The Good Word from the Office of Catholic Education is published three times annually and shared with the following groups: Parish Administrators of Catholic Education, Catholic School Administrators, Pastors, Education Commission/Board Presidents and Friends of Catholic Education. Your contributions of ideas for stories and your comments are welcome.

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May 2010

OCE Welcomes New Executive Director

Harry A. Plummer, a native Hoosier, will be returning to his roots when he becomes the new Executive Director of Catholic Education and Faith Formation on July 1, 2010. He is currently Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, Montana. Born in Indianapolis and baptized at Holy Spirit Parish, Harry, his wife of 24 years, Annina, and their eight children will be relocating to Indiana this summer.

Mr. Plummer has held a variety of positions over the past 29 years that span the breadth of total Catholic education. These include positions as Catholic school teacher and principal at both the elementary and secondary level; parish director of religious education; director of education for the Sacred Heart Southern Missions in Mississippi; and, diocesan director of religious education in Des Moines. He has also been an educational consultant and college instructor.

The new executive director earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in education, a Master of Arts in Educational Administration and a Master of Arts in Catholic theology. He will oversee all ministries under the Secretariat for Catholic Education and Faith Formation, including Catholic schools, parish faith formation programs, youth ministry, CYO and St. Mary’s Child Center. He will succeed Annette “Mickey” Lentz, who has held the position for 13 years and is now the chancellor of the archdiocese.

The search committee, chaired by Archdiocesan Education Commission President, Bill Kuntz, performed an extensive national search that began in December 2009. The group was “ecstatic” to be able to recommend someone to Archbishop Buechlein with a strong background in all aspects of total Catholic education.

Mr. Plummer initially wrote to the committee: “I went to the NCEA website to see if there was a position that could bring us closer to home and that incorporated my experience and interest in a position with a comprehensive view of Catholic education embracing both religious education/faith formation and Catholic school formation. So, you can understand that I was very pleased to read your advertisement.”

Let us warmly welcome Harry Plummer and family home to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis!

Congratulations to the Class of 2010!

Over 1300 Seniors are graduating from eleven Catholic High Schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

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<td>Scecina Memorial, Indianapolis</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cardinal Ritter, Indianapolis</td>
<td>164</td>
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<td>Bishop Chatard, Indianapolis</td>
<td>273</td>
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<td>Roncalli, Indianapolis</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>Our Lady of Providence, Clarksville</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cathedral, Indianapolis</td>
<td>294</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providence Cristo Rey, Indianpolis</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brebeuf Jesuit, Indianapolis</td>
<td>202</td>
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<td>Oldenburg Academy, Batesville</td>
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Kim Sprague
Excellence in the Ministry of Catechesis Award

Each year at the annual spring business meeting of parish administrators of religious education, a parish catechetical leader is honored with the “Excellence in the Ministry of Catechesis” award. This year’s recipient is Kim Sprague, DRE of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright.

A team approach to religious education has flourished at St. Teresa’s under Kim’s leadership. She involves young and old alike, making sure that everyone has an opportunity to grow in their faith. She is known not only for her knowledge of the Catholic Faith and Church teachings, but for being creative and flexible, too. Quick to evaluate a faith formation program, Kim is not afraid to “tweak it” to successfully meet the needs of youth and parishioners. Kim Sprague leads by example and willingly mentors others in catechetical ministry.

CONSUMED 2010, The Road to Emmaus

_When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight._ Luke 24: 30-31

As the _source and summit_ of our faith, the Eucharist is the central image and purpose of Catholic worship. March 5-7, 2010, nearly 300 youth and chaperones gathered for the 40-hour CONSUMED Archdiocesan Eucharistic Retreat for teens. Hosted at Cathedral High School, Indianapolis, the retreat brought together youth from every corner of the archdiocese. While some attending had experienced CONSUMED before, the vast majority of youth and chaperones were first-time attendees at the annual retreat.

With an extremely large group attending, it took every effort from the retreat team and host, Cathedral High School, to ensure a smooth and successful weekend. Shortly after the main school gym was set up for the weekend, the 300 participants descended upon the campus Friday evening. Father John Hollowell celebrated the opening Mass, concluding with Eucharistic Adoration as he placed a sacred Host in the monstrance. This began the veneration that would continue non-stop until Sunday afternoon when the retreat ended with a final Mass.

