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CATHOLIC • PRO-LIFE • PRO-FAMILY Mar.-Apr. 2007, Vol. 18 No. 2, Circ. 3513

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Students for Life grows campus groups

Once, the group that called itself American Collegians for Life held an annual conference in Washington, D.C., and then basically folded its tent and waited for the next annual conference.

No more. In the summer of 2006, American Collegians for Life morphed into Students for Life of America.

From its headquarters in Arlington, Va., SFLA sent out four field rep-

See **STUDENTS**, page 3

'Cemeteries' send pro-life message

When Jim McFillin proposed erecting a Cemetery of the Innocents on the grounds of his parish church, his pastor was less than enthusiastic.

Fr. Michael Dolan was worried that such a display might be an inviting target for vandals.

But he finally gave his permission, and in November 2003 McFillin installed 721 small wooden crosses on the grounds of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Lexington Park, St. Mary's County.

The vandals failed to materialize. The crosses stood.

From then on, there was no holding McFillin back.

Fifteen Cemeteries went up throughout Southern Maryland in 2004, twenty in 2005, twenty-five in 2006. Seven had been installed by early March of this year.

"We've had 35 churches and one college so far," says McFillin. "Some of them have been 'repeaters.'"

See **CEMETERIES**, page 4

Rabbi to Catholics: prod prelates to act

At a Defend Life-sponsored talk March 15, an Orthodox rabbi from Brooklyn urged Catholics to demand that their religious leaders resume their duty to speak out forcefully against immorality, especially homosexuality.

"I'm coming to you as an outsider," Rabbi Yehuda Levin told his audience at St. Joseph's Church in Cockeysville.

"But the Catholic Church is the largest denomination in the country. If the Catholic Church chooses to shape up and speak out for righteousness, the impact will be profound."

Rabbi Levin pointed out that in the

See **RABBI**, page 2



Jim McFillin (in red shirt), and his crew, son Brendan McFillin, Pat Cantwell and Gary Sabel, get ready to take down the crosses at St. Mary of the Assumption Church, Upper Marlboro.

RABBI, from page 1

1950s, outspoken prelates like Bishop Fulton Sheen and Cardinal Francis Spellman commanded such respect that Catholic politicians would quake in their boots before they would cross the line and vote for immoral legislation.

But today, he said, many of the clergy in positions of power are apathetic and lethargic: “The clergy are too comfortable. They’re ensconced in their positions; they’re pretty inaccessible.

“People would think, in the aftermath of the priest scandals, that the bishops would say, ‘We’ve got to be super-vigilant, to purge our seminaries of these kinds of people – don’t talk to us for the next ten years about homosexuals.’”

Instead, at their conference in Baltimore last November, the bishops “made an accommodation to the homosexuals,” one that the homosexual media celebrated, he said.

Religious leaders in general have abdicated their leadership and turned it over to politicians, who are very happy to jump into the vacuum and preach a new morality, Rabbi Levin charged.

“How often have we stood up in the pulpit and said, ‘Legislation XYZ is inimical to the faith and therefore we must oppose this legislation’?”

“If a minister says you will lose

your tax-exempt status if you do that, he is a liar!” said Levin.

“It is within our constitutional rights; we didn’t lose them because we’re clergymen.”

But the fault lies not just with the religious leaders, he said; their followers have a responsibility to prod their leaders to take action.

“Can we just blame our clergy? No. It’s a symbiotic relationship – the sheep and the shepherds – both are guilty.



Rabbi Yehuda Levin meets with Pope John Paul II.

“We’re asking you to open your mouths, unscrew your pens, pick up your phones!” the rabbi urged.

“Get outside that liberal diocesan newspaper that refuses to publish the word of God and is too busy seeing how far they can lean backwards to sully Church teaching.

“Get out there with 100 people and say, ‘Hell, no!’”

Pressure has to be put on politicians, using the same tactics that the feminist and homosexuals use, said Levin.

“They take to the streets. They’re abusive, aggressive, loud-mouthed, pushy. They don’t take no for an answer, and the politicians respond to them.”

Even though, as Judge Robert Bork, a Catholic, said, we are no longer slouching toward Gomorrah, we’re cascading toward it, it is not too late to turn our moral descent around, the rabbi insisted.

He called for a new type of religious alliance between Jews and Christians to take our common moral values to the streets.

“We’re at the tipping point,” said Levin. “In ten years, the youth won’t know the difference between right and wrong.

“But there are enough of us older people who have a moral and religious heritage we should be passing onto our children and grandchildren. It’s still possible to turn things around at this late date.”

Rabbi Levin has often acted as a spokesman for the 1,200 rabbis who comprise the Rabbinical Alliance of America and the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the U.S. and Canada.

The father of nine, he has been a speaker at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., for the past 25 years.

Inside the Vatican magazine named him one of the top 10 people in 2006 for fighting for pro-life and pro-family values, calling him “a hero in the ongoing ‘culture wars.’”

In 2006 Rabbi Levin led a successful effort, which included gaining Pope Benedict XVI’s intervention, to stop a “Gay Parade” through the streets of Jerusalem.

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STUDENTS, from page 1

representatives who tabled, clipboarded and Facebooked their way into the hearts and minds of pro-life college students across America.

When the smoke cleared, the number of active pro-life college groups had jumped from 181 in August to 235 in December.

In the spring of 2007, SFLA doubled its field reps to eight.

“We’ll have 310 campus pro-life groups by mid-April,” says SFLA Executive Director Kristan Hawkins.

“Our three-year goal is to have 1,000 groups.”

Clipboarding is the most effective way to start recruiting members for a pro-life group, declares SFLA Field Director Mike Barnett, a 2006 Virginia Tech graduate.

A field rep with a clipboard goes to a place where students collect, like a campus cafeteria, and sits down and talks to them, he explains.

