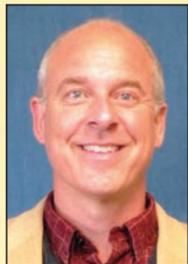


The three ironies of catechesis

By Ken Ogorek

“There are two types of people in the world,” quipped a college professor of mine.



“Those who have a sense of irony, and those who don’t.”

Separating the world into two types of people is above my pay grade. Jesus will take care of that when he comes again in glory.

I do see three ironies, though, as we celebrate another Catechetical Sunday on Sept. 15. I’m not sure if this makes me a sheep or a goat today, but here goes:

Hidden in Plain Sight

The Catholic Church isn’t exactly secretive about her basic doctrinal and moral teaching. We have a website. We have a catechism. The teaching of the Church is readily available to folks who are looking for basic information.

Yet many adult Catholics say they’re unclear on what the Church teaches about various matters. Are we unclear, or are we unwilling to embrace the basic teachings of our faith because of the demands such acceptance would place on our daily lives? Addressing that question is also above my pay grade. For now, I’m just pointing out an irony.

The Frozen Chosen

The teaching of our Church is meant to be lived out in the context of a vibrant, disciple relationship with Jesus. Without a warm, personal connection to our Lord, the doctrine we learn and the moral guidance we receive can start to sound like “interesting but odd facts about God.”

I know people who are pretty clear on the basic teachings of our faith, and even live the Church’s precepts pretty well by God’s grace, yet don’t have a deep sense of personal, discipleship connection to our Lord Jesus. Happily, this is an irony that is shifting by God’s mercy as more Catholics are living the both/and of knowledge about our Catholic faith and a focus on living in an intense, personal relationship with Jesus.

Frozen Chosen, Part II

The word catechesis, to some, evokes thoughts of a sterile question-and-answer approach and a harsh focus on doctrinal accuracy over concern for the real-life struggles of genuine human persons.

Yet, the catechetical documents of our Church—whether the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *General Directory for Catechesis*, the Catechetical Sunday resources available at uscgb.org, or other official documents—are permeated with a pastoral, parental love that sees no conflict between concern for doctrinal authenticity and care for all God’s children who, one way or another, struggle at times during our earthly pilgrimage.

This third irony of catechesis, then, is more of an urban myth in that catechists of today are encouraged to combine clear teaching with compassion for those who are taught—even when the loving words of our faith can sound like hard sayings to those striving to navigate the sometimes perilous waters of our culture.

Maybe there really are two types of people in the world: Those who separate the world into two types of people, and those who don’t. No matter what type of person you are, I hope you’ll enjoy this annual supplement to *The Criterion* as well as praying for all your fellow parishioners engaged in the beautiful ministries of evangelization and catechesis.

(Ken Ogorek helps orchestrate the ministries of catechesis and evangelization throughout the 126 parishes of our archdiocese. He can be reached in the Office of Catechesis, part of the Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization, at kogorek@archindy.org.) †

Taking down barriers helps children learn God’s message



As a volunteer sign language interpreter for St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis, Stephanie Campo translates God’s message to 12-year-old parishioner Bae Meh, who is deaf. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

By John Shaughnessy

The trusting smiles of the two Burmese children who are deaf reflect the special connection they have with their American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter.

For 9-year-old Peh Bue and his 12-year-old sister Bae Meh, interpreter Stephanie Campo is a bridge who helps them cross further into their knowledge of the Catholic faith during the children’s faith formation program at St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis.

“Having an interpreter sign helps me understand what the teacher is talking about,” Bae says in sign language as Campo interprets.

Her brother adds, “My favorite part is learning about God.”

The children’s responses elicit a warm smile from Campo.

“It’s rewarding that they’re getting the same experience that a hearing child is getting in the classroom,” says Campo, a 36-year-old mother of four children between the ages of 9 and 2 who offers her interpreting skills as a volunteer. “It would be a terrible thing for them to miss out on God’s message to them.”

At the same time, Campo insists that her connection with the two children has helped her faith and even deepened her empathy for the journeys that some families make.

Regarding the influence on her faith, Campo says, “Sometimes, I can get complacent at Mass. But hearing faith formation from a child’s perspective helps me slow down and appreciate it.”

She also has an appreciation for the journey that the children and their father, Pray Reh, and their mother, U

Meh, have made as refugees.

Both Pray and U fled their homeland of Myanmar in 1996. They married in a refugee camp in Thailand where Peh and Bae were both born. Then the family came to the United States in 2015 through the help of Catholic Charities. And here in Indianapolis, they have faced the challenge of adapting to a new country while also trying to learn English and ASL.

“They’ve been on an amazing journey,” Campo says. “I’m sure it’s been a lot to adjust to. It’s got to be difficult at times.”

That connection as people of faith—with the goal of all involved to grow closer to God—is exactly the hope of the archdiocese’s Ministry to Persons with Special Needs.

