Synod begins second phase

Focus teams begin meeting, studying issues raised at listening sessions

ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO
Florida Catholic staff

MIAMI | The second phase of the archdiocesan Synod officially began Oct. 23 when the first focus team members met. Their topic was the permanent diaconate.

There are 13 Synod focus teams whose members will meet once a month between now and January 2013 to study the issues raised at the listening sessions that took place earlier this year. Team members are tasked with coming up with SMART recommendations — specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely — for the archdiocese to implement.

“We have two or three meetings every week for the next three months,” said Rosemarie Banich, Synod director, who will be facilitating more than half of those meetings. The others will be facilitated by Ricardo Luzondo of St. Francis de Sales Parish in Miami Beach, who facilitated some of the Spanish-language listening sessions.

Banich explained that each team has between 20 and 40 members tasked with coming up with SMART recommendations — specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely — for the archdiocese to implement.

Archdiocese joins HHS lawsuit

Archbishop says contraceptive mandate violates religious freedom

ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO
Florida Catholic staff

MIAMI | The Archdiocese of Miami has now joined the 50 or so other Catholic dioceses, universities and entities throughout the U.S. who have filed a lawsuit against the Health and Human Services mandate requiring that abortion-inducing drugs, sterilization and contraception be covered under employer health care plans.

“We feel it is a violation” of the First Amendment, of the Federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act and of the rule-making authority of the Department of Health and Human Services, said Archbishop Thomas Wenski during a press conference announcing the action the afternoon of Oct. 19.

The lawsuit was filed in federal court on behalf of the Archdiocese of Miami, Catholic Health Services and Catholic Hospice. It was filed by the archdiocese’s legal representatives, J. Patrick Fitzgerald and Associates, along with the Jones Day law firm, which is providing its services pro bono. Jones Day is representing many other Catholic entities in similar lawsuits.

In his statement and in response to questions from reporters, Archbishop Wenski said “we need to get this mandate overturned (by the courts) since the administration has not shown any inclination to rescind it.”

He pointed out that Vice President Joe Biden spoke “untruthfully” during the vice presidential debate when he said there is no problem between the Catholic Church and the Obama administration on the health care issue. “There is a problem. That’s why we’re suing,” Archbishop Wenski said.

He clarified that the Catholic Church is not opposed to universal health care itself, and in fact proposed a number of options when the Affordable Care Act was being debated in Congress. But the Church’s position is that universal health care “should kill no one and it should cover everyone.”

The current law fails on both counts, the archbishop said, because it requires employers to provide drugs and services that result in the killing of unborn children, and it also excludes “millions of immigrants.”

The Catholic Church has long taught that human life is sacred from the moment of conception to natural death, and it has consistently opposed artificial methods of birth control and sterilization.

A TRUE ‘DOLPHIN’ ROSARY

Father Manny Alvarez holds an aqua and orange rosary made by a St. Gregory parishioner, a rosary he prays while standing on the sidelines at Dolphins games. See story, Page 20. (COURTESY OF THE MIAMI DOLPHINS)
1,500 attend Catechetical Day

Religious educators gain insights, receive encouragement at annual event

ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO
Florida Catholic staff

SOUTHWEST RANCHES | It was wall-to-wall catechists at Archbishop Edward McCarthy High School, as more than 1,500 gathered Nov. 3 for the annual Catechetical Day hosted by the archdiocese Office of Catechesis.

The catechists — nearly all parish volunteers who teach religion to children who attend public and nonparochial schools — sat on gym bleachers and the chapel floor to listen to the keynote speakers. They filled St. Mark Church for the 8 a.m. opening Mass, arriving by busload and carpool from as far south as Homestead and Key West. They stood elbow to elbow browsing through religious articles and religion textbooks in the exhibitors’ area.

"Last year we were expecting 500 people and 900 came. That gave me kind of a hint that we needed to make it available to all parishes in a bigger place," said Peter Ductram, archdiocesan director of the Office of Catechesis, explaining why the location for this year’s conference was moved from a parish to the high school.

Next year, he said, he might have to find a hotel, despite the fact that McCarthy High generously donated all its facilities — along with staff time and a team of student ambassadors who helped with the setup and guided the catechists around campus. Unfortunately, high school classrooms were not created to accommodate 100 people at a time.

But the turnout, especially since it included a good number of young,

er, even teenaged catechists, was very good news, Ductram said. He noted that many parishes brought their entire catechetical staffs, as many as 55 people, to Catechetical Day.

Affordability could be one reason for the large turnout, as the generousity and in-kind contributions of the exhibitors helped keep the registration cost down to $25, including lunch. But catechists also "want to come because they see the enrichment. It’s a renewal — not just spiritual, but the talks that respond to what they are going through in their parish," Ductram said. "Also, the networking — to have a sense that we are not here alone. We are all dedicated to sharing the faith."

In his homily at the opening Mass of the conference, Archbishop Thomas Wenski called the catechists' "agents of the new evangelization. You introduce people to God.""We are called to transmit the Gospel in new ways, in an adequate way in the new cultural context in which we live," Archbishop Wenski said. "(But) our task is not to change the Gospel, but to present the Gospel in such a way that it changes us — and those with whom we share it."

Sue Barroso has been doing that since 1979 at St. Mary Star of the Sea Parish in Key West. She served as director of religious education for 12 years before retiring three years ago, but continues to teach, and help people plan funerals, and train lectors and extraordinary ministers of holy Communion.

"I can’t retire from the Church — never," she said.

Barroso was among 60 catechists who received certificates this year acknowledging their status as catechists — people who have taken the number of courses required by very popular today, especially when contrasted to the Catholic Church that is, in the popular mindset, exactly the opposite: "a scold" who only makes demands and insists on adherence to rules.

"To the extent that we’re not coherent in our witness, we can become obstacles to people’s faith," the archbishop said. But the "popular mindset" that, according to polls, divorces faith from religion is also incorrect.

"To say that I believe is to place in such a way that it changes us — and those with whom we share it."

Faith "cannot be private," the archbishop stressed, and neither can each person create his or her own "a la carte" Jesus or a "la carte" creed.

"We are called to transmit the Gospel in new ways, in an adequate way in the new cultural context in which we live," Archbishop Wenski said. "(But) our task is not to change the Gospel, but to present the Gospel in such a way that it changes us — and those with whom we share it."

Dulce Jimenez Abreu, director of Spanish-language programs for Sadlier, gives the keynote talk in Spanish in Archbishop McCarthy High School’s chapel.

Posing with Archbishop Thomas Wenski are the recipients of the Lifetime Catechetical Leadership awards: from left, Anne Gardner of St. Sebastian Parish in Fort Lauderdale; Pat Solenski of St. Anthony Parish in Fort Lauderdale; and Claretian Sister Carmen Alvarez of Corpus Christi Parish in Miami. More than 1,500 catechists from as far south as Key West and as far north as Parkland took part in this year’s Catechetical Day, the annual gathering for those who teach religion to children and adults in the archdiocese. (PHOTOS BY ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO | FC)

Catechists take notes during Daniel Mulhall’s keynote talk.

Adela Siman of the Florida Center for Peace holds up a teaching aid.
Lourdes Academy breaks ground ‘on future’

STAFF REPORT

MIAMI | After 17 years of effort, Our Lady of Lourdes Academy finally broke ground on a four-phase construction project at the end of September.

“I am excited this dream is finally becoming a reality,” said the high school’s principal, Sister Kathryn Donzé. “It’s like starting from scratch in terms of their knowledge of the faith,” she said.

But she acknowledged that being a catechist is a tough job, especially since some parents simply “drop their children on Sundays. “My teachers won’t teach any other day. They go teaching.”

Her 30 volunteers teach 450 children on Sundays. “My teachers won’t teach any other day. They go teaching.”

The first phase, consisting of improvements to existing infrastructure, including sewer, drainage, a new loop road and parking, was completed in August.

STAFF REPORT

Discussion of an expansion began in 1995, when suggestions for new facilities were included in the school improvement plan that was part of the school’s re-accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Close to 200 people attended Catechist Day “so catechists could reach out to youths and families.”

Throughout the past 17 years, the school has been able to set aside $10 million to cover the cost of three phases; because of this, the Archdiocese of Miami has approved construction of the first three phases. The school plans to kick off a capital campaign for $5 million this year to cover the costs of the gymnasium (the fourth and final phase of construction), as well as the cost of maintaining the 50-year-old building. The completion of a gymnasium will finally allow the school’s award-winning athletic program to function within the school and eliminate the need for lengthy commutes to practices and “home” games.

CATECHIST

FROM 2

the archdiocese to teach religion to others.

“Back then (when she started) we didn’t take classes. We didn’t have workshops. We just taught,” Barroso recalled.

This is sort of a catch-up year, Ducatram explained, as he and his assistant reviewed the office’s records and realized that many catechists had completed all the courses but had never been certified. It was just a matter of putting the paperwork in order, including the observations and evaluations from their directors of religious education.

