"We Have Seen the Lord: Come and See."
We Came. We Saw. We Worshipped!

On Sunday, May 3, 2009, over 25,000 individuals gathered together and joyously celebrated the 175th Anniversary of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis with a Jubilee Mass in the new Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. Because of the large television screens in the stadium, each and every visitor had a good seat and was able to be a part of the activities regardless of where they were seated.

A message from Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States was featured in the printed program along with messages from Archbishop Buechlein; Mitch Daniels, Governor of Indiana; and Gregory Ballard, Mayor of Indianapolis. A special Jubilee Prayer and Jubilee Hymn along with a brief history of the archdiocese were also included in the program along with a tribute to our founders including St. Theodora and Blessed Bishop Bruté.

Prelude music was provided by the Archdiocesan High School Jubilee Choir, St. Monica Spanish Choir, Holy Angels Parish Mass Choir and the African Catholic Ministry Drummers. The music was led by Charles Gardner, Archdiocesan Music Director.

The beautiful music was a highlight of the celebration over an excellent sound system. Everyone could see and hear!

Con-celebrating with Archbishop Buechlein were Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, 16 other bishops or archbishops, two archabbots, and a large number of priests, both active and retired.

Nearly 2800 youth and adults from across the Archdiocese received the Sacrament of Confirmation during the ceremonies. Also honored on this day were over 100 first communicants representing this year’s first communion class from throughout the archdiocese. The Office of Catholic Education organized this part of the event. Couples married 50 years or more were also honored, as were members of religious congregations celebrating significant anniversaries — among them, Archbishop Buechlein himself, celebrating 50 years of priesthood.

The diversity of our local Church was highlighted during the Prayers of the Faithful, which were presented in English, Latin, Spanish, Igbo, Korean, German, Vietnamese, French, Italian and Latvian.

This was a special day for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis as we gathered to celebrate all of our blessings over the past 175 years and to anticipate additional blessings in the years to come.
**Race for Vocations 2009**

Last May I ran in the Indianapolis Mini-Marathon and participated on the “Race for Vocations” Team. I did my part as I collected prayer pledges, attended the Mass for Vocations the night before, donned my Race for Vocations T-shirt, and spoke with the people who approached me throughout the day. Everything went well, hundreds of pledges were completed, and the whole experience came and went without much of a second thought.

However, only five days after the race I received an e-mail from a friend who had promised to say a rosary for vocations. Rebecca’s e-mail was entitled, “A Vocation!” Intrigued, I opened it, and lo and behold, one of her good friends had just decided to enter the seminary in the fall! The timing was quite remarkable. For weeks we had been collecting prayer pledges, raising awareness about vocations and God’s universal call to holiness. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people were praying for vocations, and just four days later, a young man had decided to enter seminary.

We can never be sure about the exact ways in which God works in our world. But, I truly believe this was a testament to the power of prayer and the ways God was working in and through all those people praying for vocations. This “success story” was merely an affirmation of the immeasurable growth in awareness and understanding of vocations. Certainly, there were countless others who had also more fully understood their own vocation in realization of our prayers.

I did not hesitate to join our Race for Vocations efforts again this spring. Last year’s experience had shown me the subtle, yet powerful, strength of our prayerful intentions. My parish, Nativity in Indianapolis, formed a team of runners and walkers, and nearly the entire parish community joined in on the effort. In the end, even though there is no bottom line, no dollar amount or other quantifiable figure to determine the success of our efforts, surely our effort. In the end, even though there is no bottom line, no dollar amount or other quantifiable figure to determine the success of our efforts, surely our prayers will continue to be answered. The Race for Vocations effort offers prayers for all people to live out the universal call to holiness, whether in priesthood, religious life, sacred married life or sacred single life. May we continue to be attentive to the ways in which God calls us in our lives.

**John Paul Lichon**

is an ECHO Apprentice Catechetical Leader at Nativity Parish in Indianapolis

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**Celebrating Catholic School Values 2009**

Please mark your calendars now for the Celebrating Catholic School Values Scholarship and Career Achievement Awards dinner on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 at the Indiana Convention Center. This is our premier showcase event for Catholic schools. Many of our recipients from past Celebrating Catholic School Values events tell us they consider their Career Achievement Award the greatest honor of their life. They cherish their award above all others because it represents the values they espouse every day in their lives as a result of their education in Catholic schools. Since 1996 this event has featured nationally recognized keynote speakers, showcased the effectiveness of our schools, and honored some 70 servant-leaders for their values and accomplishments. More than $4 million has been raised in the past twelve years through corporate, foundation, parish, school, agency and individual investments to aid our neediest elementary and high school students in southern and central Indiana. This spring, nearly $200,000 in assistance will be distributed from the 2008 event. These funds will be even more important for our students in 2009-2010 with the current economy. Please plan now to purchase a table and invite a group from your parish, school or agency to attend — preferably with the help of a business sponsor.
A Promise to Keep
Peer Mentor Luncheon

Archbishop Daniel Buechlein hosted the annual peer mentors luncheon last month at the Catholic Center to honor 458 high school students who served in the A Promise to Keep program this school year. The luncheon is an opportunity to affirm the leadership of these high school students in our Church. Some reflections shared by these mentors at the luncheon speak volumes about the effectiveness of the APTK program.