“It is very common to hear from

See DEAF, page 10

Veteran New Albany Deanery catechetical leaders help form the next generation

By Sean Gallagher

Deacon John Jacobi grew up in St. Michael Parish in Bradford in the New Albany Deanery in the 1970s and 1980s at a time when lay Catholics were just beginning to serve as leaders of catechetical ministry in faith communities in central and southern Indiana.

Clara Fessel was St. Michael’s director of religious education at the time.

“She was a saint,” Deacon Jacobi recalled.

Deacon Jacobi took over leadership of his home parish’s catechetical programs in 1995 when he was 25. Ann Northam, the longtime director of religious education at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Augustine parishes in Jeffersonville, was a mentor for Deacon Jacobi in his early years of ministry.

About a decade later, Deacon Jacobi mentored Michelle Fessel when she became the youth minister of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. Fessel was also assisted by Tom Yost, the parish’s pastoral associate who has ministered there for nearly 37 years.

Fessel is now the sage veteran passing on wisdom gained in the



Deacon John Jacobi, left, Ann Northam and Tom Yost pose for a photo during a luncheon to celebrate the retirement of Northam, who stepped down this summer after serving for 35 years as director of religious education at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville. All three are veteran catechetical leaders in the New Albany Deanery who have mentored lay Catholics entering into the ministry in the deanery. (Submitted photo)

past in serving as director of parish initiatives at Catalyst Catholic, a youth ministry organization for parishes in the New Albany Deanery. At 39, she is also the oldest member of Catalyst Catholic’s leadership team.

Passing on the faith forms one generation to the next. That’s how the Gospel has been proclaimed from the

earliest days of the Church.

The stories of Yost, Northam, Deacon Jacobi and Fessel show how it’s also the way that lay Catholics have been formed over the past generation to lead these efforts in faith communities in the New Albany Deanery.

See VETERANS, page 9

Summer Totus Tuus program helps youths, young adults say 'I'm totally yours'

By Natalie Hoefler

NEW ALBANY—After a week of teaching the faith to youths of the Tell City Deanery this summer, Jackie Parkes was feeling uncertain.

"Sometimes it's easy to become discouraged—are they getting it? Are they listening?" Parkes, 21, says she asked herself. "By the end of the week, the kids were like, 'I want to be a saint! Thanks for showing us how to be saints!'"

Their responses were reassuring. But then she received an unexpected reward.

"This little girl came up to me at lunch the last day and said, 'Miss Jackie, I think you'll make a great saint!'" she recalls, her eyes misting at the memory.

Parkes is one of four members who formed the archdiocese's first "Totus Tuus" catechetical team. The four young adults spent seven weeks this summer traveling to parishes in central and southern Indiana, as well as Ohio and Illinois, for a week at a time to teach the faith to youths and teens—and to ignite in them a love for Christ, Mary and the Church.

'Teaching important stuff, not fluff'

The name of the program is Latin for "totally yours." It was the papal motto of St. John Paul II in honor of his



Youths of the Tell City Deanery pose with Father Sengole Thomas Gnanaraj and the Totus Tuus catechists after Mass in St. Mark Church in Perry County during the week of June 9-14. The Totus Tuus catechists are on the ends of the first row in red shirts. They are Scott Wiles, far left, and Gino Regoli, and Karoline Kress, second from right, and Jackie Parkes. (Submitted photo)

consecration to Jesus through Mary, as taught by St. Louis de Montfort.

Totus Tuus was founded in 1993 and is now implemented in parishes nationwide. Its curriculum consists of five "pillars": the Eucharist via daily Mass and adoration, Marian devotion, catechesis, vocational discernment, and time for fun games, skits and songs.

"Totus Tuus includes everything that's good and fun about other types of vacation Bible school experiences," says Ken Ogorek, director of the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis. "But it adds a few important dimensions."

Ogorek lauds the program for using "not just Scripture but also sacred tradition, teaching young people several important aspects about our Catholic faith."

Totus Tuus breaks the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* into topics that form a six-year teaching cycle: The Mystery of Salvation, The Apostles' Creed, The Sacraments, The Commandments, The Virtues, and Prayer and the Our Father.

Marian devotion is also encouraged. A decade of the rosary is prayed each of the five days of the program, and the curriculum explores one of the rosary's four sets of mysteries each year.

"It helps [youths] appreciate not just the rosary, but the mysteries, which come out of sacred Scripture," Ogorek notes. "Kids are really learning how to invite Mary into their lives as disciples of her son Jesus."

The curriculum content impresses Theresa Shaw, coordinator of family faith formation at Holy Family Parish in New Albany. This was the first summer she invited Totus Tuus to offer their program for the parish youths.

"I like that [Totus Tuus] is not just basic stuff, not just 'God is love' and 'Jesus loves you,'" she says. "They're teaching important stuff, not fluff. Even though [the



Youths of Holy Family Parish in New Albany raise their hands to answer a question posed by Totus Tuus catechist Jackie Parkes in the parish's school gymnasium on June 19. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

kids] learn about faith in school, this goes deeper into how to live it in life."