Three longtime archdiocesan catechists also were honored with a Lifetime Catechetical Achievement award: Claretian Sister Carmen Alvarez of Corpus Christi Parish, who has been a catechist since 1975; and Patricia Solenski of St. Sebastian Parish, who has served as director of religious education there since 1981.

During the day, which ended after 3 p.m., the catechists chose from among 27 speakers and topics, ranging from the new evangelization to the teachings of Vatican II, from catechesis and the environment to the law and Christian ethics, from creating lessons from worship songs to teaching out to youths and families.

“I try every year to make it better,” said Nora Torra, director of religious education at Sacred Heart Parish in Homestead, who brought half her catechists to Catechetical Day “so they can keep learning and keep teaching.”

Her 30 volunteers teach 450 children on Sundays. “My teachers won’t teach any other day. They go to Mass. They teach and they love it. Many of the parents do, too,” Torra said.

But she acknowledged that being a catechist is a tough job, especially since some parents simply “drop their children in school and eliminate the need for lengthy commutes to practices and ‘home’ games.”

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Jesús, el verdadero gobernante del mundo

El último domingo del “tiempo ordinario”, el 25 de noviembre de este año, se celebra la solemnidad de Cristo Rey.

La primera vista —ya que en la actualidad no somos gobernados por reyes—, podríamos sentirnos tentados a considerar esta fiesta como una reliquia consagrada a una época remota. Sin embargo, la solemnidad de Cristo Rey —como institución litúrgica— es, en realidad, más reciente. Fue establecida por el Papa Pío XI, el 23 de noviembre. La historia de estos “cristeros” fue llevada recientemente a la gran pantalla en el filme “For Greater Glory”.

Estos mártires, y los millones que murieron en los sucesivos holocaustos del siglo XX, nos recuerdan que cuando se pretende organizar el mundo sin referencia a Dios y su verdad, terminamos organizando el mundo contra el hombre mismo.

Si bien el establecimiento de la fiesta es reciente, el contenido de lo que celebramos es en realidad bastante antiguo: de hecho, es tan antiguo como el cristianismo. Decir que “Cristo reina” es el equivalente de lo que decimos en nuestra profesión de fe: “Jesús es el Señor”.

Significa esto que, como cristianos, como católicos, nuestro objetivo debe ser establecer una teocracia —es decir, instaurar un gobierno que reconozca oficialmente a Jesús como Señor. Esto es, a menudo, la comunidad de los bautizados, con una ferocidad paralela a lo que ya estaba ocurriendo en la Rusia soviética. Allí, en México, miles de personas fueron asesinadas en aras de liberar al pueblo de la “superstición” religiosa.

Llevados ante los pelotones de fusilamiento, muchos murieron gritando: “Viva Cristo Rey!” La Iglesia recuerda a estos mártires mexicanos en esta fiesta, para que recordemos la voracidad con que se pretende organizar el mundo.

La Iglesia se anuncia como una diócesis en el mundo y su propio final. Ello indica una autoconciencia de ella como una comunidad de iglesia “orientada sólo a la propia satisfacción de sus miembros” (cf. Romanos 14: 7-9). Vivir “para uno mismo” significa vivir como si uno tuviera en sí mismo su propio comienzo y su propio fin. Vivir “para uno mismo” es, en realidad, no importara —, el Papa Pío XI, en 1925, recientemente dijo, en las fiestas de Cristo Rey —al igual que Pío XII—: “No establecimiento” (o separación entre la Iglesia y el Estado) en la Constitución de los Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, el sistema de la Iglesia y el Estado se mantienen acertadamente separados, no debe haber separación entre la religión y la sociedad, entre clérigos y laicidades personales y la conducta pública.

Según San Pablo, hay dos maneras posibles de vivir: “ya sea para uno mismo o para el Señor” (cf. Romanos 14: 7-9). Vivir “para uno mismo” significa vivir como si uno tuviera en sí mismo su propio comienzo y su propio final. Vivir “para uno mismo” es, en realidad, no importara —, el Papa Pío XI, en 1925, recientemente dijo, en las fiestas de Cristo Rey —al igual que Pío XII—: “No establecimiento” (o separación entre la Iglesia y el Estado) en la Constitución de los Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, el sistema de la Iglesia y el Estado se mantienen acertadamente separados, no debe haber separación entre la religión y la sociedad, entre clérigos y laicidades personales y la conducta pública.

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members, with some in the 50-60 range. "A lot of the work is going to be done in pairs or triads," she noted. Much of the work is also going to be done between meetings, but team members were aware that their monthly meetings would take place between 1 and 4 p.m. on weekdays—with lunch served at noon for those who have the time.

The only exception to that is the campus ministry team, which will meet 6:30-9:30 p.m. with optional dinner at 5:30 p.m. "Many of them are taking time off from work and we appreciate it," said Banich. "There aren’t enough Saturdays in the calendar to host 13 meetings (a month). And by no means are Saturdays ideal. People have a lot of commitments."

Half of the team meetings are taking place at the Pastoral Center, and the others are spread out among other sites, including St. Thomas University and St. Mary Cathedral, and St. Rose of Lima, St. Thomas the Apostle, and Our Lady of the Lakes parishes.

Deacon Dennis Jordan, center, of Blessed Trinity Parish speaks with Deacon Carl Carieri of St. Maximilian Kolbe, left, as Deacon Roberto Pineda of St. Joseph Parish looks over the Synod focus team documents. The team on the permanent diaconate was the first Synod focus team to meet, marking the start of the second phase of the Archdiocese of Miami’s second general Synod. (ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO | FC)

The archdiocese’s health plan covers about 6,000 employees in Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe counties. Catholic Health Services serves about 7,000 people a year in its nursing homes, assisted living facilities and rehabilitation hospitals. About half of those who receive services from the Church are not Catholic.

"We do it not because they're Catholic," Archbishop Wenski said. "We do it because we are Catholic." As currently written, the narrow HHS exemption for religious entities applies only to churches, not to church institutions such as Catholic hospitals, universities and charitable agencies. Neither is the compromise announced in February by the Obama administration a solution, because it calls for insurance companies — rather than the religious entities — to pay for the objectionable services. But the Archdiocese of Miami, like most large employers, is self-insured.

"We are our own insurance company, so therefore we still are behind the eight ball," Archbishop Wenski said. To qualify under that religious exemption, nearly 100 percent of archdiocesan employees would have to be Catholic — and so would those served by the Church.

"We never ask what their religious preference is when we hire these employees," said Joe Catania, president and chief executive officer of Catholic Health Services. Moreover, "the role of the Church is to provide for all regardless of their religious preference. It affects our ability to serve the greater South Florida community."

To those who argue that the Church should cease taking money from the government — and therefore being subject to its rules and regulations — Catania pointed out that "any monies that we receive from the federal government or state government are received on behalf of the people who we care for (in the form of Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements). The people who we care for are entitled to those benefits. The people who we serve have made a conscious choice that they want to come to our facilities."

He noted that his agency provided $10 million in community benefits and indigent care last year. "It would be such a shame if we had to close our doors because we don’t want to provide these (contraceptive) services."
Catholic lay missionary preserving dignity of young girls with help from Cross Catholic Outreach

“Momma Nirva, only Jesus knows the goodness you’ve done for me,” Iverose says, her eyes filling with tears as she speaks. “I can’t thank you enough. Only Jesus can.” Iverose, 13, lives at Bethsaide, a Catholic residential home for at-risk girls in Haiti. Founded and operated by lay missionary Nirva Destunes, Iverose comes from an extremely poor family where living conditions are terrible and hope has run thin.

Nirva, or “Momma Nirva” as she is called by the girls, takes Iverose in her arms and hugs the fragile young girl. This is what she was called by God to do, Nirva says — rescue young girls like Iverose from the dangers of poverty.

The children come to Nirva from urban slums and desperately poor rural villages. There, the young girls were in constant danger of sexual assault, forced prostitution, arranged marriage or human trafficking. They lived in constant stress, desperation and fear. At Bethsaide, they find blessed relief. It’s a literal oasis in Haiti’s sea of poverty.

Word is spreading about the haven Bethsaide provides. Nirva said, “People are asking about it and telling others what we offer here. We keep a waiting list of those who want to take part in the outreach,” she said.

Nirva refuses to take credit for her work.

Nirva is a true disciple of Christ. She opened her life up to this call from God and has never looked back.

Instead, she gives all the glory to God. Born and raised in Haiti, she once worked successfully in Haiti’s banking industry, but all the while she felt called by God to do something more.

In the Bethsaide mission, God brought her dreams to fruition. With help from Cross Catholic Outreach (formerly known as Cross International Catholic Outreach), she was able to launch the program to protect at-risk girls. It has given Nirva the ability to transform young women’s lives in profound and lasting ways.

“Nirva is a true disciple of Christ. She opened her life up to this call from God and has never looked back. We’re proud to know her and thrilled to have had a role in empowering her mission,” said Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach. “We also look forward to celebrating the fruit of her sacrifices. When these young women are strong, productive members of society, all of Haiti will have been blessed by the work she is doing today.”

