

Seamus Hasson: knight of religious freedom

Kevin Hasson—"Seamus" to one and all—is the founder of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a public interest law firm and educational institute, and a true hero of contemporary Catholicism.

Now, after a decade of legal work in defense of the "first freedom," Seamus has written his first book, *The Right to Be Wrong: Ending the Culture War over Religion in America* (Encounter).

As his Irish name might suggest, Hasson is a great storyteller, and *The Right to Be Wrong* begins with a corker: How the Parking Barrier Became Divine, and Thus Caused Problems.

Let Seamus tell it in his way:

"...The Japanese Tea Garden of San Francisco's Golden Gate Park ... had long been a particularly well-groomed part of the park, a haven from the stresses of urban life. (In 1989, though) there was a problem. A crane operator had abandoned a traffic or parking barrier at the back of the tea garden. It was a small, bullet-shaped lump of granite that clashed with the ordered nature of the place, an irritant that park goers periodically tried to have removed. Bureaucrats being what they are, however, the stray parking barrier remained.

"It remained, that is, until 1993, when the bureaucrats learned of a New Age group's interest in it. The New Agers...had recognized something significant about the shape of the parking barrier: it resembled a Shiva Lingam, a manifestation of the Hindu god Shiva. What was more, they had come upon it unexpectedly and in a wooded setting, just the way you're supposed to discover a Shiva Lingam. The

The Catholic Difference

by George Weigel



little band of believers had rejoiced and begun to worship. In fact, they now came regularly to pray and make offerings of incense and flowers to the stone bullet, all of which greatly alarmed the very same authorities who had resolutely neglected to remove the traffic barrier as an eyesore. The bureaucrats roused themselves and announced that it was their duty to prevent worship on (not to mention of) public property; the parking barrier had to go.

"Whereupon the New Agers...sued for an order blocking removal of the little granite lump. The authorities agreed to give the spare barrier to its devotees, who agreed to pray to it in private, someplace else."

The tale of the divine parking barrier illustrates just how goofy American constitutional law on religious freedom has become since the Supreme Court began inverting the First Amendment in the 1947 case, *Everson v. Board of Education*. The Framers' intent to foster a robust religious life in America by preventing

the federal government from "establishing" any denomination as the governmentally approved faith has now been turned inside out.

Today, the First Amendment is widely understood to require, not simply governmental "neutrality" between denominations, or between belief and unbelief, but governmental suspicion of, bordering on hostility to, to any public manifestation of religious conviction in the public square.

As Hasson nicely puts it, "nobody could ever have mistaken parking-barrier worship for an officially established religion, even in San Francisco." But the Supreme Court's crabbed and cranky First Amendment jurisprudence, filtering down to the level of petty city bureaucrats, resulted in the removal of the eyesore-that-had-become-a-god—not because it was ugly and obtrusive, but because somebody thought it was divine and behaved accordingly. Mr. Madison, call your office.

The Right to Be Wrong explores, historically and conceptually, the convictions that drive the Becket Fund: "Freedom of religion is a basic human right that no government may lawfully deny; it is not a gift of the state, but instead is rooted in the inherent dignity of the human person. Religious expression (of all traditions) is a natural part of life in a civilized society, and religious arguments (on all sides of a question) are a normal and healthy element of public debate. Religious people and institutions are entitled to participate in governmental affairs on an equal basis with everyone else, and should not be excluded for professing their faith."

It's now been 40 years since Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Freedom. Celebrating Seamus Hasson's accomplishment, and reading his book, are good ways to mark that historic anniversary.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

Stewardship

A way of life that is more than fund raising

BY DANIEL CONWAY

Special to the Catholic Advocate

As I travel throughout North America, bishops, pastors and lay leaders frequently ask me: "What are the most important things we need to do to teach stewardship as a way of life (and not simply as another word for fund raising)?"

Here are five principles that I think should be observed in all our stewardship education activities:

1.) Make stewardship education a top priority. The U.S. bishops' pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, makes it clear—for baptized Christians who seek to follow Jesus Christ, stewardship is not an option. It is essential to living our faith on a day-to-day basis. The same can be said for parishes and dioceses.

Stewardship is not an option. It is essential to the growth-in-faith of parish communities, of the diocesan church and of the Universal Church. If this is true, then stewardship education (the task of growing stewards) must truly be a top priority.

2.) Keep in mind that teaching stewardship is a lifelong process.

We are impatient for results. We want stewardship now! But it doesn't work that way. While it's true that some people have an overnight conversion experience, the vast majority of us learn to be Christian stewards gradually. We may accept the basic principles of stewardship intellectually, but putting them into practice is the work of a lifetime.

We become good stewards through repeated acts of generosity, sharing, accountability and "giving back to the Lord

with increase" over an entire lifetime. Parishes and dioceses should begin the stewardship journey now, but they should not expect dramatic results for a generation or more.

3.) Adopt a comprehensive approach. If we only talk about stewardship once a year (on Stewardship Sunday), parishioners will only think about stewardship once a year. And they will almost certainly equate it with the Sunday collection. We need to find appropriate ways to teach stewardship constantly and to make every Sunday a Stewardship Sunday!

Obviously, we can't talk about time, talent and treasure every weekend. But we can find appropriate ways to encourage one another to be grateful, responsible and generous in our homes, at work and in our service to the Church and to the communities we live in. A narrow approach to stewardship education brings limited results, but a more comprehensive approach can help us to integrate stewardship principles into all aspects of our lives.

4.) Provide witness through prayer, reflection on stewardship themes and personal commitment. Christian stewardship is a form of spirituality. It is a way of living the Gospel in an affluent, consumer-oriented culture. It is a way of following Jesus that is particularly suited to life in the 21st Century.

Responsible stewardship begins with prayerful discernment: Lord, what do you want me to do with all the gifts and talents you have given me? We grow as stew-

ards by meditating on the inspiring and poetic messages of the bishops' pastoral. Above all, we must begin on the stewardship journey by making a commitment and taking the first steps.

5.) Go, sell what you have; give it to the poor; and come follow me. Each of us has received this personal invitation from the Lord. If we choose to follow Him, stewardship is not an option. We must respond in faith.

How do we sell what we have and give it to the poor? Some are called to radical vows of poverty. All are called to acknowledge God as the true owner of everything we possess. We give away everything by accepting our role as stewards. When we begin the stewardship journey (which is nothing more or less

than the Way of the Cross), we commit ourselves to lives of responsible service and generous sharing.

May the good and gracious God who has given us everything we possess (materially and spiritually) guide our efforts to teach stewardship as a way of life. May He travel with us on the stewardship journey and grant us His peace.

Daniel Conway is the president of RSI Catholic Services Group, Dallas, and has been writing on stewardship themes for 15 years. His reflections on stewardship are now available in several publications. For more information, call toll free 888-544-8674 or consult the website for Saint Catherine of Siena Press (www.saintcatherineofsienapress.com).



USPS-008-380

The Catholic Advocate
"Inspires Our World...One Spirit at a Time."

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PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT
 The Catholic Advocate is published by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark at 171 Clifton Ave., Newark NJ 07104-9500. Periodical postage is paid at Newark NJ and at additional offices. Postmaster: Please send address changes to: P.O. Box 9500, Newark, NJ 07104.

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FREQUENCY FOR REMAINDER OF YEAR

The Catholic Advocate continues to be a bi-weekly publication. Publication dates for 2005 are: December 7, 21.
 Dates for the first half of 2006 are:
 January 11, 25; February 8, 22; March 8, 22;
 April 12, 26; May 10, 24; June 7, 21.

NJPA



ISSN# 1084-3213

ID theft: Education is 'best defense'

BY BRIAN FORES
 Staff Writer

NUTLEY—The dangers of the ever-growing problem of identity theft and how to prevent it were explored at a forum held last month at St. Mary Parish.