Jonathan Higgins, coordinator of youth ministry and education for St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, couldn't agree more.

"We were blown away by the content and the depth of it," he says, referring to the sentiments of St. Michael pastor Father Aaron Jenkins.

He describes the program as "authentically Catholic. Everything they teach our kids is from a Catholic standpoint. It's good quality material, the kids enjoyed it—you can't lose with that."

'They not only teach, but witness'

Perfect examples of living their faith are the program's catechists, the second reason Ogorek is impressed by the summer catechesis program.

He explains that Totus Tuus "is facilitated by a team of four faith-filled young adults—two men and two women, usually college students, including a seminarian if possible"—who were interviewed and chosen from a pool of applicants.

"These four young adults are on fire for love of Jesus and the Catholic Church. They not only teach but witness in a very powerful way."

Parkes and one other team member are originally from St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington. Each is now studying at Indiana University and worshipping at St. Paul Catholic Center, both in Bloomington.

Parkes, now a senior, applied to be a Totus Tuus catechist to help prepare for a career in ministry or missionary work after graduating.

Her desire is to pass on to others "the difference between learning about Jesus, and knowing him, and how to have a relationship with him." She hopes to help youths grow "in understanding of the sacraments and why we should

be practicing our faith and not just be Catholic in name alone."

Scott Wiles, 22, of Holy Family Parish in New Albany says Totus Tuus was "right up my alley," having taught religious education to his parish's fifth- and sixth-graders. The recent graduate of Indiana University Southeast in New Albany recommends any young adult "who wants to teach kids about Christ" apply to be a catechist for the program.

The curriculum this summer focused on teaching the seven sacraments and the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary. Wiles, who is interested in pursuing a graduate degree in theology, was impressed by how two former Totus Tuus catechists—both now diocesan priests in Ohio—"taught us how to break those deep concepts down for the kids" during the 10 days of training the catechists received.

Both Wiles and Parkes are enthusiastic about their opportunity with Totus Tuus.

"To me, there's just no better summer than to talk about God all the time, go to Mass every day and have structured prayer time," says Parkes.

'The whole parish gets involved'

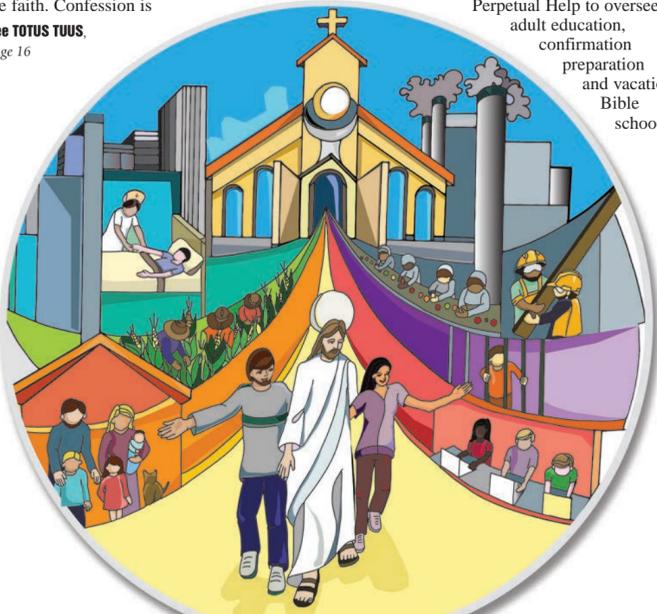
Another unique component Ogorek appreciates about Totus Tuus is that it "provides an opportunity for kids ranging from first all the way up to twelfth grade to plug into these beautiful experiences."

The catechists work with youths in grades 1-6 from morning to mid-afternoon during the week days.

Then on Sunday through Thursday evenings, they focus their catechetical efforts on students in grades 7-12.

In addition to catechesis on that summer's topics of focus, the evening program with the teens includes prayer, witness talks, small group sharing and discussions on how to live out the faith. Confession is

See TOTUS TUUS, page 16



Office of Evangelization helps parishes 'go and make disciples'

By Natalie Hoefler

"Go and make disciples" (Mt 28:19) were the final words of Christ to the Apostles. The passage is known as the "great command." It places upon each Christian the duty to bear the Good News of salvation to non-Christians (evangelization), and to Christians either lapsed or lacking in faith (the "new evangelization").

Helping parishes live out this call is the task of the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization. Three parish evangelization leaders throughout central and southern Indiana agree: "They always come through for us."

'Ready to help in any way'

When it comes to parish evangelization efforts, no one knows their community's needs better than members of the community itself.

"Oftentimes, we're working with leaders, both paid and volunteer, who know their parish and community best," says Ken Ogorek, who helps coordinate the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization with Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization. "Our collaboration with local leaders consistently bears good fruit through a combination of

their knowledge and love for their neighborhood and community and our support."

One such volunteer leader who reached out to the office for help recently is Matt Hooker of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis. He is a member of his parish's evangelization team.