The shelter and stable home life provided by Bethsaide is only part of the program’s approach. Nirva also ensures girls receive a quality education and undergo training in areas such as agriculture and sewing during their three-year stay. The girls’ parents are provided with training, monthly food supplies and self help opportunities.

“Conversation on the topic of education is happening at Bethsaide, and it’s making a difference,” Nirva said.

When the girls return home, their families are better prepared to support them and keep them out of danger.

“The ultimate goal is to return the girls to their parents. Over the course of the three years, we try to help the parents become better mothers and fathers — stable, loving parents to their children,” Nirva said.

According to Cavnar, Nirva’s education-based, Christ-centered approach has been extremely effective at preventing young girls from becoming victims of exploitation.

“The girls become filled with the spirit, are armed with an education and have the confidence to support themselves as adults. This vastly reduces the risks they might otherwise face,” Cavnar said.

American Catholics agree this approach is effective, Cavnar says.

“Catholics have always understood the value of an education and the importance of keeping families together,” Cavnar said. “All of this is happening at Bethsaide, and it’s protecting the innocence of young girls and giving them a better future.”

To support the worldwide outreaches of Cross Catholic Outreach, look for the ministry brochure enclosed in this issue of the paper or mail your donation to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC00918, PO Box 9558, Wilton, NH 03896-9558. All contributions to the ministry are tax deductible.

“Cross Catholic” Now Endorsed by 60 U.S. Bishops, Archbishops

As Cross Catholic Outreach (formerly known as Cross International Catholic Outreach) continues its range of relief work to help the poor overseas, its efforts are being recognized by a growing number of Catholic leaders in the U.S.

“We’ve received an impressive number of endorsements from American Bishops and Archbishops — 60 Catholic leaders at last count,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach (CCO). “They’re impressed by the fact that we’ve done outreaches in more than 40 countries and that we undertake a variety of projects; everything from feeding the hungry and housing the homeless to supplying safe water and supporting educational opportunities for the poorest of the poor.”

Archbishop Robert Carlson of St. Louis sent one of the more recent letters of encouragement, writing: “It is my hope that this ministry will continue to flourish and reach as many people as possible. I will inform the priests of the Archdiocese of St. Louis of the important work that Cross Catholic Outreach does and elicit their prayerful and financial support for the service you provide to the less fortunate around the world.”

In addition to praising the work CCO accomplishes, many of the Bishops and Archbishops are also impressed by the unique collaborative relationship Cross Catholic Outreach has with the Pontifical Council Cor Unum in Rome. This allows the charity to participate in the mercy ministries of the Holy Father himself. In his praise of CCO, Archbishop Dennis Schnurr of Cincinnati underscored this unique connection.

“Cross Catholic Outreach’s close collaboration with the Pontifical Council Cor Unum is a source of encouragement,” the Archbishop said. “The Holy See has unique knowledge of local situations throughout the world through its papal representatives in nearly two hundred countries and through its communications with Bishops and others who care for the poor and needy in every corner of the world.”

CCO president, Jim Cavnar, explained the significance of this connection.

“Our collaboration with Cor Unum allows us to fund outreaches in virtually any area of the world and we have used that method in special cases — to help the victims of natural disasters, for example,” he said. “It only represents a small part of our overall ministry, but it can be a very important benefit in those situations.”

Haiti Quick Facts:

• About 9 million people live in Haiti.
• About half of the Haitian population can’t read or write.
• 80% of people live below the poverty line.
Cross Catholic Outreach helps nuns, lay missionaries fight exploitation of young girls

“Without my education, I would be working in the rice fields,” says accounting graduate Mac Dung, and fellow student Be Loc agrees that the value of an education is profound.

“Without the scholarship I received, I would have left school a long time ago and married a South Korean to support my family. That’s what other girls in my village have been doing to survive.”

Both young women have grown up in the rural river deltas of Vietnam, an area of the country where clean water, steady jobs, medical care and schools are almost non-existent. It is also a place where human traffickers are common. They lurk on the fringes of society, looking for vulnerable girls they can trick into prostitution or forced marriages.

Mae and Be were among those in danger. They could have easily become one of the thousands of young girls who are trafficked out of Vietnam each year as part of the international sex trade. Fortunately, they were saved from that fate by a Catholic program that helps and educates poor, vulnerable girls.

“Our program is an expression of the commitment of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. We want to put an end to this despicable exploitation of women and the enormous physical and emotional pain it causes,” said Sister Beatrice Nguyen Thi My, founder and director.

Sr. Beatrice’s outreach sponsors the education of girls like Mac and Be from elementary school through college or vocational school. Each girl has a different story, but one characteristic is always the same: the family is extremely poor. Left in this condition, the girls could easily become victims of prostitution or a forced marriage and the sexual abuse that often ensues.

“The plight of these girls is particularly tragic because they start with all of the gifts and hope any of our daughters might have.”

Poor Vietnamese girls live with the constant threat of human trafficking.

innocence and potential are shattered when a predator exploits them. This terrible practice has to stop. It’s not how God would want his precious children treated,” said Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach (formerly known as Cross International Catholic Outreach), a ministry which supports the dignity and innocence of at-risk girls.

Cross Catholic Outreach supports numerous ministries actively working to protect and educate young girls around the globe. The

issue of trafficking and child abuse grows more pressing every day, Cavnar notes. It’s a terrible choice that can turn into a death warrant if they contract the AIDS virus themselves.”

In the Caribbean nation of Haiti, abortion is the villain and risk. There, Cross Catholic supports a residential program run by Nirva Desdunes, a compassionate Catholic lay-missionary with a heart for girls in need. Her ministry's three-year program provides education, vocational training and spiritual formation for at-risk girls. She also arranges training and support for the poor families of these children.

“At the end of the three years, the girls earn a school certificate, as well as other certificates for specific job skills and recognizing their

spiritual training. They move forward with all the skills they need to live happy, healthy, stable lives,” Nirva said.

“Another of the strengths of Cross Catholic Outreach is that it’s a strong commitment to religious education,” Cavnar said. “That’s one of the things that separates Cross Catholic Outreach from many other charities. We believe that the gift of the Gospel is as valuable and important as food, medicines and shelter. Our Catholic faith and tradition is worth sharing.”

Cross Catholic Outreach’s strategy is working too. The Catholic outreach supports — those run by Catholic orders and lay missionaries — are making a huge difference in the lives of thousands of at-risk girls around the world.

“I praise God for allowing Cross Catholic Outreach to play a role in this area of need — and for using us to advance the goals of the Catholic Church worldwide,” Cavnar said. “Of course, none of that would be possible without the help we receive from American Catholics. Our charity’s beneficiaries are the real heroes in this case.”

Catholic Outreach know the importance of tending to the ‘forgotten’ people of society — the poor, the sick, the disabled, the weak and vulnerable,” he added. “Standing on the sideline while young girls endure sexual exploitation would go directly against Catholic teachings. We are people of action, called to demonstrate Christ-like compassion in the world. I’m confident our benefactors will continue to support us in this effort.”

Mae and Be are on a safe and successful path now, but there are many children like them who still need our help,” Cavnar concluded. “I believe God will use Cross Catholic and our benefactors to meet that need, serving these girls and thousands more!”

How to Help:

Your help is needed for Cross Catholic Outreach to bring Christ’s mercy to the poorest of the poor. To make a donation, use the enclosed postage-paid brochure or mail a gift to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC00918, PO Box 9558, Wilton, NH 03086-9558.
Commentary

Remembering St. Francis Hospital

Nurses who worked at Miami Beach landmark gathering stories, memorabilia for book

Carol Lang and Bonnie Bowne Peters
Special to the Florida Catholic

Miami | The Oct. 4 celebration of the feast of St. Francis of Assisi calls to mind St. Francis Hospital (1927-1992) and many cherished memories. These memories symbolize the true compassion and caring of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegheny. They set the example caring of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegheny. They set the example in addition to numerous other hospitals throughout the county, each with their distinct culture. The identity of St. Francis Hospital remains strong even today.

We all felt it a privilege to work there and be embraced as part of a big, loving family. The sisters were ever present with their shared commitment to serving the community. The staff members took pride in their work and the physicians were confident that their patients would consistently receive the best care.

Another unique attribute of St. Francis Hospital was the Pastoral Care Department, comprised of Franciscan priests and sisters. The clergy in this department made pastoral care rounds, visited all patients and ministered to their individual emotional and spiritual needs. Attending emergency situations (codes) to alleviate fears of the patient and family was routine. They were valued members of the code team.

For many of us, the chapel at St. Francis Hospital was our home parish where Mass was celebrated daily, including holy days of obligation and all feast days. As our home parish, some were married there.

The hospital’s Catholic Nurses Association was active in funding hospital improvements, including providing rocking chairs for the newborn nursery. Another project revolved around the “adoption” of the children of Corpus Christi Parish in Miami. The nurses performed health screenings, provided school supplies and celebrated various holidays with the children. This is one example of the many ways in which we served, representing our Catholic heritage.