The event, which was attended by some 35 parishioners, featured talks by Det./Lt. Steven Rogers, supervisor of the Detective Bureau for the Nutley Police Department, and Marie A. Christiano, vice president and security officer for Boiling Springs Bank, Rutherford.

Lt. Rogers pointed out that communication is at the heart of preventing this terrible crime. "We need to be aware of who is around us, and we need to keep an eye on each other, to have a 'buddy system.' Education is the key. This parish (St. Mary) is performing an invaluable service. Every church should do this. It is the community's best defense."

Elderly people are "very vulnerable" to this crime, he went on, because they are more likely to give out personal information over the telephone. "Criminals know this," he stated.

Christiano added, "Somebody who is trying to get your personal information – they may not get all of your information, but sometimes all they need is one piece. With your address, they'll call your bank or your credit card company, and try to get other information." Christiano has worked in conjunction with authorities on dozens of cases.

Criminals can steal credit card offers from a mailbox or online, then fill them out in someone's name. To reduce the number of solicitations, call 888-5OPT-OUT or visit www.optoutprescreen.com. Remove one's name from email lists at www.e-mps.org, and from direct-marketing lists by writing to: Direct Marketing Association, DMA Preference Service, PO Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735.

Christiano said one in 10 Americans will be the victim of identity theft in their lifetime, and that 500,000 to 700,000 Americans are at risk every year.

When ordering new checks from the bank, Christiano offered, "Often, the box is too big, and won't fit in your mail slot. The mailman might leave it sitting at your door for anyone to take." Instead, she explained, have them delivered directly to the bank. Someone will call you and then you can sign for the checks when they arrive.

Lt. Rogers said if you're awaiting a new credit card or bankcard in the mail, it should be received it in a short amount of time. If that is not the case, notify the company right away. Christiano added that it's important to keep a list of relevant telephone numbers for your credit and bank cards in a safe place. "Most people look right on the back of the card for the number; if it's stolen, this will cause you to lose valuable time in contacting the companies," she noted.

Likewise, Lt. Rogers said never to give out personal information over the phone. "If someone calls you, you don't know who's on the other end of that line. If they claim to be your credit card company, calling with some request, hang up and call the company directly."

Lt. Rogers said a particularly pernicious phone scam is one that claims to be the Police



Advocate photo-Brian Fores

Marie A. Christiano, vice president and security officer for Boiling Springs Bank, Rutherford, explains the ins and outs of avoiding identity theft.

Benevolent Association. "I've even received calls from these folks," he noted with a laugh, adding, "If you want to donate to a worthy cause, contact the organization directly."

He described another common telephone scam. "Someone calls you saying you've missed jury duty. You say you never received a notice. They'll often ask, 'Okay, I just need to check in our data-bases—give me your social security number...'"

Lt. Rogers said installing a firewall and other security software on your computer is a good way to protect yourself against fraudulent emails, "spam" and pop-ups, but said, in general, to always question information that is coming in to you from an outside source.

Recently, concern over potential identity theft became an issue in the Archdiocese of Newark, when security at ChoicePoint, a company employed by the Archdiocese to run criminal background checks under the "Safe Environment" program, was compromised.

Jim Goodness, director of communications for the Archdiocese, sent a memo to pastors and administrators stating "no one who submitted a request for a criminal background check was affected by the incident."

Rather, only consumer credit history files were compromised after several individuals misrepresented themselves to ChoicePoint as a legitimate business seeking to obtain updated consumer information on Social Security numbers that they had stolen from another source, according to the spokesman. The Archdiocese neither requests nor provides consumer credit information to ChoicePoint, he added.

"Above all," Lt. Rogers stated, "the key is to be aware of your surroundings. How many people have been on the cashier's line at a department store and asked to sign up for the store's credit card? Often, you'll get a good sale if you do, but it could cost you much more in the end. I copied down a man's name, Social Security number, address, date of birth – all his info. After, explaining that I am a police officer, I approached him and showed him how easy it was to get all his

information. The lesson? Be aware of who is within earshot, and if you are in public, don't give out your personal information."

Christiano said, to a certain extent, identity theft is out of the hands of the victim, especially when it is the work of corrupt employees in insurance companies, doctor's offices, and even, she admits, banks—basically, anyone who handles your personal information. "Though," she noted, "these industries go to great lengths to protect you."

At other times, the perpetrator can be someone close to the victim: a grandson, domestic worker or even a former spouse.

Lt. Rogers said criminals will sometimes rig an ATM or other device where one must swipe their card. Known as "skimming," the machine can "recreate all your personal information in detail, which the criminal will exploit when the machine has recorded several people's information, in a remote location."

Christiano said everyone should review their bank and credit card statements regularly, to check for unusual spending, and "Get to know the people in your branch." She also said checking your credit report is another great way to check for unusual activity. Everyone is entitled to a free credit report yearly. Visit www.annualcreditreport.com for call (877) 322-8228 for more information.

She noted that if one's credit or bankcards are lost or stolen, put an alert on your credit report "so anyone who looks at it will know not to give out your information." She added, "Equifax, Experian and TransUnion, the three credit reporting companies, all communicate with each other, so there's only a need to do this once."

Recently enacted in the state of New Jersey, the Identity Theft Prevention Act offers many protections under the law for consumers, including allowing consumers to request a freeze on the release of credit reports; requiring companies to alert individuals within 15 days if information has been compromised, and requiring businesses to destroy personal records that are no longer needed. Visit <http://www.nj.gov/identitytheft/> for more information and important links.

Finally, for those who find themselves the unwitting victim of identity theft, here are some steps to clear your name from Mari Frank, Esq., author of *A Guide for Ending the Nightmare of Identity Theft* (www.identitytheft.org). She said to contact the credit agencies and they'll put an alert on your reports so creditors will contact you before opening an account in your name; record the case number you get from them, so you can identify yourself when you contact them; fill out a police report; help track it by contacting the Federal Trade Commission (www.ftc.gov) and fill out their ID Theft Affidavit.

She also said to alert your creditors. Cancel any accounts thieves have opened and send creditors a copy of the police report and ID Theft Affidavit; change passwords on all of your accounts and ask for a new ATM card; attach a "victim's statement" to your credit report with your police report number and the investigating officer's contact info, and alert other authorities, such as your local Department of Motor Vehicles, the passport office and the social security administration.



Advocate photo- M. Gabriele

HUMAN HANDS, FAIR TRADE—The Office of Human Concerns for the Archdiocese of Newark is offering catalogues and promoting the efforts of “The Work of Human Hands Program,” an organization that markets handmade crafts from producers in over 36 countries in Asia, Africa and South America. The group, founded in 1995, is affiliated with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and provides fair wages, fair trade and safe working conditions for artisans while supporting regional environmental and education programs, as well as opportunities for women. Items can be purchased directly from CRS through the catalogue or via the CRS website www.crsfairtrade.org. Featured among the exotic crafts offered by the group are woven baskets, Christmas ornaments, jewelry, carved folk art and wall hangings. The human hands pictured above belong to Catherine Furlani, the director of the Office of Human Concerns. The archdiocesan office will provide assistance to parishes interested in hosting a Work of Human Hands display. Contact Furlani at 973-497-4341 for further information on the program.

Archbishop Myers offers comments on Vatican’s ‘gay priests’ document

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A long-awaited Vatican document said the Church cannot allow priestly ordination of men who are active homosexuals, who have “deep-seated” homosexual tendencies or who support the “gay culture.”

The Vatican published the nine-page instruction from the Congregation for Catholic Education on Nov. 29 after more than eight years of internal discussion and debate. The document did not define what it meant by “deep-seated” homosexual tendencies, but contrasted them with the “transitory” problems of adolescence.

Following the release of the document, Archbishop John J. Myers commented that it did not break any new ground in terms of priestly formation, but reflected long-standing practices and teaching on the sacrament of Holy Orders.