"It's one thing to be on fire with the Holy Spirit," he says. "It's another completely different thing knowing that the Office of Evangelization stands ready to help in any way possible to ensure the success of our efforts."



Megan Rust

He says with their guidance, "our committee was up and running in no time." With continued assistance from the archdiocesan office, Christ the King's evangelization team has launched several efforts.

"I don't know how many times I've called [Ogorek or the archdiocese's evangelization office] needing direction, and by the end of our conversation I'm on the path to success," Hooker says. "It's great to know that all that's

necessary is to pick up the phone and they're available. They always come through for us."

The same sentiment is expressed by Megan Rust, parish catechetical leader for St. Paul Parish in Tell City.

"I know in times when I've felt overwhelmed or exceedingly unqualified, a call to them has put me back in perspective," she says. "They're a wonderful support team, just amazing in what they can do and how they can help us."

'Keeping us engaged'

In 2018, the office reached out to parishes encouraging and offering guidance in forming parish evangelization teams.

That fall, they hired L'Alto Catholic Institute to offer a workshop at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus for parish evangelization team members and anyone interested in promoting evangelization in their parish.

The workshop helped Diane Sutton, an evangelization team member at



Members of parishes throughout central and southern Indiana listen and take notes as Tim Glemkowski of L'Alto Catholic Institute presents on evangelization during a workshop sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization on Oct. 27, 2018, at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus. (File photo by Natalie Hoefler)

St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, "see the big picture of evangelization and how important it is in our individual

See OFFICE, page 16

VETERAN

continued from page 7

Leadership as 'walking alongside'

Tom Yost was in his last year of studies of theology at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Ky., in 1982 when he and other theology students were talking about their future.

Many looked forward to teaching in Catholic high schools in the area. Yost had another idea.

"I said, 'You know, I'm kind of thinking of parish work,'" Yost recalled. "And they all looked at me like, 'What?' It was a little foreign to them."

That was because hiring lay Catholics as parish staff members was still a fairly new phenomenon at the time. Yost, however, grew up seeing lay Catholics taking on leadership roles in the Church.

In fact, he saw it especially in his mother, who helped lead archdiocesan Catholic Youth Organization programs in the New Albany Deanery.

Yost was hired in 1982 as a part-time staff member at Our Lady of Perpetual Help to oversee adult education, confirmation preparation and vacation Bible school.

It became a full-time position the following year. Yost has never looked back, and continues to serve as a pastoral associate at the New Albany faith community 37 years later.

Over that time, he's helped to create dozens of ministries at the parish that are now led by parishioners. Yost has also been a force of stability at the parish as it has changed pastors and lay staff members many times over the years.

"There's a tremendous amount of gratitude to God, gratitude for staff members, pastors and all kinds of people who've said 'yes' when you've invited them into something," he said. "Gratitude goes a long way. I realize that there's a lot of hard work, but also a lot of God's graces that make this happen and move people's hearts."

Yost sees his leadership at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in the image of a shepherd who at times walks in front of the sheep, at times goes to the back to help those who are struggling and at other moments walks alongside sheep as they go along.

"The walking alongside is the part that I'm most grateful for," he said. "That's where I would rather be if I could be anywhere."

That's where he was when Fessel was hired as the parish's youth minister in 2002, her first job working as a parish staff member.

She appreciated the way Yost helped her adjust to serving as a leader in the parish. "We always looked to Tom for support, because at one time or another, he had filled the role of DRE (director of religious education) or youth minister or just answering the phone," Fessel said. "He knew how to do about everything. He knew all of our jobs well, but we were never intimidated by him."

'Their faith showed through'

When Fessel was starting ministry at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in 2002, she was also mentored by Deacon Jacobi. He felt grateful that he was able to pass on to her the wisdom he had received in his early years in ministry from such veterans of lay parish catechetical leaders in the deanery as Dolores Snyder, Ann Northam and Bob Leonard.

"Their faith showed through," Deacon Jacobi said. "They were all very humble. Bob would often describe God's creative personality. He would remind us that God would work in the chaos. There's a certain

amount of life in ministry that feels like chaos. Bob would remind me that God was simply creating. I'll remember that forever." Northam retired this summer after serving as a director of religious education. She saw her fair share of joys and challenges over that time.

"The joys are when the sacraments are celebrated," she said with emotion. "Every Easter Vigil is just such a wonderful opportunity. I cannot express what it feels like when those people are baptized and received into the Church."

And in serving as long as she did, Northam sometimes had the chance to see the baptism of children whose parents she helped form in the faith long ago.

"Those are the high points," she said. "That's when you feel God's presence in all you do. That's the best."

In recent years, when she's faced challenges, she's sought out the intercession of catechetical leaders who have died, especially Conventual Franciscan Brother Bob Baxter, who died in 2018.

"I had a picture of Brother Bob right

here by my desk, and every time I would struggle, I would look at that picture and say, 'OK, Bob, you've got to help me here,'" Northam recalled.