As we entered the 1980s and experienced the rising costs in health care and declining reimbursement patterns, hospitals throughout the country began to close. Sadly, St. Francis Hospital was to be among them.

On Jan. 6, 1992, prior to the demolition of the hospital, the cross was removed from the roof and transported via helicopter across Biscayne Bay to Mercy Hospital, where it remains today. An interesting fact about that cross is that it was lighted and used by the Coast Guard as a landmark. That beloved cross had been part of the hospital since 1927 and hung there as a sign of our faith and mission.

On Jan. 14, 1992, a prayer service and closing ceremony were held for the employees with Archbishop Edward McCarthy presiding. Those employees with longer tenure received crucifixes that formerly hung in patients’ rooms. During this part of the ceremony we sang “Here I am, Lord.” This was followed by a candle-lighting service and Scripture readings. To conclude, we all joined hands and sang the “Prayer of St. Francis.” This was a time of profound grief and sadness when many tears were shed.

As a family, however, this was not the end of St. Francis Hospital. Two reunions have been held — in 2001 and 2003. At each reunion hundreds attended to reunite with friends that included fellow employees and physicians. As a special remembrance of our fondness for St. Francis Hospital, mementos such as engraved desk sets and paperweights were made available. These objects were made from the ruins collected after demolition and are now cherished possessions.

In the spirit of further keeping the hospital alive, we are writing a memoir of our many experiences at St. Francis Hospital and Miami Beach in its heyday. These experiences are unique and beg to be shared — the humor and the sorrows that accompany day-to-day responsibilities of a health care professional.

Although St. Francis Hospital closed 20 years ago, it is not forgotten. Frankly, it is unheard of for a workplace to hold a bond so dear as to achieve the status of a covenant.
You can make these wishes come true by making a gift today. To donate, go to catholicextension.org/christmaswish for a complete list of all the wishes you can fulfill, or call 800.842.7804. A simple donation makes a difference in the lives of poor Catholic communities across the United States.

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A faith that perseveres

Black Catholics celebrate Mass together to mark Black Catholic History Month

Three people were honored at the St. Martin de Porres luncheon for following in the footsteps of St. Martin de Porres, “a man of virtue, humility and charity (who) worked tirelessly for the community, ministering to the poor and needy.” Honorees were:

- Dorothy W. Graham, 96, who spent her childhood in Miami, moved to New York in her early teens, and taught at schools in Missouri, New York and Tallahassee before coming back to teach at Booker T. Washington High School in Allapattah and Hialeah Junior high schools. She was an active member of St. Francis Xavier Parish and many other Catholic organizations here for 50 years and is still active at Holy Redeemer.
- Wilhelmina King, a native Floridian and 30-year parishioner of St. George Parish, where she served as choir director while also working professionally as a music teacher in Broward County schools, and at both Nova Southeastern and Florida Memorial universities. She is now a member of St. Anthony Parish where she also serves in the choir.
- Marguerite Miller, 90, a teacher, counselor and administrator in both Miami-Dade and Broward public schools for 39 years, as well as a member of Holy Redeemer Parish since the early 1960s, where she worked for many years with the Catholic Young Adults Organization. Miller is a member of the Catholic Educators Guild and received the group’s Lumen Christi (Light of Christ) award in 1987.

Black Catholics from parishes in Miami-Dade and Broward counties take part in a Mass Nov. 4 that kicked off Black Catholic History Month in the archdiocese. Archbishop Thomas Wenski celebrated the Mass, joined by Oblate Missionary Father John Cox, pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish in Liberty City.

Father Cox and Father Chanel Jeanty, pastor of St. Philip Neri Parish in Miami Gardens, suspended their Sunday Masses so that their communities could come together to the cathedral Mass. “That’s a first,” Father Cox said.

The choirs from St. Philip, Holy Redeemer and the now-closed St. George Parish in Fort Lauderdale joined with St. Mary Cathedral with Archbishop Wenski. Father Chanel Jeanty, pastor of St. Philip also closed in 2009 but re-opened in 2020.

Father Cox said Black Catholic History Month also coincides with the feasts of All Saints and All Souls to recognize “all the people who were lost in the Middle Passage, all the martyrs of the slavery and segregation era.”

The observance was established by the Black Catholic Clergy Caucus in 1990 to increase awareness about black Catholics’ contributions to the Church in the United States. “They’ve been very faithful and pillars of the Church,” Father Cox said, noting that “there’s not a lot of support for black people being Catholic in the South. Their faithfulness needs to be acknowledged and supported.”

“It’s a celebration of our faith,” said Katrenia Reeves-Jackman, director of the archdiocesan Office of Black Catholic Ministry. “We have such a wonderful history in the Church. Unfortunately, a lot of our young people don’t know it.”

Archbishop Wenski spoke about that history in his homily, citing a Haitian-born slave, Pierre Toussaint, who moved to New York two years after George Washington became the first U.S. president. Eventually freed, Toussaint is regarded as the father of Catholic charities in the U.S. because of his personal

**FYI**

Black Catholics are planning another get-together Nov. 18, this time for Mass at St. Anthony Parish in Fort Lauderdale. For more information, call the Office of Black Catholic Ministry at 305-762-1120 or email blackcath@theadom.org.

The archdiocese has a Black Catholic Implementation Team, which meets once a month to help Katrenia Reeves-Jackman, a volunteer, direct the Office of Black Catholic Ministry.

“We meet to talk about the needs and the things that we want to do within the archdiocese to see that our Catholic sisters and brothers are getting all they need for their faith commitment,” Reeves-Jackman said. “Black Catholics are very committed to their faith,” she added, noting that they are a minority within a minority. “We persevered throughout all these years.”

**PLEASE SEE CATHOLICS, 14**
An attitude of gratitude

Archbishop Carroll
High students say
sweet thanks to
archbishop for
$4 million debt
reduction

TONI PALLATTO
Florida Catholic correspondent

MIAMI SHORES | An under-
current of excitement filled the
school bus as 25 students from
Archbishop Coleman Carroll High
School — and four of their Carmel-
ite teachers — traveled to the Pas-
torial Center in Miami Shores. Their
mission: buy lunch for Archbishop
Thomas Wenski in gratitude for
helping the school reduce its debt.

Thanks to increased revenue from investments and the gener-
osity of donors to the Archbishops Charities and Development drive
(ABCD), the archbishop was able to forgive “a substantial portion” of
the school’s debt, a total of about $4 million — on top of about $1.7 mil-
lion that had been forgiven earlier in the year.

“When we made the announce-
ment over our broadcast network
to the student body on Oct. 18, the
students were thrilled,” said Sister
Rosalie Nagy of the Carmelites of
the Most Sacred Heart, principal of Archbishop Carroll. “And it was
the archbishop’s birthday, so we
all started brainstorming how we
could thank him for caring about
our school.”

“They wanted to take Archbish-
op Wenski to lunch,” Sister Nagy
continued. “I contacted Father
Richard Vigoa (his priest-secre-
tary) to schedule a date, and the re-
sponse was ‘Monday.’ We snapped
into action.”

Twenty-five students, repre-
senting the student council at each
grade level as well as the campus
ministry, were selected to make
the journey. Then decisions were
made as to how to demonstrate their
gratitude and what gifts to give the
archbishop. The students decided
to pay for the lunch for Archbishop
Wenski to write his prayer intentions. They would take it back to the school and place it
at the foot of the altar during all
Masses and Holy Hours.

On Oct. 22, the students and
Carmelites arrived at the Pastoral
Center at 11:30 a.m. and began set-
ing up their presentation.

“This is so exciting and really
cool,” said Lianny Torres, a se-
nior. “We get a chance to thank the
archbishop personally for helping
us out. This gift is a stress-reliever
and we can look to an exciting fu-
ture.”

“This is an incredible gift from
the archbishop and the ABCD do-
nors,” said Matthew Ward, a senior
and president of the campus min-
istry. “To be able to thank him per-
sonally is a great honor.”

When the archbishop arrived
for lunch, the students were visibly
excited and 12 of them took turns
reading the different sections of
the candy gram.

“No one wanted to pay for the
lunch,” said Alexis Cruz.

The archbishop was clearly
impressed with the cleverness of the
presentation and the genuine
thankfulness of the students. Dur-
ing the luncheon, they were able
to speak with Archbishop Wenski
and Father Vigoa one to one. Af-
terward, they got to check out the
archbishop’s Harley Davidson mo-
torcycle.

“He is very cool,” said Diego
Cohen, a senior. “We can relate to
him as a regular person and follow
him as an example of our faith and
spirituality.”

Patricia Joseph, originally from
Haiti and also a senior, spoke to
Archbishop Wenski in Creole. “We
discussed the need for rebuild-
ing in Haiti,” she said. “He will be
meeting with the priests in Haiti
and looking at how to help them
rebuild the churches.”