Claire Turner, Scecina Memorial High School, said: “APTK is about real students telling other students that living a chaste life is possible. … I feel other students connected, listened and learned from us because we are living breathing examples of the life Christ wants us to live.”

Kevin Banich, Roncalli, spoke about the responsibility that comes with participation in APTK because the younger kids look up to you, the mentor. “If he fails at his promise now he would let down himself, God and all the kids who heard him say how important chastity was to him.”

Sarah DeNardin, Bishop Chatard, was in the sixth grade when she first heard the message of chastity from the high school peer mentors and she, “…knew she wanted to be involved in the program. The program has strengthened her morals and values.” She was one of several mentors who spoke about the significance of their experience of APTK in middle school.

Opportunities for our Youth!

Homeland Mission Project Planned for July 5-10, 2009

The Archdiocesan Homeland Mission Project is for anyone entering their freshman through senior year of High School. It is an opportunity for young people to spend a week in our own Indianapolis community serving those in need. The goal of the week is that the young people see Christ in those they serve, and that those they serve see Christ in them. The participants stay all week at St. Bernardette Parish on the east side of Indianapolis. Each day starts with prayer, and then youth board their van which takes them to their worksite for the day. In the late afternoon and evening there is free time and time for personal reflection, mass and social activities. In previous years, our worksites have included: Missionaries of Charity Day Camp, Homeless Initiative Mission, St. Elizabeth-Coleman Home, Cathedral Soup Kitchen and A Caring Place. The cost is $150 and youth may register through their parish youth minister or forms can found at www.archindy.org/youth.

National Catholic Youth Conference

November 19-22, 2009 ~ Kansas City, Missouri

“Christ Reigns”

The National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) is an exciting, biennial three-day experience of prayer, community, and empowerment for Catholic high school youth and their adult chaperones. The schedule includes general sessions and workshops addressing a wide variety of topics as well as opportunities for reconciliation, daily liturgy, and special activities such as concerts, a dance, and a comedy club. The “thematic park” is a unique venue incorporating traditional exhibits with interactive educational and recreational activities. The cost is $480 which includes registration, transportation, hotel and a few meals. Youth may register through their parish youth minister.

Honors at NCEA for Two Schools

Two center city schools of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis were honored at the recent National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) Convention in Anaheim, CA.

St. Joan of Arc School, Indianapolis – Families Supporting Faculty (FSF) received the NCEA 2009 Distinguished Home and School Association Award. The FSF sponsored a project to create and fund “Monarch Parc” to replace the school’s antiquated playground equipment. More than 50 school families, parishioners and neighbors contributed over $40,000 and more than 50 people volunteered to help with installation of the new equipment. The project was a dream of several parents and families – to provide an updated, safe and challenging play area with outdoor art equipment to meet the needs of their growing preschool and primary grades. A series of fund-raising events were held under the leadership of Principal, Mary Pat Sharpe; FSF Officers, Jamie Pachciarz and Peggy Johnson; and Suzi Abell, Director of Curriculum. At St. Joan of Arc School 35+ percent of the students receive free or reduced lunch. Five years ago only 54 percent of the students passed the Indiana State Test for Educational Progress (ISTEP+). This year over 92 percent passed the test.

St. Andrew and St. Rita Catholic Academy, Indianapolis received the 2009 Catholic Schools for Tomorrow Award for innovations in education from Today’s Catholic Teacher. The honor was for their service-learning program “Jesus’ Helping Disciples.” Becky Douglas, Religious Education Coordinator for the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies (MCTA), a consortium of urban schools, decided to start a student group to integrate the social teachings of the Church with acts of service. The students chose the name “Jesus’ Helping Disciples.” Each month the group takes a social teaching theme, reads a relevant Scripture passage, writes a reflection, discusses it and chooses a related service project. So far the group has adopted an endangered jaguar (the school’s mascot) and has helped to save Indiana ash trees from the emerald ash borer, along with some smaller projects. St. Andrew and St. Rita is a consolidated school serving 71 percent families on free/reduced lunch and a 95 percent non-Catholic population. Yo McCormick is principal. School officials attending the awards banquet were pleasantly surprised when the school received significant gifts also from the sponsoring companies including classroom materials and a Smart Board® from Smart Technologies, Inc.
Archdiocesan Confirmation Retreat – 2009
A.C.T.S – Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, Supplication

Hosting more than 350 youth and adults is no easy task. They must be gathered, fed, have somewhere to sleep, and be in an environment which makes being away from the comforts of home at least tolerable.