“I have one question I ask when clipboarding: Are you pro-life? The answer is either a very loud ‘yes’ or a very timid ‘no.’

“If they’re pro-life, you get their name, phone number, e-mail address and whether they’re interested in leadership.

“With clipboarding, you can get one student a minute – in a cafeteria you can get a table of ten and pass the clipboard – that’s 60 in an hour!”

Once field reps find a few enthusiastic pro-lifers, they teach them how to start a campus pro-life group through “tabling” – setting up a table on campus to recruit members.

“Stand up near the table, do not sit,” SFLA’s Activism Handbook advises; “Hand passers-by an informational flyer. Avoid debates (the ONLY purpose of your table is to find other people who share your vision.)”

Facebook, the website that has superseded My Space with young



Students for Life of America’s Kristan Hawkins, Ben Wetmore (center) and Mike Barnett are leading an aggressive campaign to increase the number of pro-life groups on college campuses.

adults, is another valuable recruiting tool, says Barnett.

“It’s like a modern phone book – you’ve got their name, e-mail address, all their personal information – their hobbies and interests.

“Often, students think they’re only one of four pro-life students on campus. You show them, here’s a list of 40 people on Facebook who are pro-life!”

SFLA helps fledgling pro-life groups or existing but struggling groups to get off the ground with “a kit in a box.”

The kit contains posters, pamphlets, fetal models and wristbands for the group’s tabling event.

“It also provides sample documents, such as a sample constitution, and five sample agendas for your first five meetings, that lead you through your first few activities,” notes Hawkins.

While educating students on pro-life issues is part of their mission, she says, “We have to move on from

education to activism; we encourage groups to participate in activities.”

SFLA recommends a “diaper drive” – collecting diapers and other baby items for a local crisis pregnancy center – as a good first activity because it’s non-controversial.

“I’d like to see the campus newspaper attack them for helping out needy mothers!” says Hawkins.

Other pro-life activities they recommend and offer advice on include erecting a Cemetery of the Innocents, hosting a Genocide Awareness Project (GAP) exhibit, interning for pro-life organizations, protesting or counseling at the local abortion clinic, and holding a candlelight vigil.

SFLA Board Chairman Ben Wetmore who, like Barnett, gained leadership and organizational savvy working for the Arlington-based, conservative Leadership Institute, emphasizes that SFLA is not a membership organization.

“We’re a resource,” he explains. A membership organization “pro-

notes internal politics, infighting, coups, legal liabilities.

“We don’t want a top-heavy organization; we want 1,000 independent groups, doing their own thing,” says Wetmore.

Although SFLA has helped increase the number of campus pro-life groups, the vast majority of the nation’s 3,500 colleges and universities have no pro-life groups at all.

Pro-abortion campus groups are also small in number – about 200.

“Most campuses have neither group,” Mike acknowledges.

“But they have a pro-choice administration or women’s center professors. or Planned Parenthood reps that come into the college health care center.

“It’s a one-message culture on college campuses. You have students coming in who are pro-life, and the only thing they hear is pro-abortion.”

Feminists for Life says that 65 percent of college students come in pro-life, but only 32 percent leave college pro-life.

Wetmore envisions a long-range goal for SFLA, reaching far beyond college campuses: the recruiting and training of pro-life activists for the upcoming state-by-state battle if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned.

“It seems very possible that in 10 years, *Roe* will be overturned,” he says. “What will the day after look like?”

At this moment, he says, the grassroots network to fight the battle in all 50 states isn’t there.

“We’ll see the fruits of our work *then*, in the battle in 50 states.”

Hawkins, Wetmore and Barnett met with Defend Life Director Jack Ames on March 19 to discuss their groups’ work on college campuses.

SFLA’s website address is studentsforlife.org.

CEMETERIES, from page 1

For Jim, the purpose of each Cemetery is simple: each of the 721 crosses represents a baby killed by abortion every hour in the United States.

Pro-lifers have been erecting Cemeteries of the Innocents since the early 1990s, but the early displays usually contained 4,000 crosses, representing the number of babies aborted in the U.S. each day.

Few cemeteries went up because the large number of crosses made the project such a difficult one, says Jim.

McFillin, an engineering support contractor with System Planning Corporation, at Patuxent River Naval Air Station, decided that a smaller number of crosses would make it easier to erect the cemeteries on a regular basis.

He settled on the number 721 by dividing the 1.5 million abortions in the U.S. each year by 52 weeks, then dividing by 40, the hours in a 9 to 5, Monday through Friday work week.

“That’s still a lot of crosses,”

enough to get the point across, says McFillin.

The point is spelled out in the sign accompanying the crosses: “721 American babies die every hour by ‘choice.’ Respect Life.”

Some people get the point so well, they tear down the signs.

It happened at Immaculate Heart of Mary in November 2004.

After the initial, trouble-free year, McFillin and his volunteers installed a second Cemetery at the church. Five days after they put them up, someone came in the dead of night and pulled them down.

“We put them back up,” Jim recalls. “Then they took them down again and threw them in the pond.

“We went out in a canoe and fished them out. We had to wash them and repaint them – they were all green and slimy.”

The following year at Immaculate, he says, “We set up a watch. We caught two ladies trying to take them down at three in the morning.”

The crosses have been vandalized at other sites in St. Mary’s County as well.



Volunteers take down the Cemetery of the Innocents display at St. Mary of the Assumption School, Upper Marlboro.

McFillen poses the question: "Why do the crosses bother anyone? Why all the hate and discontent?"

"Because deep down, they know that we are made in the image and likeness of God, and that abortion is a great evil. They know it, and they do not wish to confront the evil they have committed. It's as simple as that."

Nevertheless, the cemeteries can give people a chance to confront what they've done and have a change of heart, he says.