During the weekend, all those present were entertained, challenged, and inspired by a crew of great speakers. Paul Sifuentes from Saint Alphonsus, Zionsville; Dave Gehrich from Saint Maurice, Decatur County; Joshua Schaffner, the Program Coordinator from OCE; Meli Barber from Saint Barnabas; and Father Hollowell all gave talks relating to the theme of the retreat, “The Road to Emmaus.”

As participants journeyed with Christ on the road to Emmaus, reflecting on the Scripture passage, they were challenged to see how Christ is journeying with us on whatever road we may be traveling. There is profound truth, love, and joy to be realized in the simple act of receiving the Eucharist. It has the power to change us and open our eyes to a God who desires to be one with us.

_The two told what happened on the way, and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread._ Luke 24: 35

Year for Priests Celebrated

June will mark the end of the official “Year for Priests.” Our parishes and schools have done a wonderful job of celebrating this special year, including veneration of St. John Vianney as the patron saint of priests. Many prayers were offered, stories told, thank you notes shared, special gifts given and meals served to honor our priests and seminarians. _The Criterion_ did a wonderful series called “Faithful Fathers,” and our weekly _Oe-notes_ carried a regular feature titled “Very Important Priest” – VIP Messages. To read some of these stories and messages or for more details about Year for Priests activities around the archdiocese, go to _www.archindy.org_, scroll down and click on the “Year for Priests” icon. As this special year draws to a close, we all need to continue to pray for our priests and seminarians as we also pray for an increase in new vocations to the priesthood.

Second Lawsuit Filed in Busing Case

The Marion County Superior court denied the original motions of the archdiocese in a suit against the Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township ruling that the district has a responsibility to transport parochial students without cost, but they do not have to transport the students from their designated collection points at the public middle schools in the district to the parochial schools. The Indiana law requiring the transportation of parochial school students indicates that this transportation “must be to and from the parochial school or to and from the point on the regular route which is nearest or most easily accessible to the parochial school.” The ruling went well beyond the scope of the original complaint and allows the public school district to determine “…the point on the regular route which is nearest or most easily accessible to the parochial school,” to be effectively anywhere on the route they want it to be – thus, denying transportation to the parochial students at St. Lawrence and St. Simon Schools. The bus service has now been stopped. OCE believes this action has implications well beyond these two schools, so a new lawsuit was filed on April 1, on behalf of eleven parents and their children who are affected by the court’s ruling. This suit is different from the first lawsuit in that it directly challenges the interpretation of the statute and the district’s decision not to transport the students. A hearing has been set for June 3.
“CALLED TO GLORY”
“LLAMADOS A LA GLORIA”
NCYC Coming to Indianapolis
November 17-19, 2011
The National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), the largest single gathering of Catholic young people in the United States, is coming to Indianapolis next year! Youth Ministry of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will host this exciting event at Lucas Oil Stadium. Over 20,000 Catholic high school youth from across the nation are expected to attend. The local steering committee is being launched this month. Many volunteer opportunities await all. Please check for updates to learn how you can be a part of this event in The Criterion, on Facebook and in upcoming OCe-notes.

SPRED Mass 2010
Parents, catechists and SPRED special “Friends” gathered at St. Malachy Church in Brownsburg for the annual SPRED (Special Religious Development) liturgy on May 2, 2010. The small faith communities which have been created in local parishes for individuals with developmental disabilities and learning challenges, gathered as one to share faith and joy on this special day.

Roni Wyld, coordinator of the local SPRED group, was highly complimentary of the catechists with whom she has worked. Additionally, she mentioned that while some catechists enter the program with the intention of enriching the lives of the individuals with whom they work, they find, almost universally, that they receive great benefit themselves from those with whom they interact!

There were over 250 people in attendance, representing at least 15 parishes. The main celebrant was Vicar General of the Archdiocese, Monsignor Joseph Schaedel. Father Joe Feltz, pastor of St. Malachy Parish, was celebrant. Five special friends participated in the sacrament of First Communion and another received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Specially trained Thespians provided visual interpretations of the readings and the Gospel passage. Friends were also involved in the dressing of the altar, the offertory procession, and one participated as an acolyte.