“The instruction reaffirms that anyone who believes he has received a call to the priesthood must be prepared to accept, completely and without any reservations, chastity and celibacy, and to offer them as gifts to God and His people,” Archbishop Myers said. “He also must be in agreement with the Church’s teaching and traditions, including those about sexuality.”

“At no point,” the archbishop continued, “does the instruction state that people with same-sex attraction are less deserving of respect and dignity. It does make clear that the priesthood is no place for anyone who cannot accept what we hold to be true.”

The archbishop also reflected on the importance of the individuals who are involved in the training and formation of priests in the three Archdiocesan seminaries.

“I am particularly grateful that the faculty and spiritual directors who serve in the

Archdiocese of Newark look at the whole person, and help guide our candidates for priesthood so that they will truly understand and accept the Church’s teaching and be faithful witnesses to all she offers her people,” he said.

Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in a statement on Nov. 29 that the instruction showed a “Christian realism” about what is expected in candidates for the priesthood when it comes to their “affective maturity.”

Bishop Skylstad urged bishops and major superiors to have a “prayerful and honest” discussion of the new norms with their priests and seminarians. He also made a point underlined by several other bishops that there are some homosexually inclined men who are, in fact, good priests.

The instruction, dated Nov. 4, was approved Aug. 31 by Pope Benedict XVI, but not in “forma specifica.” This means the document carries the authority of the education congregation and does not have precedence over the existing Code of Canon Law, according to a Vatican source.

The document cited that the Church teaches that homosexual acts are gravely sinful and that homosexual tendencies are in conflict with natural law. In the light of those teachings, it said, the Church, while deeply respecting homosexuals, “cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called ‘gay culture.’”

In a letter accompanying the document, the Vatican made it clear that the instruction does not challenge the validity of previous ordinations of priests with homosexual tendencies, Vatican sources said.

Jan. 23: a day to speak out

In a few weeks it will be 33 years since the national disgrace and tragedy of abortion became the law of the land with the infamous Roe v. Wade decision of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The voice of outrage will again be heard in Washington, D.C., and in Trenton on Jan. 23.

As many of the faithful as possible should make every effort to let lawmakers know that the carnage must end.

The Archdiocese of Newark will again be well represented in the nation’s capital at the annual March for Life. For those who cannot make it to the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court that day, Trenton is the place to be. A rally sponsored by New Jersey Right to Life (NJRTL) will be held outside the State House from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

While there is a pro-life president in the White House, that is not the case with the new governor of the Garden State. A solid showing in Trenton will dramatically demonstrate to Gov-elect Jon Corzine the strength and perseverance of those in New Jersey with an unshakable reverence for life. A variety of pro-life speakers will be featured at the rally.

Parishes are running bus trips to Washington D.C. For information about the Trenton rally call NJRTL at (908) 276-276-6620 or visit www.njrtl.org.

The harsh reality is that each day Roe v. Wade remains on the books another unborn child loses its life. More often than not, the reason for abortion is that having the baby is not economically viable or it is simply not the “right time.” Such crass thinking is horrific.

Make your voice heard in Washington or Trenton. Politicians count on the inevitability of public apathy. In 33 years that has not been the case in the pro-life movement and it never will be.

A question box about faith and practice

Today’s Question: Is it a sin to work on Sunday and holy days of obligation? Is it a sin to shop on Sunday and holy days of obligation? – Spiro Mifsud, Sr. – Our Lady of Victories.

While the precept of the Church specifies that “On Sundays and holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass,” the Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses the issue you raise under the section “A day of grace and rest from work,” paragraphs 2184 – 88.

Just as God “rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done,” human life has a rhythm of work and rest. The institution of the Lord’s Day helps everyone enjoy adequate rest and leisure to cultivate their familial, cultural, social, and religious lives.

On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are to refrain from engaging in work or activities that hinder the worship owed to God, the joy proper to the Lord’s Day, the performance of the works of mercy, and the appropriate relaxation of mind and body. Family needs or important social service can legitimately excuse from the obligation of Sunday rest. The faithful should see to it that legitimate excuses do not lead to habits prejudicial to religion, family life, and health.

Those Christians who have leisure should be mindful of their brethren who have the same needs and the same

What’s the Matter?

By Rev. Msgr.
Richard J. Arnolds



rights, yet cannot rest from work because of poverty and misery. Sunday is traditionally consecrated by Christian piety to good works and humble service of the sick, the infirm, and the elderly. Christians will also sanctify Sunday by devoting time and care to their families and relatives, often difficult to do on other days of the week. Sunday is a time for reflection, silence, cultivation of the mind, and meditation which furthers the growth of the Christian interior life.

Sanctifying Sundays and holy days requires a common effort. Every Christian should avoid making unnecessary demands on others that would hinder them from observing the Lord’s Day. Traditional activities (sports, restaurants, etc.) and social necessities (public services, etc.), require some people to work on Sundays, but everyone should still take care to set aside sufficient time for leisure.

The Catholic Advocate welcomes questions from its readers about our Catholic faith and how it is practiced. Email your questions or comments to us at advnews@rcan.org. Please give your name and parish

Christmas joy in the days of gloom and doom

There is a song, a rather silly little ditty, that repeats the refrain: "We need a little Christmas."

At this Advent season, perhaps someone could write a religious hymn that might say: "We need a truly joyous, a truly holy Christmas this year; this year more than ever before."

Let me explain. To paraphrase the prophet Isaiah, the American people seem to be living as a "people who walk in darkness." There is gloom and a sadness that permeates the land.

In the last election I happened to be at various places in the company of men and women who were working for the election of Jon Corzine for governor. I heard this statement several times: "I don't know what it is, but this campaign is flat. There is no life in it. No matter what we do, it seems dead."

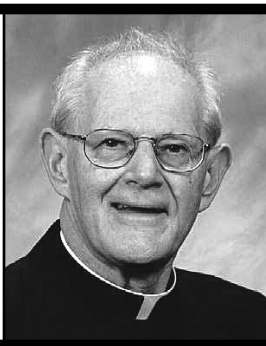
I heard almost the same thing from some people who were supporting Doug Forrester.

They did not realize it at the time, but the problem was neither their campaign nor even the candidates. They were battling the mood of the country.

As I travel around in my routine life as a parish priest, I have become convinced that the American people have been beaten down to their socks psychologically by all the bad news that pours in upon them. They are being ground down by all that they

Voices

By Rev. Msgr. John Gilchrist



see and hear in a relentless drumbeat of gloom and doom.

First of all, America is at war. I remember well that during World War II our government did everything possible to keep our morale high. In spite of huge losses at the beginning of the war, after Pearl Harbor, we were optimistic and patriotic. Today, by radio, television and print media, bad news is poured over the people every single day. The horrors of war and the constant controversy over the war take a psychological toll on folks.

Even on the local scene they hear of natural disasters and inadequate relief for the victims of tragedy. They are warned again and again of economic troubles that are to come: lost jobs; trade deficits; dangers to their security. Crimes, of every type are hyped for maximum effect and talked about endlessly.

A citizen cannot escape the daily reports of kidnappings, rapes, murders and robbery. Violence against children is not only reported, but featured for maximum publicity.

Even that which passes as recreation for the masses can be depressing. Television shows feature dead bodies, autopsies, and the gruesome reality of crime and mayhem. Sexual displays pervade the screens. What was designed as comedy is often profane and sick, the kind of stuff that is found in the world of adolescents. We are forced to ask how far people in entertainment will go in nudity and perversion before someone says, "enough."

Where is the "Good News?"

All of this, dear friends, is precisely why we Christians need a real sense of Christmas joy. We will not find it in material gifts, nor in soapy romantic fantasies, but only in a true religious vision of peace that emanates from the silence of a manger and settles in the quiet of the soul.

Yes, people need a lift—a return to true joy, found in God's love—and yes, they need a laugh or two as well.