Two years after Jim began putting them up, a woman approached him and said that at first she had been very angry about them, because she herself had had an abortion. But gradually, she came to see the truth that the cemeteries conveyed.

"Now she works with us," says Jim. "When there was vandalism at St. John's Church in Hollywood, she helped us put the crosses back up."

Many people do react positively to the signs, he says.

"Pastors have told me that the people at their church like them, and people have come up to me and thanked me. They wanted to put them up at their own church."

McFillin, who is president of St. Mary's County Right to Life and a member of the Knights of Columbus, installs the cemeteries with the help of volunteers at each church and well as K of C volunteers.

He has developed a well-oiled, efficient routine.

"It takes about two hours to put them up," he says. "We mark the field the day before, which takes 1 ½ hours with three guys."

On March 10 McFillin and his volunteers took down a display at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Upper Marlboro and a smaller display (172 crosses) at the church's school in less than an hour, before

Cemetery quashed at Naval Air Station

Permission for a Cemetery of the Innocents at Patuxent River Naval Air Station in St. Mary's County was revoked the day before its scheduled January 13 installation.

Jim McFillin had been given approval three weeks earlier to install the Cemetery at the base's St. Nicholas Chapel.

But on January 12 he received a phone call from a spokesman for Capt. Glen Ives, the base commanding officer.

"He told me that authorization for the installation was rescinded because of its pro-life aspects," said McFillin.

Jim had installed a Cemetery at St. Nicholas Chapel three years in a row, beginning in 2004.

That year, he said, Msgr. Joseph Lamonde, then-chaplain at St. Nicholas, phoned him.

"He had seen the crosses at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, when he was driving into the base, and he said he would like them at St. Nicholas Chapel," Jim recalled.

That first year the base's Judge Advocate General's Office, asked for a legal opinion on the installation of the crosses on the base, approved the display, said McFillin.

In the previous years' displays, the sign accompanying the memorial display had been "pret-

ty innocuous," he said.

At the request of the Navy, it read, "In Memory of All Americans Who Have Died by Hostile Action."

This year the sign was modified even further to read, "In Honor of All Americans Who Have Sacrificed for Our Country and Our Freedom."

McFillen said that the display, which was always erected at the chapel on the weekend before the Martin Luther King holiday, was a memorial to Dr. King as well as to unborn babies killed by abortion.

Just as the slain civil rights leader fought for recognition of the personhood of the black man, the pro-life cause fights for the recognition of the personhood of the unborn child, McFillen noted.

But his efforts to tone down the display's pro-life aspects failed to mollify Captain Ives.

In a statement printed in Lexington Park's *Enterprise* newspaper, the commanding officer said that "the request to display crosses in support of the Right to Life organization on base was disapproved . . . to ensure military installations do not become settings that allow or promote the demonstrations of personal, political or social causes."

heading to install a Cemetery at St. Philip's Church in Camp Springs.

Jim believes that the crosses are a vital tool in the pro-life battle because they graphically illustrate the personhood of the unborn child, something that pro-abortionists have denied them in the same way

defenders of slavery denied the personhood of slaves.

He considers this work a "ministry."

"It's amazing how God had gotten me involved in this," he says. "Things seem to just work out for us. I think it's the hand of God."

Marchers rally for bill to ban cloning

A bill to ban human cloning in Maryland was the focus of some fiery rhetoric at the Annual Maryland March for Life in Annapolis March 12.

Several hundred pro-lifers marched to Lawyers Mall in front of the State House, where speakers urged them to press their legislators to pass the Human Cloning Prohibition Act of 2007.

“You heard last year that we banned human cloning – not true!” said State Sen. Andy Harris, the rally’s keynote speaker and one of the bill’s sponsors.

“We made up a new definition of human cloning and banned *that*,” he explained.

Senator Harris was referring to the bill funding embryonic stem cell research passed by the General Assembly last year despite filibuster efforts by pro-life senators.

The bill ostensibly bans human cloning, but actually allows it, as long as the cloned embryo is killed by the eighth week of development.



Pro-lifers gather in St. Mary’s Church parking lot, the starting point for the Annapolis March for Life.

“Cloning goes to the core of one of the principles of the Declaration of Independence. It says we are endowed by our *Creator* with the right to life,” Harris, who is a Johns Hopkins physician, told the crowd.

“But cloning takes creation out of the hands of the Creator and puts it in the laboratory.”

On the issue of cloning, we should consider what we owe an embryo, what we owe society, and what we owe those who suffer, he said.

“The cloning we will ban in this bill is the cloning of an embryo that will be created and then destroyed. How much respect can you have for something that you create and then immediately destroy?”

Cloning is bad for society “because it’s a slippery slope for worse things,” said Harris: “What would stop us from cloning an embryo and then killing it in the second or third trimester?”

People say that because pro-lifers say no to cloning, they are indifferent to human suffering; but we have to stand by the premise that cures must be found without destroying a life, he insisted.

“Thousands of people today are



The Annapolis Area Christian School drum corps, which led the march, stops in Church Circle as the marchers pass by.

benefiting from adult stem cell treatment,” said speaker Dr. David Prentiss, a life sciences expert from the Family Research Council.

“We don’t need cloning to treat diseases; we don’t need cloning to create new people. We need to ban cloning completely in Maryland!” he declared.

This year’s march received high marks from many of the participants on three counts: it was shorter, brighter, and warmer.

Previous Annapolis marchers trekked to the State House from the distant Navy-Marine Corps Stadium parking lot in the dark, often in numbingly cold weather.

This year’s marchers enjoyed a short walk from St. Mary’s Church on Duke of Gloucester Street to the State House in broad daylight, thanks to an earlier start to daylight savings time this year, and in pleasantly warm weather, thanks to Mother Nature.

