, not the sun, he errs.”
Benedictine sisters to bestow Angel of Grace awards

By Natalie Hoffer

Throughout the Bible, three archangels are listed by name: Gabriel, messenger of good news to Mary and Zechariah; Michael, defender of heaven who chased the devil out of hell, and Raphael, the traveling companion of Tobias.

For the last seven years, the Sisters of St. Benedict in Beech Grove have followed three women who have selflessly served in roles typically held in the roles of messenger, defender and companion, and recognized their service with an “Angel of Grace” award.

This year’s recipients are Impact 100 Greater Indianapolis co-founder Donna M. Oklak for the “messenger” Archangel Gabriel Award; former first lady of Indiana Judy O’Bannon for the “defender” Archangel Michael Award, and The Good House volunteer Lori Hofmann for the “companion” Archangel Raphael Award.

These women will receive their award at a fashion show and luncheon fundraiser honoring all women and benefiting women’s programs at the Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center and the Benedictine sisters in Beech Grove. The event will take place at Primo Banquet Hall in Indianapolis from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sept. 27.

By Brandon A. Evans

What was in the news on August 21, 1964? A prelate calls for world Catholicism. It got what many deem an embarrassment about receiving the Archangel Michael Award. 

“The is a great tool for women to discern and make strategic giving decisions so money can go out to help the community.”

Archangel Michael Award winner Judy O’Bannon

Former first lady of Indiana Judy O’Bannon is still a first lady when it comes to defending the self-worth of Hoosiers and the needs of the elderly. 

“I work with bone marrow transplant nurses and cancer social workers at [Indiana University Hospital]. I work with the patients when they’ve gone through so much, and seeing people that thrive out of these terrible situations, I’ve been fortunate enough not to have to go through, and they’re still able to override things,” Hofmann said.

What do you get when you combine the different nonprofit areas listed above. Throughout the process of learning about the community, each committee selects one final applicant, then all of the women decide collaboratively by consensus who will get that year’s “defender” Archangel Michael Award; and The Good House have found three women who have heroically modeled by friends of the Benedict Inn and will be available for purchase, with 10 percent of the proceeds going toward the women’s programs at the center. Raffles will also be held for gift baskets and a week’s stay at a home on Lake Michigan.

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“Through the pages of theCriterion, I get applications from all these nonprofits doing fantastic things. [Creating Impact 100 Greater Indianapolis] allowed me to have that same job.”

Judy O’Bannon

For more information on The Good House, visit www.thegoodhouseindy.org.

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NEW YORK—Archbishop Iakovos, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, expressed ‘mixed feelings’ over the first encyclical of Pope Paul VI, which questions the document’s effect on Christian unity efforts.

Both were named after saints. Paul VI had already set forth his program and announced his aims: In his first radio message to the world following his election, His Holiness had declared: ‘The chief task of our Pontificate will be the progress of the Ecumenical Council, Vatican II, on which the eyes of all men are fixed.’

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• Lay alumni fund aids needy seminarians
• Implementing the poverty battle in our communities
• Bishop urges women to wage poverty war
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• Daniell and Roberta Groves
• Liturgical Week Masses will be in vernacular
• [Daughters of Isabella] delegates receive $1,000 from leukemia

Archangel Raphael Award winner Donna M. Oklak

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What was in the news on August 21, 1964? A prelate calls for world Catholicism. It got what many deem an embarrassment about receiving the Archangel Michael Award.
The one hand, and when they’re venturing because “it’s the best catechetical conference over similar gatherings eight attendees received financial aid to been able to do so. Hope (UCA),” several catechists from “United Catholic Appeal: Christ Our housing, attending can be difficult. They need to give in their ministry. receive both the what and the who that Steubenville in Steubenville, Ohio, to attend the annual four-day St. John Bosco Educators at Franciscan University of attend the annual four-day St. John Bosco conference.