Come, Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with Your love. Lord, this people needs a break. Bring Your light into this vale of tears. Grant us peace.

Rev. Msgr. Gilchrist is pastor of Holy Cross Parish, Harrison.

Where is the 'Good News'?

Young Adult Month

Continued from page 1

Leaders of the Archdiocesan Young Adults Ministry said they see a tremendous need for "Generation Y" young adults—the daughters and sons of the Baby Boomer generation—to return to the Church. Sister Loretta DeDomenicis, director of Parish and Outreach Training, Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the

Sisters of Charity will honor founder Jan. 7

CONVENT STATION—A Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Arthur Serratelli of the Paterson Diocese, on Saturday, Jan. 7 to honor Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, the foundress of the American Sisters of Charity.

Mass will be celebrated at 11a.m. in Holy Family Chapel.

The Sisters of Charity invite the public to join them for a reception and light lunch following the Mass in the study hall of the Academy of Saint Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Ann Seton founded the country's first religious community, the Sisters of Charity, in Maryland in 1809, and established the first free parochial day school in the United States.

In 1976 Mother Seton was canonized as the first North American-born saint. She was a convert to Roman Catholicism, a widow and mother of five children, three girls and two boys.

Guests at the Jan. 7 event will have an opportunity to visit the Heritage Room in the Motherhouse, which offers a display of Mother Seton memorabilia.

For further information call the Communications Office at (973) 290-5345. In case of inclement weather call (973) 290-5478. Snow date will be Jan. 14.

archdiocese, said she wants to encourage young adults to return to the Church, and noted that January celebrates the Feast of the Epiphany.

Coincidentally, the theme of this year's World Youth Day, the international gathering for young adults held in Cologne, Germany, in August, was: "We have come to worship Him," as said by the Magi who had traveled to see the infant Jesus.

"The Magi brought gifts to worship and young adults bring so many gifts to the Church," Sister Loretta said.

A featured activity to be held during Young Adult Month is "Theology on Tap," which will serve as a combination of community and Word. Theology on Tap, which began 25 years ago in Chicago, connects with young adults where they typically socialize—favorite bars and restaurants—to discuss issues relevant to their faith lives.

A sample topic for Theology on Tap might be an introduction to the Catholic faith, or a discussion on an issue of social justice that has recently received coverage in the media. The Young Adult Ministry office is planning three weeks of Theology on Tap, being held each weekend night during January at establishments in one of the archdiocese's four counties.

The Young Adult Search retreat is slated for Jan. 20-22 at the Archdiocesan Youth Center, located in Kearny. Bob McLaughlin, the director for retreats at the youth center and the associate director of the office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the Archdiocese of Newark, said he hopes that "young adults are able to take whatever reference of God or religion they have from their youth or from their present, and turn it into something concrete and real that brings Jesus into their lives and helps them appreciate their Catholic faith heritage."



Advocate photo- Chrissy Guerra.

Tommy Cerami, Alexis Gonzalez and Enza Paparella, at a recent meeting at the Archdiocesan Youth Center in Kearny, discuss plans for Young Adult Month. Among the various activities slated for January, the Youth Center will sponsor a Young Adult retreat Jan. 20-22. Contact the center at (201) 998-0088 for information.

Another event is a Day of Service, to be held Jan. 28. The day will begin with worship and community as each member of the service team attends a liturgy and breakfast, then spends a day serving the archdiocesan community. At the end of the service day, each participant is invited back to the Archdiocesan Youth Center for a buffet dinner and discussion of the day's events.

Activities will conclude with a special young adult Liturgy and "Chili Night," which will provide dinner, an evening of praise and worship, fellowship, and a bonfire. This event will be held Feb. 4 at the Archdiocesan Youth Center.

*"We have come
to worship Him."*

Plenary Indulgence granted by Vatican for Dec. 8 devotion

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Catholics can receive a plenary indulgence for taking part in any public or private devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to mark the 40th anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council.

Pope Benedict XVI authorized the special Dec. 8 indulgences to encourage the faithful to carry out the council’s teachings on peace, justice and charity, according to U.S. Cardinal J. Francis Stafford, head of the Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican court dealing with indulgences and matters of conscience.

An indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment due for sins committed. A plenary indulgence is the remission of all punishment.

The pope expressed his hopes that all the Church would be united with him and their “common mother,” Mary, on Dec. 8, so that the faithful “may be strengthened in their faith, follow Christ with greater dedication, and love their brothers and sisters with more ardent charity,” Cardinal Stafford said.

The Vatican published the cardinal’s statement announcing the indulgences and outlining the requirements for receiving them on Nov. 29. Thursday, Dec. 8, is the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Cardinal Stafford said that, in order to obtain the special Dec. 8 feast day indulgences, one must fulfill the normal requirements set by the Church for all plenary indulgences, which include that within a reasonably short period of time the person goes to confession, receives the Eucharist and prays for the intentions of the pope, all in a spirit of total detachment from the attraction of sin.

The faithful also must participate in a formal prayer service in honor of Mary “or at least openly demonstrate their devotion to Mary” by praying before an image of the Immaculate Conception on display for public veneration. The faithful should also recite the Lord’s Prayer, the creed and a prayer to Mary.

Cardinal Stafford said the special indulgence was being offered to mark the 40th anniversary of the formal close of the Second Vatican Council by Pope Paul VI, who proclaimed Mary “the mother of the Church” and the “spiritual mother of us all.”

Catholics who cannot visit a Marian shrine or pray before a communal image of Mary because of illness or other serious reason could still earn the indulgence in their own home or wherever they are on Dec. 8, he said.

“Openly demonstrate devotion to Mary.”

—Cardinal J. Francis Stafford

The Pope Speaks

Pope Benedict XVI



Living the psalm

Dear brothers and sisters,

Psalm 137 (136), the subject of this week’s catechesis, is a song of lamentation for the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile, a heartfelt prayer for liberation and an expression of longing for the holy city. Its evocation of Babylon as a place of slavery and sorrow can be seen as a symbolic foreshadowing of the horrors of the death camps of the last century, in which the Jewish people were destined to extermination. In their grief, the exiles are no longer able to sing “the songs of the Lord,” which can only rise up to God in freedom and in the setting of liturgical prayer. During this Advent season, the Church reads this psalm, with its plea for liberation and its nostalgic yearning for the holy city, as an expression of her own prayerful hope for the Lord’s coming. As St. Augustine tells us, we are called not only to sing this psalm, but to live it, by lifting up our hearts with profound religious longing for the heavenly Jerusalem.

Seeking the ‘authentic teacher’

Readings: Is 61:1-2, 10-11; Lk 1:46-54; 1 Thes 5:16-24; Jn 1:6-8, 19-28.

When we read weekly columns about science or food in the newspapers, we find a common concern for personal well being. Preventive medicine is given a justifiable high place in essays about health. But do any of these writers discuss the relation between personal wholeness and the mission of human life?

When we express gratitude for good health or petitions to overcome illness or affliction, do we consider that this mission is to serve God and neighbor?

St. Paul’s prayer for the Christians of Thessalonica placed this universal human concern in an even more profound perspective. “May you be preserved whole and entire, spirit, soul and body, irreproachable at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thes 5:23). To grasp the meaning of life, we must consider our ultimate destination.

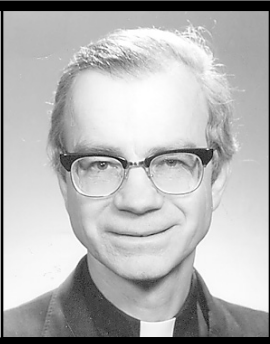
Sometimes the ancient hopes in Israel for deliverance and a better life were couched in political terms. The coming of God’s kingdom and of an Anointed Servant to lead the chosen people were expectations that seemed to demand the conquest of social evil. Thus, some documents depicted the promised scion of the Davidic dynasty to be a warrior like his illustrious ancestor.