A mixer at St. Mary’s auditorium after the march, with food and drink provided by the Law Firm of Peroutka & Peroutka, was a new, added bonus



State Senator Andy Harris addresses the marchers in front of the State House.

for the marchers.

At the mixer, State Sen. Alex Mooney, one of the bill’s sponsors, told the pro-lifers, “Your presence here is important. Don’t get discouraged.

“The other side is not going to go away. But you’re not going to go away either.”

Sixteen area pro-life groups spon-

sored this year’s march, including Maryland Right to Life, the Association of Maryland Families, Gabriel Network, Defend Life, the Knights of Columbus, Gideon’s Task Force, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Archdiocese of Baltimore’s Respect Life Office.



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Book Review

God and Man hits close to home

By Diane Levero

Any conservative Catholic who is semi-conscious knows that, with very few exceptions, the education that our children and grandchildren are receiving in our “Catholic” schools is not really Catholic.

We don’t need a book to tell us that.

And yet we do. Nothing brings a huge, amorphous problem more sharply into focus than a specific instance of that problem, well-told.

Mark Gauvreau Judge’s *God and Man at Georgetown Prep: How I Became a Catholic Despite 20 Years of Catholic Schooling*, does that.

His narrative of his Catholic mis-education especially struck home for me, and probably will for many *Defend Life* readers, because it is close to home.

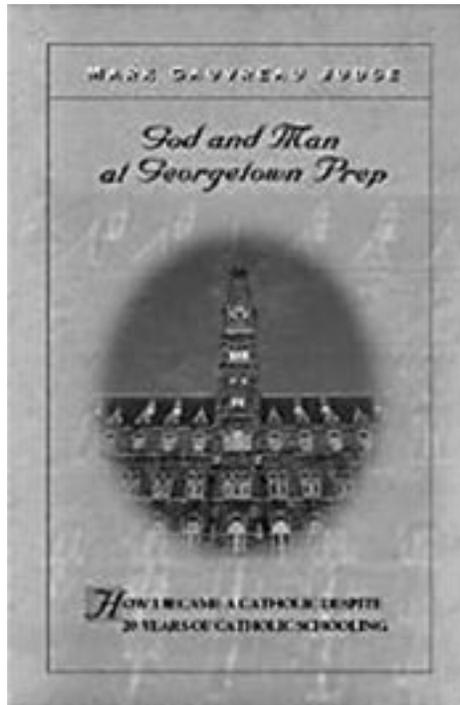
Judge was born and raised in Potomac, Maryland, and went to three area schools: Our Lady of Mercy, in Potomac, and Georgetown Preparatory School and Catholic University in Washington, D.C.

These were, and are, elite private schools for well-heeled Catholics and, as such, should have been the best. By the author’s account, they were, academically.

But Judge details the deliberate denigration of catechetical teaching in the wake of Vatican II, in which the focus was moved from Christ to the student and the changing culture.

The result, he says, was religion textbooks awash in “bland, narcissistic blather.”

Says Judge, “By 1970, when I was entering Our Lady of Mercy for the first grade, the transformation of Catholic life and education was virtu-



ally complete.

“Catholic kids were now in the hands of good liberals who would teach them their own catechism – the catechism of lax morals and hostility to the Church.”

In the second grade, young Mark encountered a glaring exception to the rule: Sister Stephanie, a pre-Vatican II nun.

Wearing the traditional habit, gruff, no-nonsense, and often mean, Sister Stephanie drilled into the second graders the alphabet, discipline, and the catechism of the Catholic Church.

“We learned about hell, purgatory, offering our own suffering up for other souls, and the boundless love of God,” Judge recalls.

But after Sister Stephanie, his religious education effectively ended.

As the title implies, Judge expends much of his ink on Georgetown Prep, a prestigious Jesuit high school “which was anything but Catholic by the time I got there in the 1980s.”

He traces the sad downfall of the Jesuits, from being “the Pope’s marines” when it came to educating Catholic boys and young men, to the point where his sex ed teacher at Georgetown would begin the course with the bland announcement, “There is nothing wrong with masturbation.”

In subjects like English, history and math, Georgetown had outstanding teachers.

“They prepared us for college in every way except spiritually,” says Judge.

Absent were books by great Catholic writers, any teaching about Catholic saints, any examination of the teachings of Augustine or Aquinas or Pope John Paul II.

In short, the one thing that was missing from his Catholic education was Jesus Christ.

The Georgetown students learned their “lessons” well. Morals were lax, partying was de rigueur, and Judge began his heavy drinking that later morphed into serious alcoholism.

But amidst all the negatives were the joie de vivre and shenanigans inevitable with a bunch of lively, irrepressible teen-aged boys.

Judge relates how he and his friends put out a whacky underground paper, *The Unknown Hoya*, produced a demented, teacher-satirizing movie called “Derelict Death Wish,” and electrified a homecoming game by leading cheers dressed as girl cheerleaders while roaring drunk.

After Georgetown, whatever vestige of faith Judge had left received its final knife thrust at that hotbed of dissent, Catholic University.

It took seven years for him to graduate. He wanted to be a writer

See SCHOOLING, page 13

John Marcus was dedicated front-line fighter

Ever since 1985, John Marcus had come to Hillcrest Women's Surgi-Center in Southeast Washington, D.C., to pray the rosary and try to dissuade young women from having abortions.

Every Saturday, "in rain, snow, cold and heat, John was there," recalled fellow pro-lifer Mike Corrigan.

One Saturday, in the spring of 2004, John failed to show up. He had been stricken ill, and was in the hospital for an extended stay.

While he was hospitalized, Hillcrest Southeast closed its doors for good.

Corrigan doesn't know why it closed, but it certainly wasn't for lack of "customers," he said: the facility was always one of the busiest in the area.