It's the mutual support among parish catechetical leaders in the deanery that has helped them become more effective ministers to their parishioners.

"Ministers need support from other ministers," said Fessel. "Sometimes that support is hard for us to seek from our families, or our pastor, who is also our boss. Sometimes the best person to lend an ear and encourage us in prayer is someone else who is living that same role as a parish [catechetical] administrator."

Having benefited from the faith and support of veteran catechetical leaders, Fessel is now looking forward to doing the same for the next generation of leaders at Catalyst Catholic and in New Albany Deanery parishes.

"I feel like I was given that gift," Fessel said. "Now it's time for me to repay that gift by helping others." †



Honoring parish catechetical leaders

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson poses on June 4 in St. Agnes Church in Nashville with Marty Williams, left, Ann Northam, Bev Hansberry and Paulette Davis after a Mass that was part of the archdiocesan Parish Catechetical Leader Spring Celebration. The catechetical leaders retired this year and were honored at the meeting for their many years of service. Williams ministered at St. Augustine Parish in Leopold; Northam served at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish and St. Augustine Parish, both in Jeffersonville; Hansberry ministered at St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis; and Davis served at St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle. (Submitted photo)

Archdiocesan endowment funds offer ways to support catechetical efforts in central and southern Indiana

Criterion staff report

Two Catholic Community Foundation funds exist that allow anyone to financially support the efforts of the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis to form faith-filled Catholics in central and southern Indiana.

Special Needs Ministry Endowment Fund

Recently, the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis was entrusted with a fund established by the Guardian Angels Guild in 1959 to provide assistance to children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It was renamed the Special Needs Ministry Endowment Fund.

The funds are still designated for supporting ministries for persons with disabilities. This now includes annual community events sponsored by the office for those with special needs, such as two retreat experiences, as well as bringing in knowledgeable and effective speakers to

help provide formation and skills to parish catechetical leaders and catechists in forming those with special needs.

To contribute to this fund, send a check payable to the Catholic Community Foundation (noting in the memo line: Special Needs Ministry Endowment Fund #289-0369) to the Office of Catechesis, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN, 46202. For more information, contact Erin Jeffries in the Office of Catechesis at ejeffries@archindy.org or 317-236-1448.

Catechesis for Discipleship Endowment Fund

Contributing to this fund allows donors to participate in the mission-critical work of the local Church to "go and make disciples" (Mt 28:19). Contributions will help make a disciple relationship with Christ more real and vibrant for many women and men throughout central and southern Indiana. Among the uses for the fund are:

- helping parish catechetical leaders attend regional or national conferences for their professional and spiritual development;
 - inviting accomplished and effective speakers to the archdiocese for workshops that benefit both leaders and catechists;
 - various related uses focused on helping those called to catechetical ministry to serve the faithful in a Spirit-filled way that bears good fruit.
- To contribute to this fund, go to www.archindy.org/ccf/contributions for online contributions, or send a check payable to the Catholic Community Foundation (noting in the memo line Catechesis for Discipleship Endowment Fund #285-0287) to the Office of Catechesis, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. For more information, contact Ken Ogorek, director of the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis, at 317-236-1446, or 800-382-9836, ext. 1446, or kogorek@archindy.org. †

Challenges to sharing difficult moral truths can be overcome in relationships, prayer

By Sean Gallagher

“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect” (Rom 12:2).

The “age” to which St. Paul was referring in this passage from his Letter to the Romans was the culture of the Roman Empire in the first century.

But his words have tremendous relevance for Catholics living 2,000 years later half a world away from Rome.

There are aspects of the Catholic faith that run dramatically counter to the conventional wisdom of secular culture. So, Catholics today seeking to proclaim the Gospel and draw others to Christ and the Church at some point have to share some of these difficult truths with others who might at first be strongly opposed to them.

They include the Church’s teachings on the conscience, how it is formed and the existence of absolute moral truths.

‘Grace influences our reason’

Father C. Ryan McCarthy, pastor of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis who holds a doctorate in moral theology, emphasized that, according to the Church, the conscience is an



Fr. Ryan McCarthy

“intellectual act of the mind by which it studies a question and determines what is right or wrong based on ethical, moral or philosophical principles.”

In contrast, he suggests that many people in secular society who appeal to their consciences to justify their choices or positions on a moral issue are actually “saying that they really feel this way or really want this to be the truth. But feelings and wants don’t make truth.”

Father Anthony Hollowell, administrator of St. Mark Parish in Perry County and St. Paul Parish in Tell City, has also earned a doctorate in

moral theology.

He spoke about the relationship of the understanding of moral truths within the heart and mind of an individual, and the external moral truths that are knowable through human reason alone and by God’s revelation.



Fr. Anthony Hollowell

Forming one’s conscience to be in conformity with

an objective truth external to oneself is challenging. For him, an essential aid in this lifelong task is “fulfilling your Sunday obligation.”