While SPRED Friends attend their local group every two weeks, SPRED catechists meet on a weekly basis. On the alternate week, catechists gather to plan, to discuss, and to pray together for the class for the upcoming week.

Two Westside Catholic Schools to Merge
St. Gabriel the Archangel and St. Michael the Archangel will become one school at St. Michael for 2010-2011. In a letter dated February 2, Archbishop Daniel Buechlein acknowledged the work of the committee and the recommendations of a consultation process, and approved a transition plan that will proceed in phases during the 2010-2011 school year.

In Phase I, the archdiocese appointed an outside coordinator to assist and oversee staffing, curriculum, administration and other related transition issues. The coordinator is veteran principal and archdiocesan school consultant, Virginia Suttner of Bloomington, who will assist with the opening for the new school year.

A newly formed interim school commission made of members from both St. Michael and St. Gabriel Schools will govern the schools into the new school year. Fr. Kenneth Taylor, Dean of the West Deanery, is also assisting the commission with the transition.

One of the first commission tasks was to recommend administrators for the next school year. Matt Goddard, teacher at St. Michael, and Sarah Watson, current principal at St. Gabriel, have been appointed co-principals with a clear division of responsibilities. Current St. Michael principal, Steve Padgett, will retire at the end of the current school year.

Priorities in Phase I include the smooth and effective integration of students, faculty and staff from St. Gabriel into St. Michael; marketing and communication focusing on the advantages of the merger; curriculum planning and implementation; and Pre-K-8 professional staff development. An early childhood program will continue at the St. Gabriel site.

Based on the committee’s recommendation, Phase II will involve a partnership with Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School for enhancing Catholic education in the West Deanery of Indianapolis. A new board of limited jurisdiction will be established by January 1, 2011 that will ensure representation and expertise for the joint venture. The chief executive officer of this new board will be the President of Cardinal Ritter.

Priorities to be addressed in Phase II will include establishment of an administrative structure for this union of schools; active marketing and advancement (development) plans to increase enrollment and financial resources; and continued discussions with nearby Marian University on increased collaboration.

While acknowledging much work still to be done, Archbishop Buechlein encouraged “…everyone involved to stay focused on what is best for the children of the West Deanery.” He thanked committee members from St. Gabriel, St. Michael and Cardinal Ritter, “… for all your hard work, time and innovative ideas.”

Celebrating Catholic School Values 2010
We are already planning for the 2010 Celebrating Catholic School Values: Scholarship and Career Achievement Awards dinner and invite you to partner with us in our premier showcase event for Catholic schools. Since 1996 this event has featured nationally recognized keynote speakers, showcased the effectiveness of our schools, and honored some 75 servant-leaders for their values and accomplishments. More than $4.2 million has been raised the past 13 years through corporate, foundation, parish, school, agency and individual investments to aid our most needy elementary and high school students in southern and central Indiana. The 2010 Celebrating Catholic School Values: Scholarship and Career Achievement Awards event will be held on Wednesday, November 3, 2010 at the Indiana Convention Center, Sagamore Ballroom. Please plan now to invite a group from your company, parish, school or agency to attend.
The Indiana Department of Education has a goal of 90 percent of Indiana children passing the state tests by 2012. Toward that goal, the state has adopted a new approach similar to the one now used by Catholic schools in the archdiocese. Currently, the student passing rate is 89 percent for archdiocesan students on ISTEP.

The state plan calls for a “growth model” – a statistical model that can predict whether a student has made year’s worth of academic growth from one year to the next on a standardized test. The archdiocesan growth model followed for the past three years is known as “value added assessment” as pioneered by William Sanders.

The ISTEP tests measure proficiency – what a student knows on the day of testing – whereas a progress model such as “value added,” shows how much a student has learned over a period of time using data from the same tests.

Two Indy Catholic Schools to Become Charter Schools

The City-County Council of Indianapolis and Marion County voted on April 5, 2010 to transform St. Anthony and St. Andrew & St. Rita Catholic Academy into secular charter schools this fall with new names. The four other schools within the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies (MTCA) will remain Catholic schools. Facing many challenges, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and MTCA developed an innovative plan over the past year to ensure all six schools remained open in their neighborhoods.