The disciples of Isaiah realized that this model did not exhaust the mystery of God’s care for his creatures. The Servant anointed by God’s Spirit would be a teacher, a healer and a mediator. The passage from Isaiah 61 is familiar to us from St. Luke’s description of Jesus in the Nazareth synagogue (Lk 4:18). He epitomized the

Sunday Readings

3rd Sunday of Advent
(Dec. 11, 2005)

By Father Lawrence Frizzell



Master’s homily with one sentence: “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (4:21).

One of the great tasks of this Servant would be a message of hope to the poor, unappreciated members of society. Those crushed by any of the burdens of life would be healed. Those unjustly imprisoned would be freed. As Jesus conducted his ministry of teaching and

healing, he insisted that these people be integrated back into the spiritual and social life of their community. Their lives were transformed so that they could fulfill their calling to wor-

ship God in the community and to minister to the needs of others. When people acknowledge that good health and freedom place this onus upon them, they will cooperate with God to “make justice and praise spring up before all the nations” (Is 61:11).

As in our own day, a number of people in the time of Jesus claimed to be God’s instruments of instruction and healing. It was the duty of the religious authorities (“the

Jews” in John’s coded phrase) to investigate the credentials of these “upstarts.” So the priests and Levites from Jerusalem examined John the Baptist. He had no Messianic pretensions, nor was he Elijah or the new Moses (promised in Mal 3:23 and Dt 18:15 and 18 respectively).

Probably relieved by these answers, the interrogators still required an answer concerning John’s identity and activities. John described his commission by quoting Isaiah 40:3 (proclaimed last Sunday). He plunged people into water in order to prepare his contemporaries for the coming of another Leader more important than himself. John acknowledges being unworthy to conduct this ministry, or even the menial task of removing the Master’s sandals.

In the midst of many conflicting message about God’s plan for humanity and all creation, people today desperately need numerous leaders with the humility of John the Baptist. Indeed, those who search for healing and freedom should discern authentic religious leaders from charlatans.

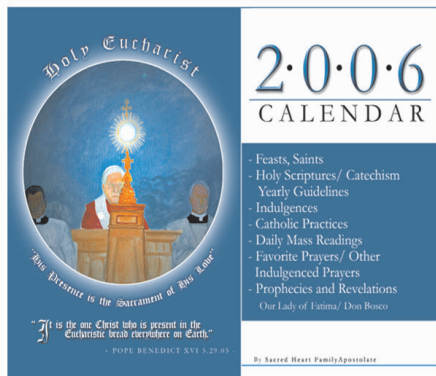
The authentic teacher points beyond himself or herself to God the Father and his anointed Servant. St. Paul gives practical advice to ordinary people of good will in every age. “Do not stifle the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test everything; retain what is good” (1 Thes 5:19-21).

Like John the Baptist, every Christian teacher must say of Jesus, the Bridegroom: “He must increase, I must decrease” (Jn 3:29). Then the person will have something of the dispositions found in Mary’s beautiful prayer, the Magnificat, part of which is used in response to the first reading.

Father Lawrence Frizzell is Director of the Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University.

The authentic teacher points beyond himself or herself.

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Christmas plans at the parishes

AREA — Special services,
liturgies and programs in celebra-
tion of Christmas have been
planned by parishes throughout
the Archdiocese of Newark.

In **Bergenfield, St. John the Evangelist Parish** will hold its annual Christmas concert Dec. 20 at 1 and 7 p.m. The Liturgy Committee is sponsoring an outdoor Living Creche Dec. 20-23 from 6 to 9:30 p.m. and Christmas Eve from 4 p.m. to midnight on the front lawn of the church.

Joyful Traditions

An Advent Penance Service, in conjunction with **St. Mary Parish, Dumont**, will be held in English at St. Mary's Dec. 14 at 7:30 p.m. and in Spanish in the lower church of St. John's Dec. 19 at 7:30 p.m.

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Christmas Eve Masses are the Family Mass at 4 p.m., 6:30 p.m., 9 p.m. in Spanish and a concelebrated Midnight Mass. Christmas Day Masses are at 7:30 p.m., 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and noon.

A concelebrated Mass in observance of the Feast of St. John the Evangelist will be on Dec. 27 at 7:30 p.m. The Hispanic Community will celebrate the Feast of the Three Kings with a children's party Jan. 7 at 6:30 p.m.

At **Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, Kearny**, the Christmas Eve and Christmas morning Masses are: a Vigil Mass at 5 p.m. preceded 15 minutes earlier by a Children's Christmas Pageant; a 10 p.m. Vigil Mass and Christmas morning Masses at 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Among the events planned at **Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Irvington**, are a Christmas Story centering on the infancy narrative of the Gospel of Matthew at 7 p.m. on Dec. 14 and again Dec. 21 in the Convent, 6 Smalley Terrace. An Advent Penance Service will

be held at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 16. On Jan. 8 a bilingual Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. followed by a Christmas party and show.

The Choral Art Society of New Jersey will hold its annual Messiah Community Sing on Dec. 9, 8 p.m. at **St. Helen Parish in Westfield**. Admission is \$10.

Parish of St. Bernard of Clairvaux/St. Stanislaus Kostka in Plainfield has a full Christmas Eve and Christmas Day schedule of Masses.

Christmas Eve Masses will be at 5:30 p.m., Christmas Carols will begin at 9:30 p.m. followed by the traditional Midnight Mass at 10 p.m. and at midnight a Mass will be celebrated in Polish.

Christmas Day Masses are at 8 a.m. in English, the Family Mass at 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m. Mass in Polish and 12:30 p.m. Mass in English.

At the **Community of God's Love**, 70 West Passaic Ave., Rutherford, a Gaudete Weekend of Prayer Meeting of Carols will take place Dec. 10 at 7:30 p.m. It will follow the regular 6 p.m. Liturgy. Father Philip Latronico will lead a "lesson in carols" teaching how to find Jesus in the music of the season. For directions and/or additional information call (201) 935-0344.

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Felician students meet former CBS anchor



With Walter Cronkite are, left to right, Communications majors Gena Russo, Keith Logan, Sierra Siebel, Gyana Garcia and Brian Gartland.

LODI — At the invitation of the Freedom Broadcasting Foundation, Dr. Gerard O'Sullivan, Dean of the Division of Arts and Sciences, five Felician College communications majors attended a luncheon honoring veteran journalist and former CBS News anchorman Walter Cronkite.

Cronkite was the recipient of the Freedom Broadcasting Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award. The event was held at New York's Museum of Television and Radio.

Students Gyana Garcia, Brian Gartland, Keith Logan, Gena

Russo and Sierra Siebel heard Cronkite in a roundtable discussion on the current state of broadcast and print journalism with his long-time friend and colleague Andy Rooney.

During an earlier session on press freedom in post-Soviet Eastern Europe, they listened as CNN's Garrick Utley chaired a session on the future of press freedom and journalistic integrity in Russia and elsewhere.

Dr. O'Sullivan called the event "a great success and an opportunity for our communications majors to meet and hear one of the most


influential figures in the history of television news." The Department of Communications, chaired by Professor Terry McAteer, specializes in preparing students for careers in digital broadcasting and long-form, investigative journalism.



Father Joseph A. D'Amico

New pastor


Father Joseph A. D'Amico was installed as pastor of St. Leo's parish in Elmwood Park during a Mass celebrated on Oct. 1. Bishop John W. Flesey presided over the Mass with 20 concelebrants. Father D'Amico is the first archdiocesan pastor to serve St. Leo. The Franciscan friars of the Holy Name province founded the parish over 96 years ago. Father D'Amico was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., and was ordained on May 27, 1995. He said his immediate plans at St. Leo's will be to build on the Franciscan foundation of the parish and "maintain the seeds already planted."