“There’s so much there in the Mass,” Father Hollowell said. “Grace influences our reason. It builds on nature. It’s going to transform us. As St. Paul said, ‘Do not conform yourself to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind’ (Rom 12:2). Your own mind needs to be changed. It needs to be formed.”

Servants of the Gospel of Life Sister Diane Carollo has



Sr. Diane Carollo, S.G.L.

faced the challenge of helping people to form their consciences in her many years of serving in Indianapolis as director of religious education, first at Holy Rosary and now at St. Luke the Evangelist Parish.

This happens for her in a special way in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), in which adults are prepared to be received into the full communion of the Church.

“If a person is honestly seeking the truth, then that means that they’re going to be open to it, even if it’s uncomfortable,” she said. “It’s that sincerity, the good will, the openness to God’s grace that really does allow them to make drastic changes in their lives.”

At the same time, some people can’t yet accept some of the Church’s



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson processes on June 24, 2018, into a filled St. Isidore the Farmer Church in Perry County to celebrate a Mass to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Tell City Deanery faith community. Father Anthony Hollowell, administrator of St. Mark Parish in Perry County and St. Paul Parish in Tell City, says regularly attending Sunday Mass is a critical part of the formation of the conscience of Catholics. (File photo by Sean Gallagher)

challenging teachings and drop out of RCIA.

“Do you go run after them? No,” Sister Diane said. “Because they’re not ready. They’re not ready to hear the truth or accept it. Something else will happen along the way that may redirect them.”

“God uses everything and everyone to bring them to the Catholic faith. Positive and negative.”

‘Trading truth for comfort’

An essential aspect of the Church’s moral teachings is that there are some actions that are always objectively wrong. Torture and abortion are examples of this.

This is challenging for many people considering the Catholic faith because of the strength of moral relativism in the broader culture.

They may hold a certain position on a moral issue to be true for themselves but not necessarily for others.

Father McCarthy pointed out the inconsistency of such an outlook.

“If you say that there are no moral absolutes, you’ve made a moral absolute,” he said. “Usually if you push people on it, they will usually consent to some sort of moral absolute. You just have to ask the right questions.

“What we’re really looking at when people say that they don’t believe in moral absolutes [is] that they don’t believe in traditional moral absolutes and they want to come up with any number of their own moral absolutes. They want to reject some moral absolutes and embrace others.”

This individualistic rejection and embracing, Father McCarthy said, is often motivated by people’s willingness “to trade truth for comfort.”

“So, whatever makes another person or myself comfortable becomes the truth,” Father McCarthy said.

Father Hollowell said there is an added challenge to convincing others of the existence of moral absolutes.

“In a highly polarized culture, people are immediately sensitive around certain phrases and words,” he said. “They’ve made their minds up. It would be nice to be able to tell them about the Church’s teachings on marriage. But do you what know happens? There’s an immediate reaction against it.”

While it’s important to speak and seek to teach those truths, Father Hollowell said Catholics need to be the light of the world through their actions.

“The light of the world is something

See MORAL, page 16

DEAF

continued from page 7

our catechists that they learn more from their friends than they could ever teach,” says Erin Jeffries, coordinator of the archdiocese’s special needs ministry.

That ministry focuses on making the Catholic faith more accessible for a range of people who have special needs.

‘Every child has special needs’

“Many of our parishes are working with individuals with autism, or other intellectual developmental disabilities such as Down syndrome,” Jeffries says. “More frequently now, deaf individuals or their family are reaching out to their parish or myself, looking to connect with parish life.”

“Some parishes are also working with individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Bringing awareness to and meeting the needs of individuals who have a mental illness is something that has been taking on ever greater importance these past few years as well.”

The overall approach of the archdiocesan ministry to people with special needs is three-pronged, she says: awareness, inclusion and

specialized or adaptive efforts.

“Basically, I begin with the premise that each person is uniquely called to holiness by virtue of their baptism, and has their own strengths and challenges,” Jeffries says. “So the first step is always taking some time to get to know the person.”

That’s the approach that St. Pius X Parish takes with all the children in its faith formation program, including Peh and Bae who are deaf and another child who has Down syndrome.

“As a mom, I tell people that every child has special needs,” says Julie Hughes, a mother of six who coordinates the children’s faith formation program at St. Pius X. “Some special needs are more apparent than other children’s special needs. I just try to work with the families and our catechists. If parents have a special concern, we try to work with their child.”

That approach is appreciated by Peh’s and Bae’s parents, who both have their hearing.

“With the help of Stephanie, they have confidence in class, they learn more things and they learn about God,” says their dad.

Besides Campo, St. Pius benefits from having three other sign language interpreters who volunteer their skill:

Diane Jones, Gretchen Krug and Lucy Wahnsiedler.

Jennifer Naville hopes to provide that service in the future at St. Mary Parish in Navilleton in the New Albany Deanery. Right now, the mother of four and grandmother of two is starting her senior years of studying sign language at the University of Louisville in Kentucky. This summer, she attended a weeklong program that connected ASL to the Catholic faith.