Any well-organized team can make such an event happen; the real challenge is gathering and feeding youth spiritually, allowing them to rest spiritually, and creating a place where they can consider their spirituality and personal relationship to God and the Church. This is what God invited our retreat team, group leaders and chaperones to do at Our Lady of the Greenwood in April.

Witnessing the confirmandi experience their faith in ways they had not yet considered or embraced is truly an encouragement to anyone who ministers to youth. Often we pray for “proof” that we are offering the truth of the Catholic Church in a way that causes them to want to pursue that faith throughout their lives. Rarely are we afforded such moments of strength as those created by the workings of the Holy Spirit during an event of this type.

Whether it was time spent listening to the presenters, attending Mass, or simply sharing their thoughts in a small group session, each young person came away with a new option to consider as to who they are and who God is in their lives. Moreover, offering the opportunity to pray before the Blessed Sacrament and to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation further provided a path by which they could walk closer to the outstretched hand of God.

On May 3 we witnessed a great moment in the Catholic Church at the Jubilee Mass at Lucas Oil Stadium as some 2500 youth were confirmed. Hosting more than 25,000 Catholics was not an easy task, but a well-organized team can make even such a massive event happen. The real challenge was in gathering and feeding them spiritually, allowing them to rest spiritually, and creating a place in that stadium where they could consider their spirituality and personal relationship to God and the Church among their fellow Catholics.

May we all hear the God we serve one-day say to us: “Welcome My good and faithful servant, for in serving them you have served Me.”

Dave Gehrich is currently Coordinator of Youth Ministry at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelbyville, transferring in July to St. Maurice, Greensburg

A GREAT ADVENTURE

The Office of Catholic Education hosted The Great Adventure Bible Timeline Seminar for the first time recently at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish. Over 60 participants were treated to a day-long presentation by Thomas Smith that featured an overview of 14 key books of the Bible capturing the “big picture” of God’s plan for salvation. Parish administrators of religious education as well as other leaders of parish Bible study groups attended to learn about The Great Adventure Bible Study Program. Ascension Press was on mark with a variety of materials and everyone who attended walked away with a deeper knowledge of Sacred Scripture.

Tom and Jane Meier from Good Shepherd Parish commented, “What we most appreciated was the reading plan that gives one the big picture of salvation history. As a smaller parish, we look forward to perhaps doing something jointly with a neighboring parish.”

Becky Cope, coordinator of religious education at Our Lady of the Greenwood will share some of what she learned with parish catechists, “You don’t learn everything about the Bible in this seminar but you gain a framework.” Becky will incorporate various aspects of The Great Adventure into her catechist training.

The Good Word

Education 400: History and Mission of Catholic Education

By Rob Rash and Kathy Mears, Office of Catholic Education

Who should our Catholic schools serve? Do we teach children because they are Catholic or do we teach them because we are Catholic?

These are questions discussed by archdiocesan educators in Education 400: History and Mission of Catholic Education offered by the archdiocese through Marian College. Educators examine their own mission in Catholic education and come to understand the rich educational history of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Did you know that in 1937, 17 years before Brown v. Board of Education, Bishop Elmer Ritter integrated our Catholic schools in Indianapolis? Were you aware that in 1953 the Archdiocese established a special education ministry some 21 years before the passing of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act? Educators learn about areas in which the archdiocese has been a national leader. Educational innovation and excellence have been hallmarks of Catholic education in the archdiocese and this history provides our current educators with a source of pride in the work that they continue today.

Educators from suburban, urban, and rural schools come together to contemplate who our schools serve and to assess the needs of their students. They exchange ideas about the children they teach and various means to bring them to a closer relationship with Christ. School finances, how the Church supports Catholic schools, and how the gift of Catholic education is offered throughout the archdiocese are all discussed.

Education 400 requires a reflective paper about the educator’s mission in a Catholic school. In addition to writing a personal mission statement, they must explain why they work in a Catholic school. Their reasons vary, yet common themes emerge. They desire to provide the best learning environment for their students, but even more important after taking Education 400, participants understand that they must continue the legacy of evangelization and educational excellence. The articulation of the educators’ mission inevitably supports the educational mission of the Church, To teach as Jesus teaches.