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and noticed them following him,

He asked them,
"What are you looking for?"

They said to him, Rabbi,
where do you stay?"

"Come and see,"
He answered.

John 1:38-39

*Have you
considered
following
after Jesus
as a Priest,
Sister or Brother...?*

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Mass celebrates faithful challenged by special needs

BY WARD MIELE
Managing Editor

NEWARK — Archbishop John J. Myers cited “the glory of God’s creation” at the annual Special Needs Sunday Mass Nov. 6 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

The “basic purpose,” explained Deacon Thomas Smith, BA, CSW, director of the Ministry with the Deaf for Catholic Community Services in Newark, is to “raise awareness within our faith communities throughout the archdiocese that many Catholics with disabilities long to be more personally involved in both worship and stewardship within our parishes, but still find barriers.”

The Mass was interpreted through use of American Sign Language. There were blind and deaf lectors as well altar servers with Down Syndrome and gift bearers with Cerebral Palsy.

In his homily, Archbishop Myers emphasized that everyone has “unique gifts.” Referring to those special needs, he reminded the faithful that someone might not be able to hear but “still listens keenly to the word of God.” A “loving God,” Archbishop Myers

continued, “understands you better than any human person.” He also mentioned the “special gift” of someone who is a caregiver.

All such aspects of the special liturgy, Deacon Smith said, “provide a number of concrete and visible examples for service and inclusion of those with physical limitations or developmental challenges.”

The barriers faced by those with disabilities, Deacon Smith stressed, may be architectural, such as the need for wheelchair ramps, pew cut outs and fully accessible restrooms,


or in the area of communications as evidenced by the need for sign language interpreters, large print missals, listening devices and Braille hymnals. Another barrier he continued, involves a “lack of understanding or perception that people with disabilities represent problems to be solved instead of allies helping to solve the problem of inaccessibility.”

Removal of these barriers, Deacon Smith noted, “enables complete hospitality and facilitates full, conscious participation in the life of the Church.”



Advocate photo - Ward Miele

Mary Ellen Dolan, a teacher of the deaf, interpreted the Mass for deaf congregants in the front rows of the Cathedral. Deacon Smith also interpreted portions of the Mass.


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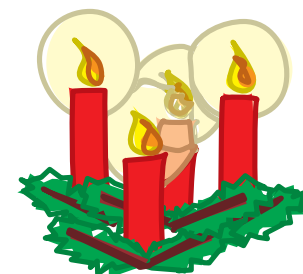
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Mosaic depicts patron saint

CRANFORD — There's a new work of art on display at St. Michael's School, a 6-by-10-foot mosaic of the patron saint St. Michael the Archangel, that is the work of fourth through eighth graders working under the direction of art teacher Dominique Parker.

The mosaic, Parker explains, is made up of 240 independently drawn panels and based on Guido Reni's famous rendering

of the saint in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Rome. It's the version that is often used for St. Michael holy card. Our version was downloaded from the Internet," Parker noted.

To build the mosaic, the art teacher first cut a print of the painting into 240 squares—enough so all the students could take part—and each student randomly chose one or two of the numbered squares out of a hat.



Since the mosaic was unveiled last month, compliments have been streaming in from school parents and members of the parish who have seen it.

They then copied the forms from the numbered squares onto a six by six inch pieces of paper, each student working only with abstract parts of the final composition. "For each copied panel," Parker pointed out, "the students were instructed to show the general shapes, darks and lights in any way they chose. For instance, they could use dot patterns, line patterns or regular shading. They could use plain lead pencil, color pencil, marker or pastel. They could even change colors as long as they exchanged a light color for another light, and dark for dark. What made this an even more fun exercise; the students weren't told what the composite picture would be except that it was 'a male character having to do with our school'. This lead to lots of speculation among the students: Pope John Paul? Pope Benedict? Father McGovern? Maybe even Mr. Murphy, the school facilities' manager. The guessing game was great fun—until someone finally guessed it was our patron saint."

When all the squares had been reproduced as paper panels, the students got to see the original of the Reni painting. With this knowledge, they then put the puzzle together. Using the numbered original, they positioned and oriented each square, looking for matching lines or shapes.

Reflecting on the project, Parker said "the students here at St. Michael's work so well together, even across the grades. They really loved being part of such a collaborative effort. They also learned that realistic works of art, while they may seem overwhelmingly complex, are as simple as a series of well-placed marks and shapes assembled into a grand whole. Now, when they see large works of art in museums or public spaces, they'll understand the effort that goes into them because they've done it themselves."

Since the mosaic was unveiled last month, compliments have been streaming in from school parents and members of the parish who have seen it.



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CONFIRMATION—Knights of Columbus Assembly 1543, Peter B. O'Connor, was the honor guard for Confirmation ceremonies last month at Immaculate Conception Parish, Secaucus conducted by Most Rev. John W. Flesey, Auxiliary Bishop of Newark, center. With Bishop Flesey are Father Joseph Pietropinto, pastor, left, and Father Guiseppe Fedele, right.



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Faithful are 'a close knit family'

BY MELISSA MCNALLY
Staff Writer

St. James Parish was founded in 1923 when a delegation from St. Rose of Lima Parish, then located in Springfield, made a plea to the Bishop of Newark expressing its desire to create a second parish in the town.

On Dec. 23, 1923, Reverend James T. Brown celebrated the first Mass at St. James Parish in municipal hall. Shortly thereafter, a new church was constructed in what now houses Bank of America on Morris Avenue.

The parish grew rapidly, as many people from Millburn and Union joined St. James. In 1950, construction began on the current church. Its design is one of the "Apostle Churches" with a wrap-around style of the school encircling the worship space. There are 12 churches in the archdiocese built from this design.

The church was established in temporary quarters in what was hoped to be a gymnasium for the school and parish. However, in 1973, some renovations to that structure were conducted by Msgr. Francis X. Coyle, and the parish continued to worship there.

The new St. James was dedicated on June 6, 2002, by Archbishop John J. Myers. The pastor, Father Robert Stagg, encouraged his parishioners to donate money along with small businesses and friends of the parish.

St. James Parish is the first new church in Union County in the last 25 years. The building



St. James Parish, Springfield, is the first new church in Union County in the last 25 years.

incorporates old Biblical models in its architecture.

"When entering the Eucharistic space... one must pass through a thick, solid masonry portal-wall. This Constantinian inspired architecture stirs familiar images of the earliest of Christian Basilicas. The portal-wall intentionally appears more monumental than it is upon entering. It frames the context as the door to our everyday lives," Architect Arthur John Sikula wrote in *The Catholic*

place at its bed. Those stones, the building blocks of these physical manifestations of church, represent the individual members of the Body of Christ—People of God," Sikula wrote.

The parishioners appreciate the hard work in bringing their new church to life. Beatrice Stracey has been a member of St. James parish for over 30 years and agrees that its recent incarnation suits the community.

Saint James the Apostle, Springfield

Advocate (June 19, 2002).

Not only does the building connect the physical structure to the spirituality of parishioners, the church unites the community in faith. The community literally formed the building blocks for the church.

"Before the concrete foundations for the altar were placed, the parishioners brought stones from their homes to

"The new building is so conducive to prayer. It's serene and peaceful. When we were thinking of constructing it, I thought about all the needy people out there and how much money we would spend on it. But God wanted us to build a church and we did."

Stracey, a retired teacher, is an active member of St. James and is a eucharistic minister, a lector, is involved in The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and teaches religious education.

Father Stagg encourages volunteerism that is constantly growing every year. There are about 1,700 registered families and marked by a growth in young families and an increase in diversity.

"Ten years ago, our school had 150 children and now we have 220. In religious education classes, there used to be 200 students and it has now grown to 570 students. The parish is getting extremely young," Father Stagg said.

Father Stagg also noted there has been an increase of Asian Americans and black families.