Its sudden, unexplained closing, just when John's many years of faithful prayer and witness there had come to a halt, seemed, to Mike, "a validation of John's front-line fidelity there."

John Marcus died on February 11 at the age of 60.

"He was a man of deep faith, absolutely committed to the Catholic faith," said Msgr. Richard Hughes, pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Upper Marlboro.

When it came to fighting abortion, said Monsignor, "John was very focused on what he was about.

"He had this fundamental understanding: these babies are being killed, and that's got to stop; it's an unspeakable crime. For him, other things took a back seat to that."

During the thirty years he knew John, Monsignor Hughes worked with him at the St. Pius X Knights of Columbus Council in Forestville, where the priest was chaplain and John served twice as Grand Knight.

They also collaborated on pro-life

work at St. Mary's, where John was chairman of the pro-life group.

"John was very much involved in anything that was pro-life," Monsignor recalled.

"He went to the January 22 marches, and he would go to Annapolis on Lobby Night every year; he would alert the parish about any pro-life bill coming up in the General Assembly."

John aided in the erection of crosses for Cemeteries of the Innocents, commemorating the deaths of



John Marcus (left) and Mike Corrigan stand outside Hillcrest Southeast in February 2001.

babies by abortion.

"Sometimes, after his Saturday mornings at Hillcrest, he would come in and tell me, 'We saved another one today!'" said Monsignor.

The second oldest of seven children, John grew up to be a systems analyst for a government contractor, said John's older brother, Syd.

By the early 1980s, he said, "Both John and I became involved in pro-life work, without the other knowing it."

When Syd learned of his brother's activities at Hillcrest, he went with him a few times.

"He was very calm, collected and compassionate," said Syd. "He would try to catch the attention of the young women as they drove into the clinic parking lot and offer them pamphlets and literature.

"If he saw the boyfriend go into the 7-Eleven nearby, he would go over and talk to the guy, try to intervene.

"He couldn't get arrested because of his job with the government, but he was on the cutting edge – he knew the limits of what he could do."

John's work as a systems analyst "was Superman's *day* job, so to speak," joked his daughter, Ginger.

She remembers going to pro-life marches with her dad and holding signs when she was 8 or 10 years old.

She also recalls going to Hillcrest with him as a little girl.

"If he had a 'turnaround,' he would make sure he took her away from the property immediately, to a nearby McDonald's or someplace else to eat, and tell her about her options," said Ginger.

"One time, he brought a baby to a Knights of Columbus meeting – one he had saved – to show the visible results of sidewalk counseling."

Ginger, an only child, thinks that her mother's difficulties in childbearing may have helped shape her father's attitude toward abortion.

"I was told that when she was pregnant with me, the doctor said she could never carry me to term, and recommended an abortion," she recalled.

Corrigan, who sidewalk counseled at Hillcrest Southeast for the 10 years before its demise, remembers John as being "extremely reliable and dependable, and that's important!

See MARCUS, page 15

Doub sets up local religious pilgrimages

The computer company that employed Owings Mills resident Ron Doub was doing a lot of layoffs.

When his job “went away” and he was given a severance package, Doub says, “I could have gone with another computer company.”

Instead, he took a deep breath and phoned David Wendt with a proposal: to expand Wendt’s tourist business to cover the Baltimore area’s hidden treasures – its many magnificent Catholic churches.

“I didn’t really know him,” Doub admits.

But in the spring of 2005, Ron and his wife Theresa, parishioners at Sacred Heart Church in Glyndon, had gone on a religious pilgrimage to Rome conducted by Wendt Touring.

Ron, a former Lutheran whose mother was a Lutheran minister, joined the Catholic Church in 2004, after a 10-year spiritual journey.

He and Theresa, a “cradle Catholic” who teaches religion at Mercy High School, joked that the Rome pilgrimage would be a great way to end his journey.

“Initially, I thought of pilgrimages as a vacation with a little religion thrown in,” says Doub.

But the trip to Rome, hosted by brilliant writer and professor Scott Hahn, himself a convert to Catholicism, wasn’t the end of the journey.

It was the beginning of a new journey, “a life-changing event” that incredibly intensified Doub’s newfound faith.

Later that year he went to a friend’s funeral at St. Joseph’s Passionist Monastery.

“The church was astonishingly beautiful,” he recalls. “I thought, it’s a shame that more people don’t visit all our wonderful churches in Baltimore.”



During a tour stop at Holy Rosary Church in Baltimore, Ron Doub pauses beside his favorite piece of religious art, a bas-relief depicting the Mass.

Doub knew that in addition to both conventional scenic tours and religious pilgrimages to Italy, Canada, Mexico and other distant points, Wendt Touring also did regional pilgrimages.

On the phone with David Wendt, Ron asked, “What you’re doing in the Pittsburgh-Cleveland area – could I do that in the Baltimore-D.C. area?”

By April 2006 he was organizing regional tours for Wendt.

The reopening of Baltimore’s Basilica of the Assumption in November, after major renovations, “was, through the grace of God, something that we could build on for our Baltimore tour,” says Doub.

The historic basilica is the highlight of the popular Baltimore Shrines tour, a one-day trip that usually includes St. Alphonsus and Holy Rosary churches, and can also include the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, St.

Jude Shrine, or Mother Seton House.

Other regional pilgrimages include day trips to religious sites in Emmitsburg, shrines in Washington, D.C., or the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City.

Wendt also offers two-day religious pilgrimages to Southern Maryland or Philadelphia and longer pilgrimages to Western Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts, and the South (EWTN in Alabama, and Kentucky).

Building up the touring business is “a bit of a slow process,” Doub says. “I call parishes and inquire if they do any traveling. Obviously, we do regular scenic tours too.”