“I just always felt I wanted to integrate my faith with ASL to connect people who are deaf to their faith,” says Naville, who made a career change after 30 years as a nurse. “It’s giving them access to the word and connecting them to the Gospel. It’s something I’m looking forward to doing in the future.”

Taking down barriers, building a sense of belonging

Jeffries welcomes that help, noting that about 200 children are born every year in Indiana who are deaf or have significant hearing loss.

“Yet the vast majority of deaf individuals do not attend a religious service, much less a faith formation opportunity, for the primary reason that

it is not accessible to them,” she says. “So I would just encourage our parishes to consider the possibility of this need in their planning, and to be open when the opportunities arise and someone reaches out.”

That openness to any person with a special need will help to give all people a sense of belonging to God and the Church, Jeffries says.

“My hope is that persons with disabilities are empowered to achieve the fullest measure of personal participation—belonging, serving and flourishing as part of the body of Christ.

“I think what it comes down to is that so often we put up barriers that, in large part, these folks don’t. They truly are who they are—human in the best sense of the word. To be in relationship with them brings down our barriers—and allows us to be vulnerable as well. It truly is a gift I hope every parish experiences.”

(For more information on the archdiocese’s Ministry to Persons with Special Needs, visit www.archindy.org/specialneeds, or contact Erin Jeffries, coordinator of the archdiocese’s special needs ministry, at erj@archindy.org, or 317-236-1448.) †

TOTUS TUUS

continued from page 8

available, and one evening includes a holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament.

“The teens, who can be less enthusiastic by their nature, ended up absolutely loving the program and were passionate about it,” says Griffin. “It’s great to have college kids come in and show kids they’re living their faith out this way. It sets a good example. They taught them [the faith], and also showed them.”

And the benefits of the program don’t stop there, says Shaw. With parishioners preparing lunch during the week, hosting team members for dinner and providing a place for them to stay, she says Totus Tuus “gets the whole parish involved in this opportunity for the kids to grow in their faith.”

Closeness to Christ leads to purpose in life

It was during his exposure to parish life as a Totus Tuus catechist for two summers as a seminarian that Father David Doseck of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati affirmed his call to the priesthood.

Now he and a priest of the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, who also served as a Totus Tuus catechist while in seminary, devote their vacation time to training the program’s catechists for 10 days each summer. They also develop the program’s theological content, “making the curriculum as applicable as possible,” says Father Doseck, 29.

The last day of the program includes a discussion about vocation.

“We mention the vocation call and that,

first and foremost, a relationship with Jesus Christ will lead you to your purpose and meaning for life,” he explains. “We tell [the youths] how some of them might be called that very week at Totus Tuus to be a priest, to marriage, to the religious life, or to be single and chaste and live in holiness right now.”

But the largest witness of seeking one’s purpose and meaning through a relationship with Christ comes from the catechists themselves, says Father Doseck.

“They’re giving up their summer to dedicate their life totally to Jesus and loving these children,” he explains. “For a young, single person, that’s very radical.”

“And the fascinating thing is that most Totus Tuus missionaries are actively discerning their own vocation to married life, the priesthood or to religious life. We encourage them to be open to sharing their discernment at this stage in the process, especially with the middle school and high school kids.”

In all, says Father Doseck, Totus Tuus is “a healthy, holy way to approach [youths] where they are in their faith, and move them in a direction closer to Jesus.”

And for the young adult catechists, he continues, “This is where they learn ‘*totus tuus*,’ saying to Christ and Mary, ‘I’m totally yours,’ and saying to the kids and the parish for that week, ‘I’m totally yours. I’m dedicated to help you encounter Jesus and learn the faith.’”

(For more information on Totus Tuus, go to www.archindy.org/totustuus or call Ken Ogorek at 317-236-1446 or toll free at 800-382-9836, ext. 1446, or e-mail him at kogorek@archindy.org.) †

OFFICE

continued from page 9

faith life, and how that carries over into our parish life.”

Ogorek says that through a parish evangelization contact list created by University of Notre Dame ECHO apprentice Theresa Inoue during her two years with the office (which ended in June), parishes are now kept informed “of the best Catholic evangelization resources,” and of other opportunities offered by the Office of Evangelization.



Gaye McKenney

“If not for the communiques coming from the evangelization office, there are a lot of things we wouldn’t be aware of,” such as webinars and conferences, says McKenney, president of the parish pastoral council at St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville. “We’re very grateful to them for being on point all the time and keeping us engaged. We use what they send out as inspiration and make it fit for what our needs are and what we can handle.”

McKenney cites one resource from the office as having “great traction” in the parish’s evangelization efforts. With input from parishioners throughout the archdiocese, a tool called “10 Things We Want You to

Know About the Catholic Faith” was created to evangelize about the faith (available at www.archindy.org/yearoffaith/10things).

“We have a booth at the [local] farmers market and pass it out there, and at the [local] Friday business exchange,” she says. “It’s amazing the number of Catholics we’ve had who are divorced but not remarried who stopped going to Mass because they thought they weren’t of the archdiocese.”