"Thirty years ago, St. James was not as diverse as it is today," Stracey said.

The parish has several organizations and events throughout the year including Bible study, a Woman's Day of Recollection in which over 100 women gather on Ash Wednesday in discussing their faith, a pastoral council, and Shepherd Speak, a Lenten series of talks with three bishops.

"We have a close knit family. We are blessed with newcomers and we have a net gain every year," according to the pastor. All of these activities ensure everyone can get involved in parish life.

"There is something for everyone to do. No matter what your talent is, there is something to do. You are never left out at anything at St. James. I have definitely seen a growth in hospitality in the last 10 years," Christina Boris, a member of St. James for 11 years, explained.

Art Tupper has been a parishioner for 21 years and co-chaired the Capital Campaign with Boris to raise \$2.5 million for the new church building. Tupper also works on the financial council for St. James the

Apostle Parish School where his wife is the 8th grade teacher.

Tupper attributes the change in the St. James community to the spirit of Father Stagg.

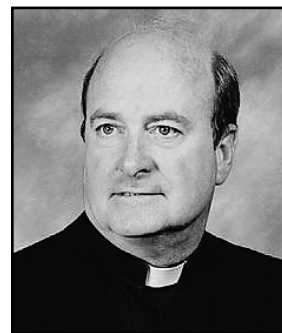
"When I came to St. James in 1985, it was a sleepy parish. There was a huge change when Father Stagg came here—it exploded. People would come from all different towns to hear him speak. He attracts people and interests them. He just gobbles you up when he speaks," Tupper said. "What you see is what you get with Father Stagg," Stracey added.

St. James School has won several awards and came third in science, math, and social studies in a competition out of all the private schools in Union County. The school also excels at competitive cheerleading and basketball.

The students also participate in church activities and have donated coats to the homeless, given Christmas presents to children of parents who are in prison and collected backpacks for children in Newark. The parish and school are now more intertwined and are working together to spread joy and goodwill.

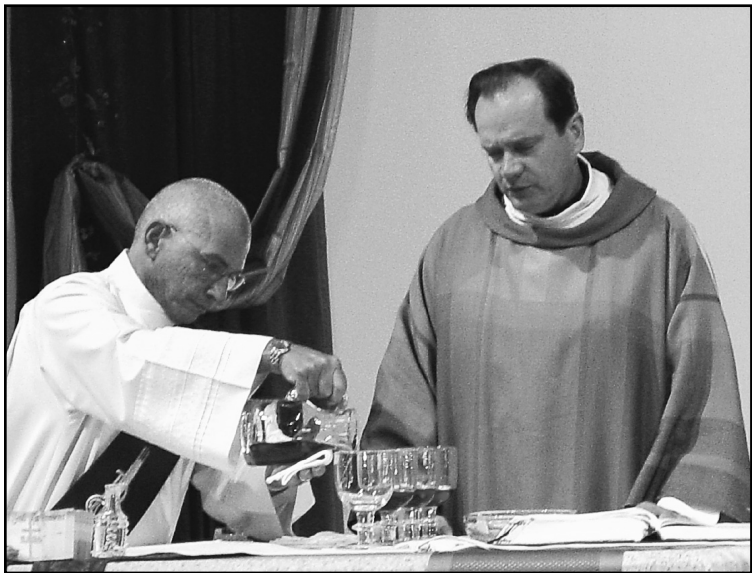
"It used to be that people who

Meet the Pastor



Father Robert Stagg

High School: Bergen Catholic High School
Undergraduate: Seton Hall University
Graduate School: Drew University
Ordination: May 31, 1975
Hero: My mother
Favorite Saints: St. James, St. Brendan
Favorite Sport: Golf, basketball
Favorite Food: anything Italian
Favorite Subject in School: History
Favorite Movie: *Goodfellas*
Latest Book Read: *Year of Magical Thinking* by Joan Didion
Occupation if I Weren't a Priest: Teacher



Deacon Michael DeRoberts (left) and Father John Dennehy (right) celebrate Mass at St. James Parish.

were involved in St. James School but were not parishioners of St. James were like stepchildren. Now everyone is more integrated," Stracey said.

This lesson of giving is also taught in the religious education program. "Our program has an emphasis on love and as the students grow, it is about what to do for outreach. We try to teach the children that they impact the world. Every lesson ends when the students can show God's love," Stracey explained.

"The priests lead us to be better people. They bring you further in your journey," Boris said.

"I feel like my spiritual needs are met here. This is a community and family of Christians. I hope that in the future, St. James Church continues to attract all kinds of people without barriers. I would like to see a beautiful bouquet of different flowers at Mass so they too can have the joy of being here that I have," Stracey explained.

"Whatever you need, wherever you are in your journey, you can be fulfilled here," Boris exclaimed.

St. James the Apostle Parish is located at 45 South Springfield Ave., Springfield 07081.

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The joyful experience of that 'unique moment'

BY WARD MIELE
Managing Editor

AREA—Sharing their faith with the younger generation has deepened the spirituality of those involved in parish catechetical programs throughout the Archdiocese of Newark.

Every parish, indeed, every baptized Catholic, explained Ronald L. Pihokker, director of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office, has the "responsibility to evangelize." In fact, he stressed, Pope Paul VI taught that the reason the Church exists is to evangelize.

Further clarifying the relationship between evangelization and catechesis (or faith formation) Pope John Paul II, Pihokker continued, called catechesis a "unique moment" in the evangelization process.

Three key elements are involved in the evangelization process: religious education/catechesis in the schools; catechetical programming at the parish level most importantly for adults, as well as for children; and additional summer, weekly and home activities designed to complement

and nurture the first two efforts.

The importance of the catechesis of adults, Pihokker emphasized, crystallized a decade ago following the publication of the US Bishop's Plan for Adult catechesis: "Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us," which indicated that everything flows from the catechesis of adults.

Parents, the Catechetical Office director went on to say, are the primary religious educators of their children and therefore formal catechetical programs in the parishes and schools provide them with the necessary organized and formal foundation to assist them in instilling the faith in young people. The role and witness of parents is crucial in this effort.

After working at the Prudential Insurance Co. for a quarter century, Edward Karpinski, a parishioner at St. Aloysius Parish in Caldwell, said he felt he was at a "crossroads.... I wanted to live out my faith more fully."

He ultimately talked with his pastor at the time and was told of

an opening at the parish religious education coordinator. It was a direction, Karpinski recalled, in which he is convinced God was calling him.

The rewards of catechetical ministry are profound. Karpinski pointed to the first Eucharist and Sacrament of Reconciliation as "moving moments." He also referred fondly to the heart-warming experience of walking into a classroom and seeing the youngsters' "faces light up because they are learning about Jesus and their faith."

with the Church and children whom, she said, "are the future of our Church."

Being with children on their spiritual journey "as they experience the message of Jesus Christ of forgiveness and compassion" is especially meaningful for Furey.

She is moved by the "sense of building a community based on the belief in Christ" drawn from the four Bergen County towns served by the parish. Furey urged other adults to "follow your desires, follow where your heart is pulling you, it is a wonderful opportunity for lay people to grow."

"I love being Catholic," declared Holly Lawmaster at St. Cecelia Parish, Kearny. The more

she learns about her faith, Lawmaster continued, "the more fascinated I am and the more I want to share my faith with others."

Starting her second year at St. Cecelia's, Lawmaster cited how she felt when the children received First Holy Communion. "It struck me that this is what it is

all about, bringing kids to Christ."

She would "encourage" others to join the catechetical ministry as either a career or volunteer. It is, Furey noted, "working for souls."

"Love of God, love of parish" was the motivating force behind the decision of Nancy Plate at Sacred Heart Parish in Bloomfield. Looking back on her first year as religious education coordinator, Plate said she "keeps learning about my religion, it is an awesome experience."

Although parents are busy in today's society, Plate pointed out, "they still want to make it work for their children, they want to have them know God."