The reduced debt also will help
the school — founded in 1998 and
located in the western edge of Ken-
dall — to focus more fully on its
mission, “educating for life with
the mind and heart of Christ,” as
well as increasing enrollment,
which now stands at around 600.

“Now we have the opportunity
to tell our story that has been de-
voping over the past 11 years to
everyone,” said Carmelite Sister
Lourdes Serrano. “It’s a story of
growth and development, and
this has given a boost of morale to
the students, the teachers and the
staff.”
ST. BARTHOLOMEW PARISH AT 50 YEARS

Parish community displays ‘Catholic universality’

MARLENE QUARONI
Florida Catholic correspondent

MIRAMAR | When Dorothy Chew attended Mass at the newly formed St. Bartholomew Parish in 1962, she hoped Mass would not be interrupted by a familiar sound in the building the parishioners were temporarily occupying.

“I was always afraid that the alarm signaling a fire would go off in the fire station,” said Chew, one of the church’s first parishioners, who attended its 50th anniversary Mass Nov. 3. The parish pioneer was at the ground-breaking ceremony in October 1964 for the church and school, which are located on the northwest corner of University Drive and Miramar Parkway. Her three children would attend the school. One of them, Dotty Chew, attended the Mass with her parents.

In those days, there were only ranches west of University Drive, which was a two-lane road, said Dotty Chew. “I recall playing in an empty field during recess and seeing wild rabbits,” she said. “Most of all I remember the Sisters of Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus who taught us. My brother was the clown in his class and always got in trouble. Since there wasn’t a cafeteria, my mother brought lunch to the students. And I remember Mr. Lincolnheimer who drove us students on our only school bus.”

Eventually, University Drive went from a two-lane road in a rural community to a four-lane and then a six-lane highway in a bustling suburb. When new residential developments rose in the area, St. Bartholomew School parents and public school parents worked together to get a pedestrian footbridge built across University Drive for the students.

Now, St. Bartholomew is a very diverse parish with members of many cultural groups as parishioners. During the procession at the start of the Mass, members from those cultures walked in carrying the flags of their ancestral countries — Haiti, Jamaica, Nigeria, Cuba and others.

Father Andrew Chan-A-Sue, the parish administrator, thanked all the parishioners who have built St. Bartholomew Parish into the vibrant, faithful, diverse community that it is today.

“Those parishioners who started out in the fire house could not have imagined the growth of this church,” he said.

Father Paul Vuturo, who served as pastor of St. Bartholomew until two years ago, said it was nice to return to the parish and to see old friends. He also addressed the diversity of the parish.

“All the cultural groups blend together,” he said. “It’s a wonderful example of Catholic universality.”

Archbishop Thomas Wenski told parishioners that for 50 years St. Bartholomew Parish has welcomed God’s pilgrim people.

“Over the years, thousands of people have met Christ in word and sacrament here at St. Bartholomew,” he said. “As we celebrate this golden jubilee today, may we remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm, and look forward to the future with confidence.”

Pauline Tunkuda, right, and Gertrude Ariendumphare take part in the offertory procession of a Mass Nov. 3 to mark the 50th anniversary of St. Bartholomew Parish in Miramar. (MARLENE QUARONI | FC)

Retirement Fund for Religious

Like thousands of senior religious, Sister of St. Joseph Rita McNally, 88, has spent her life serving others. Today, she and some 34,000 elder Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests benefit from the Retirement Fund for Religious. Your gift provides funding for prescription medications, nursing care, and more. Please be generous.

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www.retiredreligious.org
Blessed John XXIII’s parishioners learn about their faith in the Year of Faith

ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO
Florida Catholic staff

MIRAMAR | Given his parish’s name, Father Vivian Loughrey thought it would be good to do something special for the Year of Faith: Blessed John XXIII, after all, was the pope who called for the Second Vatican Council 50 years ago.

So he decided to put on a series of two-hour lectures on the documents of Vatican II. What Blessed John XXIII’s parochial vicar did not expect, however, was the level of interest from his parishioners.

“I’m amazed at the people coming,” Father Loughrey said. “I expected about 20." Instead, the very first night, they overflowed the small classroom where the lectures were supposed to be held and moved into the main church. “I was completely floored.”

An average of about 100 people have been attending since Oct. 11, when Father Loughrey presented his first talk. “What is an ecumenical council?” Even when Hurricane Sandy brushed South Florida Oct. 25, about 50 people braved the rain to learn about the council document “Dei Verbum” ("Word of God").

Father Loughrey admits the lessons are “very squeezed. It’s basically to give kind of an introduction” to the documents. He uses a PowerPoint slide show to reinforce the main points and distributes handouts at the end.

The lessons are self-contained so people are not obligated to attend every one. And the notes are posted a day later on the parish website.

A native of Ireland who has served at Blessed John XXIII for a year and a half, and previously served at Blessed John XXIII for a year and a half, and previously served as parochial vicar at St. Gregory in Plantation, Father Loughrey admits he does not have any special expertise when it comes to Vatican II. What he knows comes from his seminary studies and his current work on a master’s degree from Steubenville University.

“That guides me, in a way,” he said.

“What I like is how he feels it,” said Jennifer Anzalone, who comes along with her two children. “He is moved by what he says. It’s real.”

Those in attendance at the free lectures include parishioners, catechists, and confirmation students.

“I think we need all this information to grow not only in our faith but also in the history of our faith,” said parishioner Elba Safe. “I have done a lot of courses learning about evangelization and we have dealt with some documents, but to tell you the truth I never sat with any of the documents and read them all through.

“It’s like a banquet handed to you through the work of Father Vivian,” Safe added. “It’s like drinking all his knowledge through these courses.”

But Father Loughrey is not relying only on himself to teach. He plans to bring in guest speakers, such as Jesuit Father Michael Paul Gallagher, renowned for his interpretation of "faith and unbelief, culture and spirituality." The former dean of the theology faculty at the Pontifical Gregorian University, and now rector of the Jesuit College Bellarmino in Rome, will speak Dec. 15.

“We’re going to go Skype” on that, Father Loughrey said, since Father Gallagher will not be able to travel to South Florida.

After the Vatican II documents Father Loughrey wants to tackle the Catechism — “Can you imagine that in six sections?” — and other papal encyclicals. He also hopes to combine learning with action by holding a food drive “because charity is mentioned in the encyclical ("Porta Fidei,” which opened the Year of Faith) as well.”

Although he uses modern technology, Father Loughrey is not exactly comfortable with it. He credits a number of helpers from his parish — Yvette Brown, Antonio Gonzalez, Pat Francis, Roman Vonthron, Frank Totta, Kathy Cabrissas, Elizabeth Rodriguez, Henry Procianos — saying “such a program is not possible to be carried out by one person.”

He also looks forward to his next Year of Faith project, which will definitely be less demanding of his time: Father Robert Barron’s famed “Catholicism” series. “Ten weeks of video,” Father Loughrey said. “Hit play. Whew!”

To coincide with the Year of Faith, Father Vivian Loughrey, parochial vicar of Blessed John XXIII Parish in Miramar, has put on a series of six lectures on the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Attendance has averaged about 100 people.

For the latest information on all the faith education events being held in the archdiocese, go to the website, www.miamicatholic.org, and click on “View All Events” on the home page.

Father Vivian Loughrey speaks about “Dei Verbum,” the Vatican document on the word of God. (PHOTOS BY ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO | FC)
More parishes host concert series

In addition to the three parishes and one school whose annual concert series were announced in the October edition, two more South Florida churches have announced their artistic series. They are:

- **St. Hugh-Steinway,** 3460 Royal Road, Miami, which is having its inaugural year. Internationally acclaimed coloratura soprano Maria Aleida Rodríguez kicks off it on Saturday, Dec. 8, 8 p.m., accompanied by Roberto Berrocal, Spanish pianist and the series’ founding artistic director. On Friday, Feb. 8, 2013, 8 p.m., Uruguayan soprano Maria Antúnez and tenor Martin Nusspauamer will sing famous opera arias and duets accompanied by Berrocal. The final concert takes place Friday, April 19, 2013, 8 p.m., featuring members of the Florida Grand Opera Young Artist Studio along with Berrocal. Tickets are $40 per concert for Swan Circle and $20 for Lake Circle, and may be purchased at www.sthughconcerts.org or by calling 305-444-8363. All tickets include an after-concert reception with the artists.

- **St. Pluss,** 2511 N. Ocean Blvd. (A1A), Fort Lauderdale, whose annual concert series kicks off Sunday, Dec. 9, with a joint Christmas choral concert with St. Sebastian Parish, both choirs singing “music to put you into the holiday mood.” On Sunday, Feb. 17, 2013, the Jazz Rats Big Band will play the music of Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller and more. On Sunday, March 17, 2013, concertgoers will enjoy Irish music both past and present. And on Sunday, April 14, 2013, “The Drama of Broadway” will feature Kristen D’InNonne and friends singing selections from Broadway’s most dramatic musicals. Admission to each concert is $15, payable at the door, and concerts begin at 4 p.m. Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more. Call 361-239-4767 or 954-565-9335 for information.