Education 400: History and Mission of Catholic Education provides an avenue for Catholic educators to learn about their archdiocesan faith community and colleagues. Through the class, educators are affirmed in their decision to teach in a Catholic school and realize what a privilege it is to teach for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.
SHINE! A Social Ministry Renewal in the Archdiocese

He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"
Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." (Jesus) said to him, "Feed my sheep." (NAB John 21:17)

We are in the middle of the Easter season where we once again celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and our redemption. If ever there was a time it should be crystal clear that we are called to action in Christ it is during this season.

Most of us know about social ministry and the integral part it plays within the Catholic Faith. As Pope Benedict XVI writes in his encyclical Deus Caritas Est: “The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God (kerygma-martyria), celebrating the sacraments (leitourgia), and exercising the ministry of charity (diakonia). These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable. For the Church, charity is not a kind of welfare activity which could equally well be left to others, but is a part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being.”

The problem faced by administrators is how to fit one more thing into our already full program? This fall we will have a gathering of leaders within the Church to discuss these concerns. We urge administrators and other interested persons to make this a priority so we may allow God to bring about His kingdom on earth.

It is more a matter of refocusing the lens than adding anything new. Just as we cannot worship without all three persons of the Trinity, neither can we be truly Catholic without Word, Sacrament and Love of Neighbor. So, please join us on October 1, 2009 for a day filled with community, joy and love as we aspire to more fully integrate the Eucharistic commission we receive: “Go forth to love and serve the Lord.”

SHINE: Spreading Hope In Neighborhoods Everywhere
Kickoff Day: October 1, 2009
Lucas Oil Stadium Exhibit Halls
9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Only $45/ person
Register at:
www.SpreadingHopeEverywhere.com

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2009!

During May and June 752 Seniors will graduate from seven interparochial high schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis:

- Bishop Chatard 165 Our Lady of Providence 104
- Cardinal Ritter 108 Seton Catholic 18
- Fr. Thomas Scecina Memorial 82 Shawe Memorial 25
- Roncalli 245

Three private high schools in the archdiocese will have approximately 586 additional graduates this Spring:

- Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory 198
- Cathedral 245
- Oldenburg Academy 51

The fourth private high school, Providence Cristo Rey, will graduate their first class in 2010.

Congratulations to our Seniors. We are proud of you!

The Good Word

GUIDELINES ARE PROGRESSING

The Office of Catholic Education continues its work in implementing the Guidelines for Chastity and Sexuality Education in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. One requirement in the guidelines is to prepare teachers and catechists to teach lessons in human sexuality and chastity living. Teachers and catechists need to know their role in teaching lessons from approved texts while partnering with parents and guardians. They also need to be prepared to answer students’ inquiries clearly and pastorally while being faithful to the teachings of the Church.

Margaret Hendricks of the Office of Catholic Education has presented the guidelines to Catholic school principals and parish administrators of religious education at business meetings over the last few months. Several of the required teacher/catechist trainings have taken place. Two more “live” training seminars are planned for Tuesday, June 9 at the Catholic Center and Saturday, September 12 at Holy Name Parish in Beech Grove. To ensure that these trainings become readily available throughout the archdiocese, we are working to identify a coordinator/facilitator in each deanery. The Office of Catholic Education will collaborate with these trained coordinators to offer video assisted training sessions for teachers and catechists, and to promote communication to parents. Two video assisted teacher/catechist trainings are scheduled to be held in August — one at St. Mary, North Vernon in the Seymour Deanery and one in the New Albany Deanery.
Thomas Paine wrote, “These are the times which try men’s souls.” It was a turbulent time in American history and hundreds of years later we can still identify with his sentiments. We find ourselves greatly challenged in today’s world, especially in our school and parish communities. Times are tough as we deal with difficult decisions related to personnel, finances and finding new resources. However, I have learned over the years that God does not give us more than we can handle. We just need to look for the opportunities God provides for us among the challenges.

I immediately think of graduations. What an exciting time for our young adults to begin yet another journey in their lives, and we had the privilege of preparing them for the trip. Then, I reflect on our glorious celebration of 175 years as an Archdiocese. Wow, what an event!!!! One only needed to be present to feel the energy, enthusiasm and excitement of today’s Church. God has been so very good to us.

I also think of the recent death of my sister, Ellie. Many of you have also lost loved ones over the years. We know that great faith emerges from the hope of passing from death into new life as we continue to celebrate the Easter season and all of its blessings. I can’t begin to express the gratitude I have for each of you who sent kind greetings and prayers or took time to be present to me at this time.

So, I say to all of you, although life continues to challenge us, God provides us with great opportunities. We must keep the Faith He has given to us. Remember, “…this too shall pass.” May God continue to bless you as you complete yet another year in service to His Church. And, may each of you find time to refresh and renew yourselves this summer for the challenges to come.

God bless,

Mickey

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