Key to his work is finding someone in a parish who is excited about doing a tour and will help him organize it.

An added bonus is getting the parish priest to lead the trip.

See TOURS, page 13

Pilgrims see Basilica, Divine Mercy miracle site

“You’re in the most historic Catholic church in the U.S.,” Mark Potter told the tour group inside the newly restored Basilica of the Assumption in Baltimore on March 24.

“We’re lucky,” murmured Wendt Touring’s Ron Doub.

His pilgrimage group, from St. Michael’s Church in Mt. Airy, had happened to get the basilica’s Historic Trust Executive Director as their tour guide.

Maryland was settled by Roman Catholics, Potter told his attentive listeners, but almost immediately they became a persecuted minority.

It was illegal to practice the Catholic faith after 1688, and the Church went underground.

After the country’s new constitution guaranteed religious freedom in 1789, however, America’s first Catholic bishop, John Carroll, wanted to build a cathedral to celebrate this new freedom.

Renowned U.S. Capitol architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe presented the



Mary Sherron guides the Mt. Airy Pilgrims through Holy Rosary Church, the site of the miracle that led to the canonization of Saint Faustina.



Mark Potter stops near the altar during the Mt. Airy pilgrims’ tour of the Basilica of the Assumption.

bishop with two designs, one Gothic, the other neo-classical.

“Carroll chose the neo-classical,” said Potter. “He wanted the new cathedral to reflect American design.” Also, a Gothic-style cathedral might be a target for anti-Catholic bigotry, the bishop reasoned.

The cornerstone was laid in 1806, the bishop raised funds partly through the sale of 30,000 lottery tickets, and by 1821 the cathedral was completed.

“Thomas Jefferson inspired Latrobe to put 24 skylights in the outer dome,” said Potter, pointing toward the basilica’s most spectacular feature.

Light filtered indirectly through the oculus of the inner dome, creating what Latrobe termed *lumiere mysterieuse*.

The skylights, covered up in 1904,
See PILGRIMS, page 15

St. Alphonsus Church: historic and holy

The erudite and ascetic Fr. Casimir Peterson, in rose-colored chausible, is offering Tridentine High Mass at St. Alphonsus Church, the only church in Baltimore to offer the Tridentine Mass.

Introibo ad altare Dei. Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam.

I will go unto the altar of God. To God, Who gives joy to my youth.

To the Mass-goer over sixty, the old, familiar Latin words of the Mass are like long-lost friends.

But young families with lots of well-behaved little children make up a good part of the hundred-plus attentive faithful in the pews.

For the first ten minutes of the Mass, Msgr. Arthur Bastress, St. Alphonsus' pastor, can be seen in one of the intricately carved confessionals, head tilted meditatively and resting on his hand, still hearing confessions.

Then he pops up in the choir loft, vigorously leading the excellent choir in Gregorian chant.

The twelve Apostles, posted in niches along both sides of the church, seem

to be watching protectively the unfolding of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

But the eye is drawn irresistibly toward the altar and to the brightly lit sanctuary, with its splendid profusion of ornate, ivory-hued scrollwork and soaring Gothic arches.

High above the altar, St. Alphonsus beams down, flanked by St. Boniface and St. Martin of Tours.

They in turn are flanked by rows of smaller saints – thirteen to the right, thirteen to the left.

The solemn yet triumphant music, the finely choreographed movements of priest and altar servers, the astonishing prodigality of color and light and beauty all affirm Fr. Frederick Faber's declaration that "the Mass is the most beautiful thing this side of heaven."

"We're a good fit," Msgr. Bastress says of himself and St. Alphonsus Church.

After half a century in the priesthood, "You like to have a challenge," the 80-year-old priest explains, and the

beautiful but badly deteriorating church fit the bill.

He became pastor of St. Alphonsus in 1998 and has been its champion and protector ever since.

When it opened its doors in 1845, just 24 years after the dedication of its neighbor, the Basilica of the Assumption, the Baltimore *Sun* proclaimed it "one of the most splendid churches, perhaps the most magnificent of any yet erected in this city."

Designed by eminent architect Robert Cary Long in Southern neo-Gothic style, the church served Baltimore's German community, while its attached rectory functioned as a provincial headquarters for the Redemptorist priests and brothers.

St. Alphonsus has a saint-studded past. St. John Neumann was its pastor from 1848-49 and 1851-52, and Blessed Francis Seelos was pastor from 1854-57.

"If Blessed Francis Seelos is canonized, this will be the only church in America that had two saints as former pastors," the Monsignor brags as he escorts a visitor through St. Alphonsus.

"When the church was built, you didn't have electricity or even gas lights," he remarks, pointing upward.

"In the center of the church was a big brass chandelier ringed with three rows of candles, and there were big candelabra on each side of the altar."

Later the church had gas lights inside glass globes, on poles screwed into the pews.

"You can still see the screw marks," notes Bastress.

Probably the most intriguing feature to the modern eye is the church's original pulpit, which rests like an exquisitely wrought crow's nest atop a huge pillar, and is reached by a stair that winds around the pillar.



Msgr. Arthur Bastress stands near the altar of the side chapel at St. Alphonsus Church.

“Nowadays, we have microphones,” explains Monsignor. “But then they had a high pulpit so the priest’s voice would carry.”

The elaborate canopy over the pulpit helps deflect the sound of the priest’s voice down to his listeners.

While modern backs may find the church’s pews narrow and uncomfortable, “Back in those days, people had *posture!*” Monsignor exclaims. “Also, they were shorter.”

Ladies usually sat on the edge of seats anyway, he says. They *had* to; they wore hoops, and if they sat back, their hoop skirts would go flying up.

The church’s beautiful side chapel is “fairly elaborate” because it was used by the Redemptorist novices, he says. It was built in one of two adjacent houses on Saratoga Street bought by the order.