“Many urban Catholic schools are closing across the nation and we did not want to leave the students or communities we currently serve,” said Msgr. Joseph Schaedel, Vicar General. “Through this transformation, an urgent and unmet need within urban Indianapolis will be filled.”

A separate board, independent of the Archdiocese – ADI Charter Schools, Inc. – will oversee the two schools to ensure all aspects of governance and operational activities conform to Federal and State laws.

Indianapolis Mayor Gregory A. Ballard is the only mayor in the nation empowered to sponsor charter schools. “Choices for our students and parents are important especially when it comes to education,” said the Mayor. “I am pleased and honored to fully support the transformation of both St. Anthony and St. Andrew & St. Rita into charter schools and look forward to the quality of education these schools will provide.”

Through extensive community outreach, the transformation has been discussed at more than 40 meetings with parents, teachers, parishioners, community leaders, elected officials and other key stakeholders. “The overwhelming majority of people we have met with have provided support, including the Indianapolis Charter School Board and Mayor Gregory Ballard,” said Connie Zittnan, MTCA director.

ADI is also searching for a head of school (principal) for each location. As soon as the heads of school are determined, parent focus groups will be held to focus on branding, including the name of the school, and parent communication. All current teachers and staff will be asked to reapply.

A prospectus and letter of intent was submitted to the Indianapolis Charter School Board in December 2009 and the full application in February 2010. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the application. Mayor Ballard also approved the application as did the Rules and Public Policy Committee of the City-County Council. Finally, it went before the full City-County Council for the final vote and was approved April 5, 2010.

In high performing schools such as the Catholic schools of the archdiocese, many students could pass the ISTEP on the first day of school. Rather than allowing students to rest on their proficiency, it is important to know that there has been additional growth during the year. It is also a much fairer way to measure learning, because it is reasonable to expect all schools to show reasonable academic growth with their students over time.

Teachers can use the growth data to plan instruction to better meet the needs of students and ensure growth. It also appears to be the best way so far to measure the “value added” by the teacher and to learn and share effective approaches from the most successful teachers.

The value added growth model was adopted as part of Project EXCEED a major school improvement initiative funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and other generous individual and corporate donors. The value-added approach was expanded to all archdiocesan Catholic schools at the end of the project.
People from All Walks of Life Run the Race for Vocations

Neither driving rain nor cool temperatures could dampen the spirits of those running the third annual Race for Vocations on the second weekend of May in Indianapolis. In connection with the 500 Festival Mini-Marathon, the archdiocesan Office of Vocations teamed with Young Adult and College Campus Ministry as well as the Dioceses of Lafayette and Evansville, to encourage people to support and pray for vocations.

In the months leading up to the race, runners were encouraged to use their training time as an opportunity to pray for vocations. Thousands of prayers have been pledged over the last three years in support of vocations to priesthood, religious life, sacred married life, and sacred single life. The Race for Vocations team sent out messages each week which touched on everything from the universal call to holiness, to vocations themselves, to the need for good running equipment.

A Mass for Vocations was held at St. John’s Church downtown Friday night before the race. Hundreds of runners and their families came out along with nearly a dozen priests despite the stormy weather to celebrate the Eucharist and pray for vocations. There was a pasta dinner afterward in a giant tent in the parking lot. The feast brought the whole crowd together for great fellowship and carbo-loading.

On the chilly race morning nearly 200 “vocation runners” donned bright blue shirts, emblazoned with a powerful statement: “Vocation… everyone has one. What’s yours?” They joined the 30,000 other runners and walkers on the Mini-Marathon 13.1 mile course.

Andrew Costello, a young adult in the archdiocese was the Race for Vocation’s team winner with a time of one hour and 31 minutes, followed closely by Fr. Josh Janko of the Diocese of Lafayette. Andrew said that many people asked him about the shirt. They were encouraging or were simply curious about the vocations statement. Matthew Rasche, another young adult from the area, said that being on the Race for Vocations team helped him and others “stand apart from the crowd. It gave us a sense of purpose and solidarity. There were so many young people there – married people, college students, people from all walks of life – all running for vocations,” said Rasche.

And now, despite sore legs, 200 more people can repeat the motto of the Race for Vocations from Timothy, “I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.”