Four years ago, the office launched an annual “Morning with Mary” event open to all. It takes place each October, with its location moving among parishes in central and southern Indiana. This year it will take place at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Providence at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods near Terre Haute from 9 a.m.-noon on Oct. 5.

And one final update Ogorek is pleased to announce: “We are in process of hiring a coordinator of evangelization and discipleship for the Office of Evangelization.”

“We were blessed to have Theresa as our ECHO apprentice for last two years,” he says. “She laid some good groundwork for this ministry. The hope is for the new coordinator to start in the fall, pick up where Theresa left off, and keep the momentum going.”

(For more information on resources offered by the Office of Evangelization or guidance in parish evangelization efforts, go to www.archindy.org/evangelization or contact Ken Ogorek at 317-236-1446 or toll free at 800-382-9836, ext. 1446.) †

MORAL

continued from page 10

that you can see,” he said. “Christ didn’t say, ‘Be the megaphone to the world.’ Words are

important. But a light is a powerful image.

“When we need to touch people’s eyes, and, through their eyes, touch their hearts. They need to see something in us ... in order to convince them of a truth that they’ve already decided against.”

Father McCarthy emphasized that this light will shine most effectively on others through relationships.

“Very few people are converted to the faith by intellectual arguments,” he said. “They’re converted to the faith by relationships. So, when people experience true, good and loving relationships with Christians where they actually want and desire their authentic good, it motivates people to understand what motivates that act of charity.”

Letting God do the heavy lifting

Convincing people immersed in the values of contemporary secular culture of the Church’s teachings on conscience and the existence of absolute moral truths can be difficult even in the context of fruitful, authentically loving relationships.

Father McCarthy said that the heart of the Church’s continued effort to share these and other challenging teachings is the family.

“The best thing the Church can probably do in all of these things is to continue to reinforce the goodness and holiness of the traditional family structure,” he said, “because it’s in a traditional family structure where we’re usually exposed to the good, the true, the one and the beautiful.”

Father Hollowell also recognized that,

while it’s essential that the Church teach moral truths that are opposed by many in society, the faithful should be prepared to reach out to people who have acted against them.

“From Adam and Eve forward, the biggest way that we learn about moral absolutes is by breaking them, suffering from them and learning our lesson,” he said. “That’s just human nature. We should teach, and we should affirm, and we must communicate [moral truths]. But we should also not be shocked by most of our peers, children and spiritual children learning about moral absolutes by breaking them.”

Sister Diane has worked closely with such people in RCIA. Prayer is a key response for her.

“I pray for all the RCIA people,” she said. “They have struggles that they have to deal with, with the sins that they’ve committed.”

She relies heavily on prayer because she knows in the end that she can’t bring about their conversion by herself.

“For the most part, my experience has been that people come to the truth and the Church because they need it,” Sister Diane said. “They need the truth, the Church. They need Christ. I don’t change anyone. It’s going to be God who changes them if they permit God to act within them.” †

Right to Life
OF INDIANAPOLIS

Invites you to the
37th Annual



Celebrate Life Dinner

TUESDAY
OCTOBER 1, 2019

Marriott Downtown
Indianapolis

Registration – 6:00 p.m.

Dinner and Awards – 6:45 p.m.

Keynote Speaker, Star Parker – 8:00 p.m.

Star Parker is the founder and president of the Center for Urban Renewal and Education, a Washington D.C. based Public Policy Institute that fights poverty and restores dignity through messages of faith, freedom and personal responsibility. As a White House consultant, Star has established herself as a thoughtful and energetic leader. She has spoken on hundreds of college campuses, authored several books, is a regular commentator on national television and radio and is a nationally syndicated columnist.

FOR MORE INFORMATION – AND TO REGISTER
visit www.rtlindy.org or call (317) 582-1526

PUBLIC WELCOME

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2019

Shuttle Service, Handicap Parking, Shaded Dining Area & Grounds

OPENING CEREMONY
St. Meinrad Scouts 102, 10:00 a.m. CST

LIVE MUSIC
10:10-11:00 Hagedorn Family Band
11:00-12:00 Shady Tree O
12:00-1:00 Celebration Singers
(indoor concert)
1:00- 2:00 Troesch Brothers
2:00- 3:30 The Gatwoods

FUN FOR THE FAMILY
Kids Zone
Clowning Around with the Hadi Shrine Funsters
Bingo

ATTRACTIONS
Cash Raffle WIN \$5,000 IN CASH PRIZES
Special Quilt Raffle
Quilt Wheel/Cash Wheel
Theme Basket Raffle
Country Store & Crafty Corner
Architectural Tours of Parish Church
Prize drawings begin at 3:30

FOOD COURT
Fried Chicken Dinners
German Cuisine
Homemade Desserts
Homemade Soup (bulk or bowl)

All times are central time



St. Meinrad Parish Fall Picnic
19630 N. Fourth St., St. Meinrad