Archbishop [Joseph W.] Tobin carry Catholic Education. In the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education. As one who is “here to help Archbishop [Joseph W.] Tobin carry his vision for faith formation in the archdiocese,” Ogorek encourages archdiocesan catechetical leaders to attend the annual four-day St. John Bosco Conference for Catechists and Religious Educators at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. Wagner and Chamberlain were attending the St. John Bosco Conference for Catechists and Religious Educators offered every summer at the university. (Submitted photo)

Academic in nature, while others were more inspirational. “And part of the opportunity of being able to get away there is to take advantage of Mass every day, and there are different prayer opportunities that are programmed into the conference. It’s a good mix.” Christine Beiriger, director of faith formation at St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis, was able to attend the conference through the help of appeal funds, as well as financial support from her parish. “I learned so much,” she said. “I learned how to do my job from people who’ve been doing it 20, 30 years, the best in the business.” One of the most impactful workshops for her, she said, was one on the basics. “The workshop was on how to recruit, form and train catechists. I can’t believe I didn’t know how to do that or think to do that other than to say. ‘Here’s the book.’” Beiriger, a graduate of Franciscan University, was reminded of words that her professors there “drilled into my head.” “Kids, especially teens, and people in general, don’t listen to teachers. They listen to witnesses. Kids only listen to teachers when they’re first witnesses. It’s important for catechists to have a personal relationship with the Lord, so they can witness to kids.”

Thanks to the help of United Catholic Appeal funds, several catechists are now better able to “dive into the program where God has them, whether it’s in a parish or a school or youth ministry,” said Ogorek. “These folks are not only growing closer to Jesus, they’re also forming bonds of prayer and fellowship with each other that will help nourish their efforts to help teach the faith in the years to come.”

Beiriger agreed. “It was wonderful,” she said. “I am so grateful for the opportunity.”

For more information about the United Catholic Appeal, log on to www.archindy.org/ua or call the Office of Stewardship and Development at 317-236-4245 or 800-882-9835, ext. 1425. For more information on the St. John Bosco Conference for Catechists and Religious Educators, contact Ken Ogorek at 317-236-1448 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1446, or by e-mail at ko@archindy.org.

Liberian health system suffers from strain of caring for growing number of Ebola patients

CAPE TOWN. South Africa (CNS)—Liberia’s health system is in “complete shambles,” a Church aid agency said, as the death of a Spanish priest brought to six the number of caregivers at a Catholic-run hospital in the capital of Monrovia who have died of Ebola in August. Father Miguel Pajares, 75, a member of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God, died in a Madrid hospital on Aug. 12. He had been evacuated from Liberia on Aug. 7. A few hours after the priest’s death, the World Health Organization endorsed the use of experimental medication to combat the Ebola virus, which has claimed more than 1,000 lives in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

The Spanish health ministry said earlier that it had obtained the U.S.-manufactured drug Zmapp, for the missionary priest. Caritas Liberia reported in an Aug. 12 notice to health workers that the Liberian health system “is in complete shambles with immense strains.” “Suspected, probable, and confirmed cases of Ebola as well as Ebola-related deaths continue to rise with isolation centers overcrowded with victims. Most of the referral hospitals in Monrovia are closed due to limited safety gears for health workers and support staffs,” the message said, which was shared with Catholic News Service. Three or four doctors are under a 21-day observation at the hospital as caregivers look for signs of the virus, Sister Barbara told CNS on Aug. 12 from Makena, where she is on home leave. The doctors are not allowed to work in case they are infected with the virus, she said, adding that the hospital will reopen when the observation period ends and the hospital has been decontaminated.

Catechists Mary Wagner, left, of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, and Lynell Chamberlain of St. Joseph Parish in Clark County pause for a conversation near the statue of Saint Francis of Assisi on July 15 on the campus of Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. Wagner and Chamberlain were attending the St. John Bosco Conference for Catechists and Religious Educators offered every summer at the university. (Submitted photo)
Robin Williams: A lesson from the dimming of a bright star

Once, during a trip to New York City, some friends and I stopped into a restaurant on Seventh Avenue for dinner. I was happily slurping down my pho-boodle noodle dish, when I heard a familiar voice. The comedian Robin Williams, Mrs. Doubtfire himself, was sitting less than 10 feet away, telling hilarious stories to friends gathered around his dinner table.

It was really neat to see that Williams was as funny in real life as he appeared to be on the stage and screen.

What I didn't know that night was that Williams struggled with depression, like hundreds of thousands of other human beings. It was that depression which may have caused his tragic death in August.

Clinical depression has a lot to do with the way chemicals function in your brain. Scientists have found that chemicals that help regulate your mood are severely low in depressed people. They can even episodically be high.