**Camp Erin comes to South Florida**

Catholic Hospice teamed with the Miami Marlins Nov. 8 to host a reception at Marlins Park announcing the launch of Camp Erin South Florida. This national children’s bereavement camp will start to provide services next year in Miami-Dade and Broward counties thanks to a grant awarded by the Moyer Foundation to Catholic Hospice.

“We are very fortunate to be part of the largest network of free bereavement camps in the country designed for children ages 6-17 who have experienced the loss of a loved one,” said Bonnie Alkema, executive director of Catholic Hospice.

The mission of the Moyer Foundation is to empower children in distress by providing education and support, helping them to live healthy and inspired lives after the loss of a loved one. The foundation was founded in 2000 by Major League Baseball player and World Series-winning All-Star pitcher Jamie Moyer and his wife, Karen. For more information on Camp Erin South Florida, email specialcare@catholichospice.org or call 305-351-7102.

**Buy one, give one: Kreyol New Testament**

The lay missionary group Amor en Acción (Love in Action) is running a two-for-one sale on the new Kreyol-language translation of the New Testament. For $4, those who wish to do so can buy this New Testament, and another will be given in Haiti to catechists in the archdiocese’s sister Diocese of Port-au-Prince.

The goal is to promote reflection on the Gospels in Kreyol among the Haitian faithful, both in Haiti and in the diaspora, during the Year of Faith.

“There is a great deal of enthusiasm over this translation and we hope to help make it available for all the Haitian faithful, to spread the good news and enliven the faith in this Year of Faith,” said Teresita Gonzalez, executive director of Amor en Acción and director of the archdiocesan Mission Office. “This version of the Nouvo Kontra is more suitable for pastoral work, made in similar style to La Biblia Latino Americana.”

A Kreyol translation of the Old Testament is also in progress. The New Testament books can be sold in parishes after Mass or on a pre-order basis. All the proceeds go to providing Nuevo Kontra in Haiti, and to cover shipping and handling for any copies that are mailed to purchasers here. To set up a sale in your parish, call 305-762-1226 or email info@amor enaccion.com.

**Se buscan juguetes para niños necesitados**

Todos los años Radio Paz, la estación católica del Sur de la Florida, y la Sociedad de San Vicente de Paúl, con más de 83 años trabajando por los pobres en el área de Miami y Broward, se unen para su entrega de juguetes a los niños más desafortunados. Los juguetes se entregarán el 5 de enero 2013, para celebrar el Día de Reyes. Una vez más, Radio Paz y la conferencia de San Vicente de Paúl piden ayuda en esta gran campaña para que no se quede un niño sin recibir un juguete. Puede traer un juguete nuevo o Radio Paz, 1779 N.W. 28 St., Miami, durante todo el mes de noviembre y diciembre. Si son muchos los juguetes, voluntarios de San Vicente de Paúl con mucho gusto los recogerán. Para más información, llamar al 305-474-9010.
St. Thomas Aquinas gets ‘extra’ gym

FORT LAUDERDALE | With a student body of 2,200 and a total of 10 boys and girls basketball and volleyball teams, athletic powerhouse St. Thomas Aquinas High School needed another gym — a spare one where the teams could practice and train year-round and which could be used by physical education classes as well. That new, auxiliary gym was dedicated Nov. 8 by Archbishop Thomas Wenski during a morning ceremony at the high school, whose athletic prowess is matched by its national reputation for academic excellence.

The $1.5 million facility took a year to complete and boasts perhaps the only volleyball net and standard that is suspended from the ceiling — and can be lowered into place with the turn of a key.

Before blessing the new gym with holy water, Archbishop Wenski reminded the students, parents, and priests from neighboring parishes who attended the event that “sports can give our young people lessons for life.” He compared the rules and training required of athletes to the Christian expectation to know and live according to God’s commandments. Athletes do not succeed unless they know and adhere to the rules of the game, Archbishop Wenski said. Similar adherence to God’s rules is required to succeed in life.

“We have to make the rules of Christian living second nature to our daily living,” he said. “They (God’s commandments) make true happiness possible for us.”

Before the ribbon-cutting, Holly Berman, president of the student council, presented Archbishop Wenski with a $5,000 check to help the victims of Hurricane Sandy in the U.S. and the Caribbean. It was the second $5,000 donation collected by the students. Another check had been sent earlier in the week to Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami for forwarding to its Catholic counterpart in New Jersey.

Archbishop Thomas Wenski sprinkles holy water on a crucifix that will be hung in the new gym at St. Thomas Aquinas High School. At right is Msgr. Vincent Kelly, longtime supervising principal of the school, and second from right is Father Richard Vigoa, the archbishop’s priest-secretary.

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Knights of Columbus councils growing, making a difference in archdiocese

This article is part of an ongoing series about papal and chivalric orders active in the archdiocese

TOM TRACY
Florida Catholic correspondent

FORT LAUDERDALE | Even after 12 years of Catholic education — at St. Coleman School in Pompano Beach and Cardinal Gibbons High School in Fort Lauderdale — Aaron Palazzolo didn’t think about his faith traditions. Until he had children, that is.

Now 38 and a project coordinator for the South Florida Hospitai and Healthcare Association, Palazzolo was challenged by his daughter on the meaning of life and God. That dialogue, along with a challenging career transition during the economic downturn, sent him looking for a connection to the faith of his childhood.

“I was being remiss about God, and during the recession I found solace when I returned to church,” said Palazzolo, adding that today he is really great guys. Some are also prominent within the area, which helps us to get (civic) support for our projects. It helps to have some really great guys. Some are also prominent within the area, which helps us to get (civic) support for our projects. It helps to have some　

From this council alone come the state council’s charities chairman, the state ceremonies chairman and the state wheelchair fund chairman.

COMMON VISION

Like a national college fraternity with regional chapters, no two councils of the Knights of Columbus in the archdiocese are exactly alike. But they have a common ancestry and a common vision — that of the Venerable Father Michael McGivney, the son of Irish immigrants and a parish priest in New Haven, Conn., whose cause for sainthood is being investigated by the Vatican.

The Knights of Columbus was formed in 1882 to render financial aid to members and their families, as well as to the sick, disabled and needy members of Catholic families at a time of virulent anti-Catholicism. Social and intellectual fellowship was promoted among members and their families through educational, charitable, religious, social welfare, war relief and public relief works.

Today, the order is proud of its service to the Church, its charitable works, its support of the U.S. military, pro-life causes, its membership insurance program and assistance with church building loans, among other things. In the last fiscal year, the order gave more than $158 million directly to charity and performed more than 70 million volunteer hours of service. Sixty percent of the contributions were for projects at the community level.

In the archdiocese, there are an estimated 15,000 members with some 50,000 members statewide. Of those, 10,000 are part of the patriotic fourth degree — often seen wearing their black tuxedos, baldric, white gloves, cape and a naval chapeau.

“I enjoy working together to raise the money and then giving it away to needy groups,” said John O’Toole, the state ceremonies director and director of the order’s exemplary team for the fourth degree. O’Toole said he recently facilitated an initiation meeting and Mass for new Miami-area fourth-degree members at St. Richard Parish in Palmetto Bay.

“If I joined the Knights because I have four sons and the Knights supported a Boy Scouts troop; I became involved that way through coaching Little League baseball,” he said, adding that today he is also an extraordinary minister of holy Communion and a lector in Coral Springs. A recent “K of C” fundraising dinner there supported the parish religious education program, while other activities have benefited pro-life causes, children with diabetes, the handicapped and needy mothers.

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

To attract newer members, one local council set up an impressive array of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and more. They also encourage members to stay in touch through

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For information about the Florida State Council of the Knights of Columbus, go to http://www.floridakofc.org. For information about the statewide Run4Life coming up in January 2013, go to http://www.kcunorunlife.com.

Lou Cimaglia Jr., right, state wheelchair fund chairman, speaks to a recipient of a donated chair at Catholic Health Services’ Lauderdale Lakes campus as two members of the Knights of Columbus color corp attend to the wheelchair recipients. (COURTESY PHOTO)
KNIGHTS: 100-year-old organization ready to focus on promoting activities and promoting the faith

FROM 16

email and newsletters, according to 22-year member Joseph Scerbo, grand Knight of Council 3080 in Oakland Park and a member of St. Pius X Parish in Fort Lauderdale.

Scerbo and his wife, Barbara, were recognized with the Knights’ Family of the Year Award in Florida last year.

“There hasn’t been enough recognition worldwide about the Knights when you consider the work that is done globally for the benefit of mankind,” Scerbo said.

“We have a 100-plus-year-old organization and it is now time to focus on promoting our activities and our faith.”

Council 3080 includes 127 members, but Scerbo said they do face challenges in trying to sustain the council going forward, he added. “We are getting some young men but not enough. That is the situation in almost every organization — the challenge of getting young people to make a commitment to service,” he said.

This year, through the annual Tootie Roll fundraising project, the council is contributing to the Schott Communities for Persons Who Are Deaf or Disabled in Lauderdale and the Ann Storch Center, which serves children and adults with developmental disabilities.