In 1892, fifteen bells were ordered from the McShane Bell Foundry, located in present-day Dundalk – “a symphony of fifteen bells for the faithful,” according to a Latin inscription on one of the largest.

That bell, weighing 3,800 pounds, and three smaller ones still remain, but McShane repossessed eleven others when the parish was unable to pay for them.

The four 115-year-old bells are still rung.

By 1917, with the German community moved out to the suburbs, St. Alphonsus became a Lithuanian parish.

For generations afterwards, it served downtown shoppers, workers and visitors. But as businesses and stores moved out of the city, weekday attendance and donations diminished.

Today, says the pastor, “They’re trying to rehab the city, and the city’s Catholic churches – the Basilica, St. Alphonsus, St. Jude’s, St. Vincent’s, and St. Ignatius, are each attracting different kinds of people and creating different communities.”

St. Alphonsus “attracts a lot of tour-



Saints adorn the sanctuary at St. Alphonsus Church, on Saratoga Street in downtown Baltimore.

ists who are taken by its history and its beauty – and its spirituality. It’s a very holy place,” he says.

Badly needed roof repair, completed in March, cost \$600,000.

“We’re trying to do it so it will last another 100 years. It’s always just been patched before.

“Last year, if you stood by the windows with a cake of soap, you could have taken a shower, the way the rain was splashing down,” the priest recalls. “It caused tremendous paint damage.

“The next project will be pointing the bricks, to help keep water from coming in. Then we’ll repair the windows.”

In the meantime, on Sundays St. Alphonsus has an 8:30 Lithuanian Mass, a 10:00 a.m. Mass in English, and a Tridentine Mass at 11:30 a.m.

Weekday Masses are at 7:00 a.m. and noon.

St. Alphonsus’ website is stalphon-susbalt.org.

TOURS, from page 10

“It’s really neat when the priest goes along; it makes for an incredible trip,” says Doub.

He often goes along on the pilgrimages himself.

“It’s a fun job,” he says.

He remembers one little old lady who got off the bus and burst into a song from a Broadway musical.

“Some of the responses are priceless,” he reflects with a grin.

See WendtTouring.com for more information on *Wendt Touring*, or phone 410-802-5365 or toll-free 866-464-9088.

SCHOOLING, from page 8

like his father, an associate editor at *National Geographic*, and, he said, “I thought college would just get in the way.” Also, he was drinking a lot.

After graduation, he wrote for various publications, managed to beat his drinking problem, and then got a job in the English Department at Georgetown University.

Georgetown’s liberalism was too much even for this fallen-away Catholic, and he quit.

In 1996 Judge was deeply shaken when his beloved father, a committed and devout Catholic, died of cancer.

His own return to Catholicism was gradual, brought on by reflecting on his father’s example and by discovering the intellectual riches of Catholicism, which he found in his father’s old books.

His narrative is laced with quotes from Catholic writers such as G.K. Chesterton, Josef Pieper, James Hitchcock and Thomas Merton.

His elation over having discovered them and “the pearl of great price” – the Catholic faith – shines from the pages.

His plea is that the riches of the Catholic faith be, once again, taught in our Catholic schools.

Pro-Life Training Program Series

Anti-lifers distort true freedom

By Janet M. Baker

We continue this examination of the anti-life mentality, always bearing in mind its humanistic roots. We noted that the humanists formally reject the notion of God as a Divine Person; they deify themselves. They become their own false gods; accordingly, the so-called “moral codes” they devise for themselves are shriveled mutations of God’s moral law.

Also distorted is their concept of freedom. They cannot distinguish between true freedoms and counterfeit freedoms.

Traditional American concepts of freedom also fall short of what true freedom is, as taught by Christ through His Church. The Catechism teaches that “there is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to ‘the slavery of sin’ (Romans 6:17).”

The Church, during every Morning Prayer, prays the Benedictus, which states that God enables us to serve Him without fear, holy and righteous before Him all our days. I’ve heard true freedom defined this way: “Freedom means being able to do as we ought, not as we want.”

Indeed, does this not hearken back to the old Baltimore Catechism question of why God made us? We were made “to know, love and serve Him in this life, to be happy with Him in the next.” This true freedom involves an orientation and submission to God who transcends us. We obey His moral law if we wish to truly be free.

However, the twisted notion of freedom, as displayed by anti-lifers and humansists in general, is merely another guise for self-centeredness. These individuals see freedom as the license to do whatever they wish and to have all consequences and responsibility for these actions eliminated.

Probably the most apparent manifestation of such a quest is seen in the so-called “gay-rights” movement. Nowadays, they are even trying to have verbal rebukes of their perversions punished by law (“hate speech” legislation, etc.)

England and Canada have gone so far as to make some forms of truth-preaching punishable by law; the U.S. is not that far behind. Such is the drive to deny responsibility for sinful actions. Heaven forbid that perverted consciences be pricked!

Besides not wanting to hear about the spiritual consequences of their perversions, gays and other promiscuous folks demand public assistance to avoid natural consequences of their sins. It’s no secret to the reasonable person that the AIDS epidemic would soon fade into history if promiscuity were to cease.

Yet rather than admit that obvious truth, sexual libertines pooh-pooh the idea of abstinence education in schools and demand free access to condoms and contraception, and lurid “sex education.” Moreover, they demand that we fund the cushioning of these consequences with our tax dollars via AIDS research, etc.

We also hear the clarion call for contraceptives even among so-called Catholics. Recall the dispute between Sean Hannity and Father Euteneuer of HLI. Hannity, in a mixture of ignorance and arrogance, simply refused to listen to the truth that Father was proclaiming.