But society stigmatizes depression as just a case of "being sad," and tells the depressed to "get over it." Yet, the truth is that some who are clinically depressed to hide their illness until it is too late. Sarah Brubaker, a ordained minister who learned how to help others who are depressed, said that she has been a mentor to many people who feel that they cannot find a support system. She said, "It is really important to be aware of these feelings, don't stay silent. Reach out and connect with people or resources that can help. Don't think depression is a shameful thing. Treating it is the same as making chicken soup for a cold, or running to the pharmacist for the right prescription. You will help someone feel better about themselves—and, in some cases, you may actually save a life."

Sometimes, all that stands between someone who is depressed and the darkness of oblivion is a friend who cares enough to take their hand. Robin Williams was a bright light for everyone. He was an incredible performer and a comedian of the highest caliber. He will be missed by his family, by the artistic world, by the audience who watched. The world is a better place because he brought mirth and joy. If you think you might be depressed, or if you know someone who may be depressed, please get help. This world cannot stand to lose your bright light, too.

(Karen Osborne writes for Catholic News Service.)

Celiac disease is an autoimmune reaction that can be triggered in wheat, rye, and barley and many prepared foods, such as wheat-based and pastas.

According to the Mayo Clinic, about in one people are affected by celiac disease.

Celiac disease can cause severe stomach pain and diarrhea and, in extreme cases, nutritional deficits due to the disease’s interference with nutrient absorption. A gluten-free diet is the most effective way to manage celiac disease, but this can be difficult because the protein is found in so many foods, including wheat products used at holyCommunions.

At about the same time, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and other Church leaders were studying the celiac/gluten issue. Given that altar bread must be made from wheat and rye flour, many people felt that they could not fully participate in holy Communions.

Then, one day, said Sister Lynn, "We were working with two different kinds of wheat starch. I felt like nothing was working. Sister Jane said, 'What happens if we mix them together?'

Then, one day I remember thinking, "Sure, it's the same as making chicken soup for a cold, or running to the pharmacist for the right prescription. You will help someone feel better about themselves—and, in some cases, you may actually save a life."

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(Karen Osborne writes for Catholic News Service.)
Sunday Readings

Sunday, August 24, 2014

• Isaiah 22:19-23
• Romans 11:33-36
• Matthew 16:13-20

The first section of the Book of Isaiah provides this weekend with its first reading.

The author of this section of Isaiah lived when the southern Hebrew kingdom, or the kingdom of Judah, still existed. Only the northern Hebrew kingdom, and the other Hebrew kingdom, the kingdom of Israel, bewildered by outside invaders.

As has been and is so often the case of national rulers, the king of Judah governed the country with the assistance of aides and subordinates. The principal assistant wore a distinctive badge to authenticate to any and all that he acted in the king’s behalf. This distinctive badge was a key.

In this reading, God, speaking through the prophet, stated that a chief minister would be selected to serve the king and to carry out the royal will. This official would wear the key.

An important point in this reading is that God intervenes in human lives, and uses human agents to accomplish the divine will and to communicate his words to people.

The prophet, the king and the chief minister all were commissioned by God to bring him to the people, and the people to him.

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans again is the source of the Church’s second reading. Romans has been read for the past several weekends. It is a great testimony to the majesty of God. As such, it is a great expression of Paul’s own faith. In it, he refers to various Old Testament passages in asking who has been God’s counselor in order to emphasize the ultimate transcendence of God’s judgments and ways. Nonetheless, Paul elsewhere affirms that God, working through people, is able to use humans to communicate with him to be counselled by him.

In this reading this weekend, the Church offers us a passage from St. Matthew’s Gospel. It is an especially descriptive and enlightening reading.

The occurrence at Caesarea Philippi, a place northeast of Capernaum. At the time of Jesus, this place was a resort. The River Jordan forms here from springs, and small creeks flow from it. Still picturesque, it is a modern, popular place for relaxation and for delighting in nature.

Central to the reading is St. Peter’s confession of faith in Jesus. The Lord asked the Apostles, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” (Mt 16:13). Jesus identified with the “Son of Man” of the Old Testament, who was God’s special agent.