Jeff and Karen Saturday Address Mentors

It’s not every day that Archbishop Buechlein and Colts Center, Jeff Saturday and his wife share a stage to affirm high school students for the decisions and choices they are making in their lives! It happened on Thursday, April 15, 2010 at the 16th annual A Promise to Keep (APTK) Luncheon. Archbishop Daniel told an audience of about 235 high school student peer mentors, who teach the APTK curriculum to younger adolescents, that he was proud of them for the commitment they made to the virtues of chastity and purity. He told them that it was important to surround themselves with like-minded people and he was grateful for the influence of young people in our Church.

Jeff and Karen Saturday’s keynote was entitled, “Living Out Marriage as Christian Men and Women of Faith.” They focused on the importance of living a moral life dedicated to Christ, family and service to others. They spoke of their belief in the dignity of each person and the sanctity of marriage. “We are here because we are proud of you and we want to tell you from our hearts how proud we are of the choices you have made and what you stand for.”

Jeff credited a high school coach for providing a “defining moment” for him. He had begun hanging out with the wrong people. Bold words, spoken in love from a respected role model “changed his life.” His “job” with the Super Bowl XLI Champion Colts, is what he does for a living, but his job is not what defines Jeff Saturday. He loves football, but the fact that football provides a platform for him to share his faith and do good is what really matters to him.

Karen spoke boldly about the importance of setting high moral standards and sticking to them. “There is grace under Christ and you can hold onto your faith and boundaries and stick to them. Think about your future when you make important decisions. Be bold and strong in your stance.” She cautioned the teens to be wary of alcohol, because “everyone knows when you start drinking, you make bad decisions.”

During the 2009-2010 school year, some 456 high school mentors participated in the APTK program throughout the archdiocese. Jeff and Karen Saturday told the teens that they want their own children “… to be sitting where you are in a few years.” They want their daughter and two sons to know the importance of this ministry and its message. “We are behind you 100%,” they said.

Father James Wilmoth, pastor at St. Roch Parish, was honored as the “Distinguished Pastor” at the annual Saint Theodora Guérin Excellence in Education luncheon in February. He was also among ten pastors recognized nationally by NCEA at the recent convention in Minneapolis. He was honored for his dedication to Catholic education and his inspirational leadership at St. Roch.

Also at the luncheon Mary Pat O’Conner, Cardinal Ritter Jr/Sr High School, was selected from among the five Guérin honorees to represent the archdiocese at the convention. Other honorees included Sister Maureen Fallon, SP, Providence Cristo Rey High School, Indianapolis, Patrice Payne, St. Thomas Aquinas School, Indianapolis, Amy Weigel, St. Louis School, Batesville and Laura Williams, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis.
Thanks to all of you at the end of another successful program year. It has been an exciting year for me, filled with both opportunity and challenge. It has not always been simple to wear two "large hats" at the same time -- learning my new role as Chancellor and continuing as Executive Director of Catholic Education and Faith Formation.

Once again, I am in transition mode, leaving the OCE -- head not heart -- and moving beyond the "glass doors" of the Chancery. Recently, there has been more required from me in the Archbishop's absence, but that has allowed me to learn more about the operations of the Chancery.

This is a bittersweet time. I have served in the OCE for over 23 years and in my present position for the last 13 years. It has been an enriching and rewarding experience for me and the OCE staff has become my extended family. They have served without fail. And, with our special leaders in the field, and the grace of God, I believe we have accomplished great things together for those we serve in the archdiocese. My life is richer because of the experiences I have had as leader of OCE.

Very soon the new Executive Director will be introduced to you. Harry Plummer is committed to Catholic education. He has a deep spirituality which gives witness to his faith. He understands the concept of total Catholic education. He has had experience both in schools and religious education. He sees his role as a shepherd of all of the ministries for which he will be responsible. And, I am anxious to prepare and transition him into this role. I do not want a day to pass when we are not about advancing this wonderful ministry we call Catholic Education.

I leave these thoughts with you. I hope my achievements in life and in this ministry shall be these: that I will have fought for what was right and fair; that I will have risked for that which mattered; that I will have given help to those in need; and, that I will have left this position better for what I have done and who I have been. The Good News for me is that I will not be far away.

God bless,

Mickey

Office of Catholic Education
Archdiocese of Indianapolis
P.O. Box 1410
Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410