Plate called working in catechetical ministry "the best opportunity of your life. Never say no and realize that God has you in a place for a reason." She also cited the "sense of community" at the parish level and beyond in the archdiocese. The support system, Plate said, is "terrific."

"To be a catechist is to be a witness," Pihokker added. "Teachers are listened to when they are witnesses of the faith and are living the faith."

"To be a catechist is to be a witness."

—Ronald L. Pihokker

To those considering following in his footsteps, Karpinski was emphatic. "Follow your heart," he said. "Follow the calling, it is really a vocation."

On the job the past year and a half at Our Lady Mother of the Church Parish in Woodcliff Lake, Susan Furey sees it as an opportunity to work in and grow



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PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Oh most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the Sea, help me and show me that you are my mother. Oh Holy Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to secure me in my necessity (make request). There are none that can withstand your power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. I place this cause in your hands. Amen. Say this prayer for 3 consecutive days. Novena is published in gratitude. Thank you. **V.A.B.**

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Oh most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the Sea, help me and show me that you are my mother. Oh Holy Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to secure me in my necessity (make request). There are none that can withstand your power. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. I place this cause in your hands. Amen. Say this prayer for 3 consecutive days. Novena is published in gratitude. Thank you. **L.F.**

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The ministry of Catholic Cemeteries operates under the auspices of the Catholic Church.

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The Church encourages frequent cemetery visits and prayers for the dead.

Visiting the sick, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry are also works of mercy to also be encouraged.

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Felicians celebrate 150 years

BY MELISSA MCNALLY
Staff Writer

NEWARK — "The Felician Sisters have always served as a joyful reminder of God's love for His children," Archbishop John J. Myers declared at a Nov. 5 Mass at the Sacred Heart Cathedral Basilica celebrating the Order's 150th anniversary.

In a service marked by reflections of the Order's history of service to the Church of Newark, Archbishop Myers noted "we are blessed to be able to have them as members of our Archdiocesan family and are honored to celebrate this special day with them."

Father Placid Stroik, O.F.M., chaplain to the Felician Sisters at the provincial house in Lodi, said in his homily, "We are here to give thanks and show our honor for the wondrous things God has done in 150 years through the Felician Sisters."

Father Stroik also discussed the impact founder Mary Angela



Advocate photo - Melissa McNally

Sisters pray in reverence during the Felician Sisters Sesquicentennial Celebration at Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

Truszkowska has had on the world. "The Felicians have left their footprints in Mexico, Africa, Rome and even here in Lodi, New Jersey. These footprints are left in the sand of time and on hospital floors, college floors, streets, fields...they come

with the full weight and power of the Eucharist."

"Sister Mary Angela's footprints still exist in other forms. The things she has done still exist. We walk through this world as pilgrims yearning for something. Let Sister Mary Angela's legacy be our legacy as well," Father Stroik said. "People in the year 2155 will have noticed Felician footprints all over the world and will once again give thanks."

The Felicians were founded in 1855 in Warsaw, Poland and named after Saint Felix, a 15th century Franciscan saint devoted to children. The Sisters first responded to the poor and needy in their war-torn country and tended to wounded soldiers, orphans and the homeless.

With over 2,000 Sisters who serve in 11 countries, the sisters were officially established in the Archdiocese of Newark in 1913 when they occupied the Immaculate Conception Province in Lodi. Nov. 21 was the official day of celebration for the Sisters including prayers to the foundress and reflection on her early writings.

Sisters in attendance were impressed and joyous after the Mass. Sister Marie Victoria Bartkowski has been a Sister for 44 years. "The Mass was beautiful. This was a wonderful milestone for the Felicians. I love being a Felician and I wouldn't miss this day for the world."

"This day was inspiring and the future looks promising for the Felicians," Sister Jean Ryder added.

Sister Cynthia Babyak, a Sister for 42 years, also looks toward the future. "It was a glorious day and I am proud to be a Felician. I would like to see more women come into our Order."

MISSION NEWS

"The children's lives are totally changed since coming to Holy Rosary School."

While visiting families in Faisalabad, Pakistan, missionary Sister Rosalda Aquilina came upon five children whose parents could not afford



school fees. Sister Rosalda arranged for them to attend a Church-run school.

✧ "We love learning our lessons," said

one of those children. "The Sisters teach us about Jesus too, and we want to be like Him." ✧ Sisters throughout the Missions reach out with the love of Christ to serve the needs of children, offering them the "Good News" proclaimed by the angel that first Christmas: "a savior has been born for you." ✧ This Christmas, won't you offer a gift to our mission family, through the Propagation of the Faith, to support those who, through their words and actions, reveal Christ's love and peace to the suffering and the poor?



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Don't forget your Church when you're giving

The end of the year will soon be upon us and before we know it, a new year will dawn. To help you finish this year in charitable style, here are five gentle reminders.

1. Charitable giving benefits your parish and the Archdiocese, as well as you.

A special, year-end gift during "The Season of Giving" can bring you added joy, especially as you consider the boost your gift will give your parish or us here at the Archdiocese. You will enjoy knowing that your generosity has made a difference by helping the Church fulfill its worthy goals. And, of course, there are usually tax benefits related to charitable giving.

2. Appreciated assets can make dandy gifts.

Take stock, for example. If you have owned the stock for at least a year and a day, you can receive full value for the gift, including all the appreciation. What's more, neither you nor the Church will have to pay capital gains tax on the gift. The more the stock has appreciated, the greater the benefit. Your tax advisor can spell out the specifics for you.

Mutual funds, real estate and other appreciated assets can make great gifts as well.

3. Tax-wise charitable gifts often require advanced action.

A stock gift usually takes more time to complete than writing out and mailing a check. Real estate gifts require even more time - often several weeks.

You should also plan for time to discuss your non-cash gift with your attorney or financial advisor. Getting appointments and handling the paperwork takes time. So . . . start early!

4. Charitable gifts can be accelerated.

That is, you can reach into next year and pull your charitable giving into the current year. There are several reasons why this might make sense.

First, you may be looking at a higher tax bill this year, due to larger-than-anticipated income.

Additional giving this year may create a higher charitable income tax deduction and help ease your added tax burden.

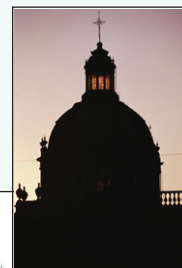
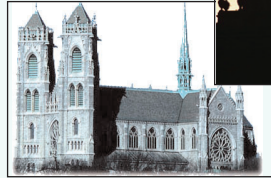
Second, as you move closer to the end of the year, you may find you have extra cash on hand and may want to make an "advance" on your charitable giving plans for the new year.

Third, you may want to give more this year simply because you are sure of the tax benefits now, but unsure what Congress may do next year regarding the charitable income tax deduction. After all, who knows what a year can hold?

5. A life-income plan may make sense for you at this time.

Life-income plans allow you to establish a gift arrangement now, create a stream of lifetime income, obtain current tax benefits and provide a future gift to the Church. They are especially attractive to donors who cannot afford to give up current income from retirement-related assets but may want better returns like 6% to 11.3%.

Ken DiPaola, Associate Director of Planned Giving, is ready to chat with you about your year-end giving plans and the various options available to you. He can help coordinate the planning and giving process to your parish and the Archdiocese by meeting with you and your professional advisor(s), and by caring for the various details. The services of Mr. DiPaola are, of course, complimentary to you. Please feel free to call him at (973) 497-4332. Or use the handy reply form below.



Dear Mr. DiPaola, I have an interest in learning more about planned giving, please:

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- ☐ Send me information about creative and tax-efficient ways to give to the Church.
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- ☐ I have remembered my parish in my will. Please enroll me in the Archdiocesan Lagacy Circle.
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- ☐ I want to review my will and would like information to assure that my intentions are recorded correctly.

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