The Apostles replied that the people were confused. Some saw Jesus as a prophet, such as John the Baptist, or even Elijah. Jesus pressed the question, and Peter declared that Jesus was the “Son of the living God,” a profound proclamation of the Lord’s own divinity (Mt 16:16). Peter had faith, and faith gave him insight and wisdom.

Reflection

Before accepting Christianity, two steps are necessary. The first is to realize that God exists. The second is to believe that God communicates with people, and people may communicate with God. Neither is easy in our culture.

God is not boisterous. He does not shout his divine revelation at us. He does not thunder divine decrees. Indeed, humans cannot comprehend the divine message unless they have faith. Otherwise, it is puzzling or even nonsensical.

These readings build upon the basic thought that God exists, a Supreme, eternal Being, great and unique in power, wisdom and mercy. Such was the testimony of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans read this weekend.

The readings from Isaiah and Matthew clearly indicate that God speaks through human instruments, such as Isaiah, the king and his servant.

What about Peter? His great faith gave him extraordinary wisdom. In his faith, he saw genuine reality. Jesus is God.

What does our faith allow us to see? Are we confused? Or are we secure in our knowledge of God?  

Daily Readings

Monday, August 25
St. Louis
St. Joseph Calasanz, priest
2 Thessalonians 1:1-5, 11-12
Psalm 96:1-5
Matthew 23:13-22

Tuesday, August 26
St. Theresa
2 Thessalonians 2:1-3a, 14-17
Psalm 96:10-12
Matthew 23:23-26

Wednesday, August 27
St. Monica
2 Thessalonians 3:6-10, 16-18
Psalm 128:1-2, 4-5
Matthew 23:27-32

Thursday, August 28
St. Augustine, bishop and doctor of the Church
1 Corinthians 1:1-9
Psalm 145:2-7
Matthew 24:42-51

Friday, August 29
The Passion of St. John the Baptist
1 Corinthians 1:17-25
Psalm 33:1-5, 10-11
Mark 6:17-29

Saturday, August 30
St. Monica
1 Corinthians 1:26-31
Psalm 33:12-18, 19-22
Matthew 25:14-30

Sunday, August 31
Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Jeremiah 20:7-9
Psalm 63:2-6, 8-9
Romans 12:1-2
Matthew 16:21-27

Question Corner

Fr. Kenneth Doyle

A need for a savior can be accepted in various interpretations of Genesis

I believe in the evolutionary theory of creation and have never given much thought to its impact on Christianity—until recently. While talking to a local priest, he mentioned that Adam and Eve were fictional characters who have provided generations with lessons on good and evil, and who thus provided the foundation for redemption.

I agreed, but later it made me wonder about all that. Most of the Bible: the concept of original sin, the promise of a savior, etc. And so, simply asked, “If there was an exchange of rings, after the rings have been blessed. Is the exchange of rings necessary in a Catholic wedding ceremony? My daughter doesn’t wear any jewelry and doesn’t intend to wear a wedding ring either. What happens in that case?” (Ireland)

A The heart of the Catholic marriage ceremony is the exchange of consent by the couple, and that is all that is ultimately required. The priest or deacon asks the couple the following three questions:

“Have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?” “Will you love and honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives?” “Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?”

Then the man and woman pronounce their wedding vows (usually by repeating them, in short phrases, after the priest or deacon). Technically, that is all that is required for the sacrament. Most often, the vows are followed immediately by an exchange of rings, after the rings have been blessed.

In many cultures, rings are widely recognized signs of lifelong commitment to love and fidelity, but they are not an essential element of the marriage ceremony. So your daughter needn’t worry.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle or to kfdoherty@gmail.com and 40 Hopewell St., Albanar, N.Y. 12208.)
Coffee problems

Manuel Antonio Gutierrez inspects his coffee crop in rural El Salvador on July 3. A coffee fungus is the latest misfortune for Central America, where the nonprofit International Coffee Organization estimated in 2013 that growers would see production losses of $900 million and nearly 3,740,000 lost jobs. The fungus may be a factor in the increase of emigration of people from El Salvador to the United States. Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities agencies in El Salvador have helped farmers find alternative ways of earning an income. (CNS photo/David Agren)

Franciscan Sister Helen Saler

Franciscan Sister Helen Saler, previously Sister Devota Saler, died on Aug. 4 at the St. Clare Health Center at the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of Francis in Oldenburg. She was 85.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Aug. 7 at the Motherhouse Chapel. Burial followed at the sisters’ cemetery.