“Hopefully, youths will look to the Knights of Columbus as a means of personal fulfillment and make that commitment to join in the fellowship,” Scerbo said.

MORE COUNCILS

In Homestead, Chuck Roessner, the state council’s annual Run4Life coordinator and a former district deputy and past grand Knight, has traveled the state and seen how the Knights have helped keep the Church in Florida grow rapidly.

More parishes have their own councils, some set up specifically to welcome Spanish or Haitian Creole-speaking men.

“We grow five to 10 councils a year,” said Felipe Gonzalez, a seminarian from the Diocese of St. Petersburg who is student coordinator of the event. “It’s too late to turn back now. The bus will be leaving the seminary at 4 a.m. Dec. 1 and arriving in Sarasota just in time for the event. With less than three weeks to go, the seminarians, along with Father Toups and vice rector Father Jose Alfredo, a Miami priest, have begun training four days a week. In addition to doing pull-ups and push-ups, they run, jog, and jump into the pool with their shoes and clothes on.

“It’s like purgatory,” Gonzalez joked. “I was a little intimidated because I am not the most athletic guy, but from the trainings, I have forced myself to get involved with running.”

“One group name is Tested by Fire,” said Miami seminarian Alex Rivera, who admits he did not know what he was getting himself into. Another Miami seminarian, Julio de Jesus, is participating as well.

“What most attracted me was that it was different and we get to do it in a group with other seminarians,” Rivera said.

“The training has been going well,” said Father Alvaro. “When I started training it dawned on me how out of shape I was. I just finished running seven miles and two more times I couldn’t run three. He plans to build up to 10 miles by running one extra mile a week. One touted benefit of the Tough Mudder is the sense of camaraderie it builds among participants. It is not a competition but a challenge.

“It’s like purgatory.”

Rodriquez said. “The goal is to organize a group in every parish to serve the community of faith and assist the pastor and the projects of the Knights of Columbus.”

Although Latin Americans here may have been unfamiliar with the order in their home countries, “most Spanish-speaking Catholics in Florida were immigrants; the order was really started for immigrants so the new immigrants can relate to Father McGivney’s goals,” Rodriquez said.

“The idea is to make it a very multicultural group in Florida including Filipino, Chinese and Haitian-American Catholics in the Miami region, he added.

Potential members may resist making new commitments that would take up their free time, but members say the order can appeal to those who see other men pray on a consistent basis, do projects in support of the Church and their pastor, and stand for values of charity and community service framed by their faith traditions.

“Councils make it a habit of getting members to pray the rosary and that builds a tradition that we must always pray,” Rodriguez said. “As you get into the habit of praying, a conviction forms that prayer does work. We must build up the body of Christ by having an organization that attracts them and gets them involved.”

Rodriguez said.
AROUND YOUR COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY EVENTS

HIV/AIDS awareness, Saturday, Nov. 24, 7:30 p.m., St. Bartholomew, 8005 Miramar Parkway, Miramar.

Information booth in English about HIV/AIDS and other diseases to the Haitian and parish communities. Contact stbrendanmiami.org.


Christmas arts and crafts festival, Dec. 1-2, St. Margaret, 801 N.E. 32 Ave., Fort Lauderdale. Handcrafted Christmas decorations, jewelry, more. Snacks available on Saturday; pancake breakfast on Sunday. Free. 305-243-1124.

ADVENT EVENTS

List of Advent spiritual events taking place in the archdiocese

MorningStar Renewal Center, 7275 S.W. 124 St., Miami, 305-238-4637.

• Advent evening of reflection, Thursday, Nov. 29, 8 p.m., “Who’s that girl?” Questions of music and art engaging the themes of Advent. Call for admission fee.

• Day of retreat, Monday, Dec. 10, 9:30-4 p.m., “Preparing to celebrate the Christmas season,” presentations, spiritual, personal prayer, Mass and simple lunch.

Director: Father Armando Tolosa. 305-628-6646.


Retiro, sábado, 1 de diciembre, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m., St. Kieran, 3605 S. Miami Ave., Miami. Con el Padre Marcos Soanamia, la cantante Gladys Garcete, y celebración de la Santa Misa. $10/persona, incluye almuerzo. Favor de reservar con anticipación. 786-326-7969, misericordialive.com.

Preparación prematrimonial, sábado 1 de diciembre; se requiere de tiempo para que deseen celebrar el sacramento de matrimonio en la Iglesia Católica, ofrece entrenamiento sobre sacramentalidad, la Teología del Cuerpo, y cuestiones prácticas. $125/pareja. 305-226-4664 o www.catholicmarriagemod.com.

Casa de Oración Nuestra Señora del Monte Carmelo, 15710 N.W. 105 Ct., Miami Gardens. 305-816-6468 o info@casaoracionestm.com.

• Meditación para Advenido, sábado 1 de diciembre; se requieran Biblia, lápiz, papel para tomar notas, un corazón abierto.

• Retiro contemplativo de Advenido desde la espiritualidad

RETRIEVES/DAYS OF REFLECTION

Schools


Pre-Cana marriage preparation. Class requirement for all couples who offers Sacramentality and Life Skills training using Blessed Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body. For registration, information and a list of sessions to receive the sacrament of marriage in the Archdiocese of Miami, visit www.miamimariarch.org/familylife or contact familylife@theadom.org.

Pre-Cana marriage preparation. Contact 305-652-1148.

• Friday, Nov. 30, 7-10 p.m., Roca Theatre, 305-599-9292.

• Saturday, Dec. 1, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Immediate Conception, 4497 W. First Ave., Hialeah. $200/couple, includes workshops, book kits, handouts, welcome reception and refreshments, breakfast, lunch and snacks.

• Online marriage preparation for couples with special circumstances will not allow them to participate in any of the parish programs. Contact the Office of Family Life, 305-762-1148/1157, familylife@theadom.org.

Preparación prematrimonial para internacionales, contactez-vous avec circonstances especiales que no les permet aux partir ay programas en las iglesias. Para más información, comuníquese con la Pastoral Familiar de la Arquidiócesis de Miami at 305, 484-1157, familype@theadom.org.

Matrimonios en Victoria, 1 de diciembre, 9 a.m., 1600 Royal Road, Coconut Grove, movimiento laicos católico de la Arquidiócesis de Miami para matrimonios que deseen enriquecerse en la fe y en su compromiso como esposos. 305-342-8950.

Natural family planning classes, Saturday, Dec. 8, St. Patrick’s, 2020 S.W. 118 Ave., Miami Beach. For married couples or those preparing for marriage; led by certificated instructors. 305-531-1124.

Camino, diciembre 8 y 9, SEP1, 7700 S.W. 58 St., Miami. Programa de preparación matrimonial para parejas que deseen preparar el sacramento de matrimonio en la Iglesia Católica, ofrece entrenamiento sobre sacramentalidad, la Teología del Cuerpo, y cuestiones prácticas. $125/pareja. 305-226-4664 o www.catholicmarriagemod.com.

Casa de Oración Nuestra Señora del Monte Carmelo, 15710 N.W. 105 Ct., Miami Gardens. Marian eucharistic conference, featuring EWTN’s Father Michael Perry and featuring EWTN’s Johnette Benkovic, Dr. Mark Miravalle, Roy Schoenman and Anne Kato. Advent music provided by Mand Martin. $50/adults, $10/child, excluding meal, lodging. penny.stetina@ewtn.com.

YOUTH EVENTS

Advent retreat, Saturday, Dec. 8, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Youth Center, 3333 S. Miami Ave., Miami. Presented by Encuentros Juveniles. $10/person. 305-298-4163, 786-893-9464, 305-856-3404.

“The Joy of Believing,” Saturday, Dec. 15, 1-2:30 p.m., St. Marie University, 5000 Ave Maria Blvd, Ave Maria. Marian eucharistic Advent conference, featuring EWTN’s Johnette Benkovic, Dr. Mark Miravalle, Roy Schoenman and Anne Kato. Advent music provided by Mand Martin. $50/adults, $10/child, excluding meal, lodging. penny.stetina@ewtn.com.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Courage apostolate, second and fourth Mondays, 7:15 p.m., St. Anthony, 901 N.E. 2nd St., Fort Lauderdale. Group for men with same-sex attraction struggling to live out the teachings of the Church.

Divorce care, Mondays, 7:30-9 p.m., St. Maximilian Kolbe, 701 N. Haiti Road, Pembroke Pines. Features video seminars with experts and support group. 954-538-6151, www.divorcercare.org.
**Baby Gabriel’s story**

From abandonment to Easter hope, thanks to efforts of Catholic Church and its people

ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO
Florida Catholic staff

NORTH LAUDERDALE  | He died alone and unnamed, dumped in a trash bin. But 110 mourners attended his funeral, four priests concelebrated the Mass, and his remains will rest eternally underneath a statue of the Blessed Mother.