Helen Rose Saler was born on Feb. 10, 1929, and grew up in Enochsburg. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis on Feb. 2, 1952, and professed final vows on Aug. 12, 1957.

During 62 years as a Sister of St. Francis, Sister Helen ministered as a teacher and principal in Catholic schools and as director of religious education in various parishes.

In the archdiocese, Sister Helen taught at St. Mark the Evangelist School, St. Michael the Archangel School and St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School in Indianapolis, St. Gabriel School in Connersville and St. Lawrence School in Lawrenceburg.

She also ministered as director of religious education at the former St. Joseph Parish in St. Leon.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, IN 47361-0100.

Latin American Church leaders pledge to promote family’s role in society

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (CNS)—Church workers and bishops from across Latin America emerged from a first-of-its-kind regional congress on Aug. 9 pledging to strengthen the Church’s work in promoting the role of the family in society.

Seeking to renew their commitment to promoting family values, representatives of 22 bishops’ conferences from Latin America and the Caribbean attended the First Latin American Congress of Family Pastoral Agents in Panama, according to the Latin American bishops’ council, CELAM.

“Enlightened by the Holy Spirit and inspired by the values of the Holy Family of Nazareth, we want to tend to all families in Latin America, the Caribbean and around the world this message of hope,” said a statement released at the conference’s conclusion by CELAM’s Department of Family Life and Youth.

The conference was aimed at reminding families to “live the values of the Gospel, to be certain that we are not alone and that together we can face the storms that threaten the identity and the mission of marriage, the family and life,” the statement said.

Organizers called for the congress—which will be followed by a series of smaller meetings in 2015—among numerous social trends that have raised a red flag for the Church. Among those changes are a rising number of divorces, fewer two-parent homes and a corresponding increase in the percentage of single-parent families.

“We are at a stage of change, which is generating new concepts, understandings, positions and actions facing the idea of family as society’s primary cell,” said a statement signed by five Latin American bishops and Father Antonio Jose Velaquez, executive secretary of the department.

The document said the Church’s pastoral mission needs to work more fervently to push the importance of the family unit as an agent of social development and influence governments as they consider public policies that affect the family structure.

“In general, what came out of [the congress] was a greater determination to do more to strengthen pastoral ministries for families overall,” said Trinitarian Father Juan Molina, director of the U.S. bishops’ office on Latin America and the Caribbean, “One of the main conclusions is that the church has a fundamental role in protecting life and in promoting better policies for family leave.

Central American and Mexican leaders raised the issue of immigration, including the surge in child migrants crossing into the U.S. from Mexico, which is separating families.
WASHINGTON (CNS)—Health care policy remains a potentially divisive subject not only in Congress but in the heartland of America, as hospitals across the country continue to be affected by state decisions regarding Medicaid expansion.

Although Medicaid has provided affordable health insurance to low-income individuals for decades, provisions in the 2010 Affordable Care Act now allow states to extend health care coverage to millions of additional uninsured Americans who had previously not qualified for the program.

Prior to 2010, the median eligibility level for working parents to qualify for Medicaid was 61 percent of the federal poverty level, and non-disabled adults without dependent children were ineligible to receive health insurance through the program. Today, states that decide to expand Medicaid benefits extend health care coverage to all non-elderly individuals in families with incomes below 133 percent of the federal poverty level, which is $27,310 for a family of three in 2014.

While many legislators were concerned that extending coverage would be a costly process, the federal government has agreed to cover the majority of costs associated with expansion, paying 90 percent of the cost of covering newly eligible individuals through 2016 and 100 percent subsequently.

In addition, researchers at the Urban Institute have estimated that, if every state elected to expand Medicaid, reductions in uncompensated care currently financed by state governments would be more than offset any additional Medicaid costs, generating $10 billion over 10 years for all states.

So far, 22 million Americans have gained Medicaid or Children’s Health Insurance Program coverage in hospitals within 26 states and the District of Columbia. One of those hospitals, Mercy Medical Center in Canton, Ohio, uses Medicaid and other community health programs to provide quality health care for all individuals.

Thomas Turner, vice president of development, physician services and government relations at Mercy Medical Center, described how employees at the Catholic hospital “continue Christ’s healing ministry.”

“Our role in this community is to provide affordable, accessible care for individuals in a Christ-like fashion, and we continue to do that by providing the dignity of coverage to people who are working and trying to contribute to society,” Turner said.

“I come to the cross no matter what your current status in life may be. We in Catholic health care grant charity to patients on their balance on a bill after insurance payments, or will provide charity care based on need if there is no ability to pay. We have become a more trusted partner of care because of the work that we do as the faith-based hospital in the region.”

On June 30, 2014, 285,000 newly enrolled individuals have benefited from Medicaid expansion in Ohio, and hospitals like Mercy Medical Center have increased revenues as they continue serving new patients daily.

“We have seen a lot of people who are eligible now that had never been before, and have expanded our primary care network in order to meet the demand,” Turner told Catholic News Service.

“In women’s health, more people are getting their well-checks and examinations because they know that there is a methodology to pay for it.”

“Women are becoming more apt to go and see the pediatrician or go to their primary care doctor instead of avoiding medical care and ending up in the emergency room,” he added.

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—Thomas Turner, vice president of development, physician services and government relations at Mercy Medical Center

‘People feel that they have found greater access to care, and we attribute this to the expansion of Medicaid.’

Although many individuals have benefited from newfound coverage in expansion states, many hospitals in the 24 states that have not opted to expand Medicaid are facing increased economic hardship because they are serving more uninsured patients and are not receiving federal money they expected to cover uncompensated care. Some hospitals have had to shut down.

During a recent news conference, the Rev. Susan McCann of Grace Episcopal Church in Kansas City, Mo., described how the people in her state have been affected by the decision not to expand coverage.

“Life expectancy in one-fourth of our counties is going down,” McCann said. “This is the first time that this has happened in recent recorded history. People in Missouri are living sicker and dying younger, and we believe the decision not the expand Medicaid has produced this moral crisis.”

Gabriela Saenz, vice president of advocacy and public policy for CHRISTUS Health in Texas and Louisiana, explained how hospitals in non-expansion states are being affected by decisions regarding Medicaid.

“For CHRISTUS, more than 60 percent of reimbursement comes from government-sponsored care, like Medicare and Medicaid,” Saenz said. “Medicaid expansion or alternatives to Medicaid provide financial relief for hospitals, physicians, employers, counties and property owners. Ultimately, it is about creating a stronger state economy.

“Without it, uninsured, low-wage working individuals will rely on hospital ERs as their primary source of health care, leading to major financial repercussions to the entire state’s economy.”

According to a July 3 report released by the presidential Council of Economic Advisers, the 24 states that have not yet expanded Medicaid “would have created an additional $66 billion in total economic activity through 2017,” and helped produce 184,000 new jobs in 2015 alone if they had made the decision to expand Medicaid benefits according to the provisions in the Affordable Care Act.

Although expansion would produce numerous benefits, many legislators have not elected to expand Medicaid coverage because they believe the federal government cannot afford to keep its promises to pay for expensive statewide expansion initiatives and would leave state governments with even larger health care bills than those they say are currently facing.

In addition, many legislators believe the entire U.S. health care system is deeply flawed and government Medicaid cannot be expanded until health care undergoes major systemic changes.

“Along with the governors of both Louisiana and Texas, many of our state lawmakers believe that the current Medicaid system is broken, and that infusing money into a ‘broken’ system is not the answer,” Saenz said.

“There are many alternatives that states may seek that could offer a private market-based coverage plan that will improve the health of low-wage working citizens and strengthen the state’s economy.”

While Saenz does not believe that legislators in Louisiana or Texas will choose to expand Medicaid coverage, she remains hopeful that individuals still living without health insurance will be offered the care that they need.

“For non-expansion states, doing nothing is not the answer,” Saenz said. “There are too many lives at risk and too much money already invested by providers and taxpayers. We are hopeful that legislators will consider alternative options to Medicaid expansion and provide necessary care to the American people.”

**This is an undated exterior shot of Mercy Medical Center in Canton, Ohio. So far, 5.2 million Americans have gained Medicaid or Children’s Health Insurance Program coverage in hospitals within 26 states and the District of Columbia. One of those hospitals, Mercy Medical Center, uses Medicaid and other community health programs to provide quality health care for all individuals. (CNS photo/courtesy Mercy Medical Center)
to house them,” although the job is a bit easier now with their new 12-bed facility. In 1995, a new type of shelter was conceived and built, a transitional home that could house seven mothers and their children—up to two children under the age of 4 per mother—in small apartments. “They have up to two years at the transitional home,” Casper explains. “The average stay is 10 months.”