The contrast between the beginning and end of Baby Gabriel’s brief life is a testament to the Catholic Church’s belief in the dignity of all human life, a living witness of the Church — and individual Catholics — do indeed back their pro-life words with deeds, despite the often unrelenting criticism of the secular world.

Baby Gabriel was found in a trash bin Aug. 10 outside a Fort Lauderdale beachside hotel, stuffed into a pillowcase that was wrapped in a towel. Police discovered him after growing suspicious of the story told by a woman, identified as Alexandra Sladon-Marler, who was being treated at Broward Health Medical Center. The 33-year-old had told hospital staff that she had had an abortion. But doctors saw that part of an umbilical cord was still attached, and determined she had given birth.

The medical examiner later concluded that the baby was born alive and died in the trash bin. Sladon-Marler is now in jail, charged with manslaughter. For more than two months, Baby Gabriel was in the morge, unclaimed.

In stepped Frank Marques, a parishioner at St. David in Davie. “It just upset me. No one should end up in a dumpster,” he said.

He decided to donate his own burial plot at Our Lady of Mercy Cemetery in Miami. “I was a little nervous” but thought “God will work it out,” he said. “It’s not a place for me when my time comes.”

So he contacted a local television station that had aired the story. When he got no response he called Mary Ross Agosta, archdiocesan director of communications. She was able to get through to the station and get in touch with the investigating officer, Det. Jim Jaggers of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department. He said if no one claimed the body, it would eventually be cremated by the county.

Ross Agosta contacted Mary Jo Frick, executive director of Catholic Cemeteries, who said Marques would not have to give up his burial plot. The Fort Lauderdale cemetery, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, would gladly donate a plot in their baby section — the newest of two that exist at the cemetery — as well as staff time and a chapel for the funeral Mass.

On very short notice, Father Dominick O’Dwyer, pastor of St. Malachy Parish in Tamarac, offered to celebrate the Mass. He was joined by Msgr. Vincent Kelly, pastor of St. John the Baptist in Fort Lauderdale, Father Michael “Happy” Hoyer, pastor of St. Gregory in Plantation, and Father Manny Alvarez, parochial vicar at St. Gregory, as well as Deacon Mario Lopez of Mary Help of Christians in Parkland.

They invited members of their parishes and respect life volunteers to take part in the Mass, which was celebrated Oct. 24 in the chapel of Our Lady Queen of Heaven’s mausoleum. TM Ralph Funeral Homes donated the casket and their services.

Ross Agosta and Jaggers served as pallbearers.

“We know for sure that this innocent soul is secure and happy in the presence of God,” Father O’Dwyer said in his homily, noting that the tragic circumstances of Baby Gabriel's death point to the reality of what Blessed John Paul II called “the culture of death.”

“Our hearts when this happens. It’s just so sad,” Silverio said. “Sometimes God requires us to do things that are very uncomfortable,” said Marques, who also attended the funeral. “Coming here today wasn’t easy for me because my late sister is buried here. But I felt, no, I have to come. So I’m glad I’m here. God has given me the peace to be here. I’m glad for the turnout.”

To find out more about Catholic cemeteries in the Archdiocese of Miami, go to www.catholiccemeteriesmiami.org.

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Father Dominick O’Dwyer prays over the casket of Baby Gabriel before burial in the baby section of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Cemetery in North Lauderdale. At left is Mary Ross Agosta, archdiocesan director of communications, and at right is Det. Jim Jaggers of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department. (PHOTOS BY ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO | FC)

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A crucifix, a rosary and a teddy bear surround the coffin of Baby Gabriel and his burial at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Cemetery.

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Priest on the sidelines

Sports fan Father Manny Alvarez serves as chaplain for the Miami Dolphins

TONI PALLATTO
Florida Catholic correspondent

MIA M I A  |  When it comes to identifying his dream job, Father Manny Alvarez’s first response is the priesthood.

But “this other gig does come in a close second,” added the Twitter and Facebook posting sports fanatic.

Earlier this year, Father Alvarez, ordained in 2001, was asked to be the team chaplain for the Miami Dolphins. He had started last season celebrating Mass at the team hotel the night before home games. This year, at the request of new Dolphins head coach Joe Philbin, Father Alvarez is on the sidelines for every game, home and away.

The native Miamian, who also roots for the Hurricanes, Marlins and Heat, was parochial vicar at St. Gregory the Great in Plantation until Nov. 5, when he was named administrator of Our Lady of Divine Providence in Miami.

Coach Philbin came from the Green Bay Packers, who have had a Catholic chaplain on the sidelines since the days of the great Vince Lombardi. Father Alvarez now is on hand at every game, not only to celebrate Mass but to pray with coaches, players and staff, encouraging their spiritual life and safety. After the game, both teams meet at the 50-yard line, where Father Alvarez leads a prayer of thanksgiving.

Before he accepted the role, he consulted with St. Gregory’s pastor, Father Michael “Happy” Hoyuer. “I told him of course he needed to be there for them,” said Father Hoyuer. “They want him there and he would be bringing the Catholic perspective and presence to the Dolphins. As far as the schedule, we’ll work around that.”

Then, Father Alvarez wanted the blessing of Archbishop Thomas Wenski, which also was forthcoming. “With Father Manny standing on the sidelines, the team knows that someone is praying for them,” the archbishop said. “And the fans are reminded that they can still make the late Sunday evening Mass.”

When Father Alvarez began traveling with the team on road games, he began to wonder how he could minister to a professional football team. “On my first road trip, I felt a bit out of place and I asked a lot of questions of where I needed to be and what I needed to do beyond the celebration of the team Mass,” he said. “I still didn’t know where I was going to watch the game until I was told, ‘Coach wants you on the bench.’ I respect Coach Philbin a great deal because as a man of deep faith he knows from experience the impact a priest can have on those around him. I slowly started to recognize why he wanted me around.”

Father Alvarez sees quiet time with the players in the locker room; he prays with them and participates in the prayer led by Coach Philbin before each game.

“As the preseason went on, more players and staff reached out to me, more people were attending Mass, and during the road game, even one of the fans was touched by my presence on the sidelines,” Father Alvarez recalled.

He said he was walking out of the tunnel after halftime when he stopped to reach up and say hello to two parishioners from his first parish, St. Agnes in Key Biscayne. While talking to them, a very thin man came to the railing. He struggled to be heard over the noise of the stadium, and he asked Father Alvarez if he could pray a prayer of healing over him and bless him, as he was terminal.

“I smiled and nodded and extended my right hand toward him and began to pray for his healing,” Father Alvarez said. “When I was done, I blessed him and all of a sudden this man, who at first looked to be in so much pain, looked like he was filled with an overwhelming peace as he smiled down at me. All I was doing was standing there wearing my black collar and representing my Lord and carrying his presence in my heart. All of us are called to do the same. We must take Christ with us wherever we go. We may not have won the football game that night, but as a team, we definitely won a soul for God.”

Coach Philbin said he believes it is important to have a priest and a minister on the sidelines and traveling with the team.

“There is a personal and professional level in every business,” he explained. “We provide the opportunity for spirituality to the players, staff and coaches; they are not forced. There is a place and time for it. Besides, I talk to my 82-year-old mother every week, and she always reminds me if I am still going to church. With Father Alvarez on our team, of course I can say yes.”

As a result of Father Alvarez’s “moonlighting,” an actual “prayer army” has developed for the Dolphins, with a great deal of that attributable to Joe Zarranz, a parishoner at St. Gregory since 1988.

Zarranz learned the art of making rosary beads from a nun from South Bend, Ind., while he was on pilgrimage at Medjugorge, Yugoslavia.

“I have been making rosary beads for more than 20 years,” said Zarranz. “I serve as an altar server and lector at the home team Masses. I got to see the great character of Coach Philbin. He is so personable.

Zarranz became inspired to make special rosaries in the team colors, orange and aqua.

“I feel God has smiled on the Dolphins with our new coach who is turning the team around, mentally, spiritually and through his great example of the man he is,” Zarranz said. “Wherever the prayer warriors are, the morning of the Dolphins’ game, we all say a personal rosary for the players that God keeps them safe and sound.”

More than 100 rosaries have been distributed to coaches, players and parishioners at St. Gregory. “I started using the Dolphins’ rosary beads at the Oakland game Sept. 16,” Father Alvarez said. “The Dolphins started winning games.”

As it happens, Father Alvarez missed the last two Sunday games due to parish obligations — saying goodbye at St. Gregory and introducing himself at Divine Providence — and the Dolphins lost. As Archbishop Wenski put it: “A priest on the sidelines again, and the Dolphins winning three in a row... Coincidental or providential?”

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Belen Jesuit Roca Theatre is located at 500 SW 127th Ave., Miami, 33184

Florida Catholic November 2012

20 YOUR MIAMI COMMUNITY

Father Manny Alvarez stands on the sidelines before the start of the Dolphins game against the New York Jets Oct. 28, holding an aqua and orange rosary made by a St. Gregory parishioner. (COURTESY OF THE MIAMI DOLPHINS)