Mothers who move from the maternity home to the transitional home are encouraged to improve their lives, says Townsend-Cronin.

“Our main goal for them is a job and a housing,” she explains. “From day one, we get them working toward moving out into some sort of permanent housing. We push hard for them to look for a job and stable housing.”

Knowing a young woman’s next step into renting an apartment or buying a home could be risky given their lack of experience, St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities recently started a third form of shelter called ASH—or Affordable Supportive Housing—larger apartments rented on a sliding scale based on income. “The goal is for them to continue the improvement they’ve been doing in the transitional home or off the streets,” says Townsend-Cronin. “They get quarterly rent reviews, and paying rent plus utilities gives them the ability to build their own credit. The idea is that they’ll eventually be able to buy their own home or go into fair market rent.”

Through purchasing homes and former multiple-unit rentals and repurposing the former eight-bedroom house at 313 W. Walnut Street, the agency now has five ASH units available, with two more to be completed by the end of the year and three more in 2015. “We are the last emergency shelter for pregnant women, and we’re one of the last transitional shelters in the community,” says Townsend-Cronin.

The homes housing the ASH units—as well as the new maternity home and the transitional home—are all located on one block between 6th and 7th Streets, as is St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities’ newly renovated social services offices. For the young mothers to move from the transitional housing to an ASH rental “is not a baby step,” says Townsend- Cronin, “But they still have access to our services, whether they choose to move into the community, they could hit a rough spot, be evicted and be right back in the same spot just because they don’t have that experience yet.”

And there is the security of the familiar, says Casper, a member of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville.

“On the campus they have security, they have friendships they’ve made, sharing rides, access to case management and mental health, the distribution center,” he says. “There’s a sense of community they develop.”

Programs beyond ‘moms and babies’

In 2004, St. Elizabeth Home and Catholic Charities, two separate agencies in New Albany, were merged, creating one entity that served far more than women in crisis pregnancies. (See related list on this page.)

Beyond the maternity home, transitional housing and ASH units, St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities offers six other programs that meet the needs of the community beyond “moms and babies,” says Townsend-Cronin. Counseling is one such service. “Except for our ASH program, we require all of our residents to receive individual counseling as well as group counseling,” she says. “And we also provide community health counseling.”

The community is also served by the agency’s Distribution Program run totally by volunteers,” she says. With a form of identification and proof of a child, anyone can receive free baby food, diapers and formula. Baby and maternity clothing, blankets, car seats and baby beds are also available.

The agency also offers adoption services in Indiana and Kentucky, as well as providing home studies for international adoption.

Casper explains another financial advantage is that the ASH homes were paid for by cash through special fundraising efforts, so the agency has no mortgages. “All the rent goes right back into maintaining the buildings,” Casper says. The agency also saved money by moving the maternity home to the site that served as the former office building attached with an enclosed breezeway to the transitional facility. More savings came in moving the social services offices to the former Holy Trinity Parish rectory.

When Holy Trinity’s church burned down in 1975, the parish was merged with St. Mary Parish just two blocks away, and the parish acquired the former Holy Trinity rectory. St. Mary donated the structure to St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in the spring of 2012. After historical preservation and energy-efficient changes were made, the majority of the agency’s 14 full-time employees moved into the structure in July of 2013. The final improvement, window restoration, was completed during the last week of June this year.

Through the recent changes and improvements, says Casper, “We’ve saved about $30,000 and improved our services.” They’ve also improved their status in the community.

“We really work hard to make sure that we’re a part of community meetings that link up with our programs in order for our input to be put into what goes on in the community,” says Casper. “We’re proud of it.”

Thanks to strategic planning started seven years ago, Casper is proud of how far St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities has come in its 25 years. “When I came here [in 2008], we had a great base of good people doing good things,” he says. “We have added to that to become an accredited social services agency that meet the community need, whatever that is at that time.”

“All’ve completed 25 years. Now on to the next 25!”

[Photo by Christopher Pryor of the New Albany News and Tribune]