Sadly, way too many Catholics (including clergy) have bought into the sinful deception of contraception. Of course, when the contraceptives “fail” (that is, when they don’t thwart nature), abortion is the “fall-back.”

We see other abuses of true freedom. Millions of people are enslaved to alcohol and drugs. They damage the lives of countless others before dying early deaths themselves. The same can be said for those enslaved to tobacco (I know some of the readers are smokers. You are sinning against the Fifth Commandment. Stop it!)

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul reminds us that “we are called to freedom, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another.” There was once a common understanding of that concept in our culture. We can find traces of it in the song, “America, the Beautiful,” to wit, “Confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law.”

Those wishing further insights into true freedom should study the encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*.

Despite their self-made “gods,” their subjective moral codes, etc. (or rather, because of these things), guilt is a prime motivator of the anti-life mentality. We’ll save that for the next time.

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PILGRIMS, from page 11

were restored during the renovation.

Many features, such as the statues of St. Joseph and Mary in the sanctuary, and the main altar, crucifix and candlesticks, are original from 1821, said Potter.

The Mt. Airyans viewed the restored “slave gallery,” where slaves and free blacks used to sit, and the crypt bearing the remains of the cathedral’s bishops.

Near the crypt, they visited the museum containing a letter from George Washington “to the Roman Catholics in the United States of America” and “my favorite piece,” said Potter, the Saddleback Chalice used by Bishop Carroll when he rode on horseback to distribute Communion.

Then it was off to Holy Rosary Church, the Archdiocesan Shrine of the Divine Mercy, for a tour guided by parishioner Mary Sherron, who walked the group through the beautiful Romanesque Church, built in 1927 by Polish immigrants.

Pausing before a painting of St. Faustina, the Polish nun to whom Jesus gave His message of Divine Mercy, she said, “It was the healing of the heart of a priest, our pastor, that brought about her canonization.”

Fr. Ron Pytel grew up at Holy Rosary, was ordained there, and came back as pastor for 12 years.

In 1995, despite emergency heart valve surgery, doctors told the 48-year-old priest that his heart was worn out, and he had only a short time to live.

But on October 5, after praying in Holy Rosary before a relic of Sister Faustina, he collapsed. For 15 minutes he felt paralyzed, yet strangely at peace.

When he came round, said Mrs. Sherron, “He had the heart of an 18-year-old man.”

Father Pytel’s healing was the second miracle required for Sister Faustina’s canonization, which took place in 2000.

For Margaret Bartholow, one of the pilgrims, the stop at Holy Rosary was an especially emotional one.

“Father Ron” used to go to Citizens Nursing Home in Frederick for three years, she said.

He visited her son, also named Ron, who had Lou Gehrig’s disease, but the visits were unknown to Mrs. Bartholow.

Some time after Father Pytel’s miraculous healing, she came to Holy Rosary Church with a friend, who was going to counseling there.

While she sat in the rectory waiting for her friend, “a priest came down the dark steps.

“He said, ‘Can I help you?’ After I said my name, he said, ‘I know your son.’”

An ordinary exchange. But what made it extraordinary, Margaret related in a tremulous voice, was that Father Pytel had a bright light – “a halo” – around his head.

MARCUS, from page 9

“His Catholicism always framed his approach to the women going in. He brought his Christian insights to his counseling; he was always gentle and non-controversial.”

John, along with Corrigan and several others, helped found Lifeguard, a front-line pro-life organization created in response to the FACE Act’s crippling restrictions on pro-life activity at abortion sites.

He had a great sense of humor, and was always upbeat and friendly, said Mike.

“But I think he also treated his time out there as penance, a sacrifice he made – because he was often not dressed very warmly in cold weather.”

John arranged for Lifeguard to use the St. Pius X Council’s facilities for meetings and events, including a

presentation by Mike to the council members on front-line work.

In 2002, after a diagnosis of kidney failure, he started undergoing kidney dialysis.

“He underwent dialysis three times a week, four hours a day,” said Syd.

John had become a Eucharistic Minister when his wife, Wendy Joy, had contracted breast cancer and was bedridden, in order to bring her Communion.

Wendy, a convert to Catholicism, died in February 2005.

Every Friday, when John would go for dialysis, he would bring Communion to the other patients, said Syd.

As his stays at the hospital became more frequent in the final few months, John, an inveterate smoker, would often sneak out of his hospital bed for a clandestine smoke in his car in the hospital parking lot.

“He would say that smoking was what kept him alive – that getting out of his hospital bed for a smoke was his only exercise,” said Syd.

On Saturday, February 10, John went to a Knights of Columbus wake in Huntingtown, Md.

“He had been in the hospital, but he came out because it was for one of his co-workers,” said Monsignor Hughes, who was also at the wake.

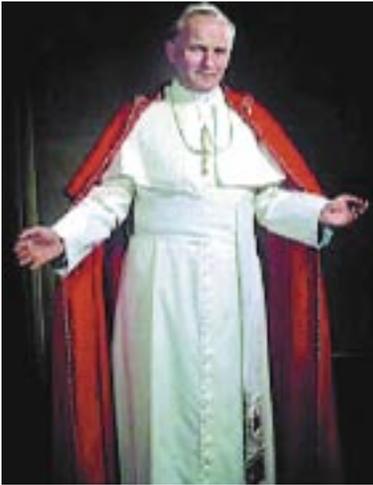
He told the priest that he was having trouble breathing.

At home after the wake that afternoon, John called an ambulance.

When the paramedics arrived, they found him already unconscious.

“He never woke up again on this side of eternity,” said fellow pro-lifer Janet Baker.

Said Syd, “John would never back down with anybody about two things: the Catholic Church and the right to life. He didn’t hurt people’s feelings, but he let people know where he stood.”



John Paul The Great
1920 - 2005

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Detroit, 1987

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Rome, 1996



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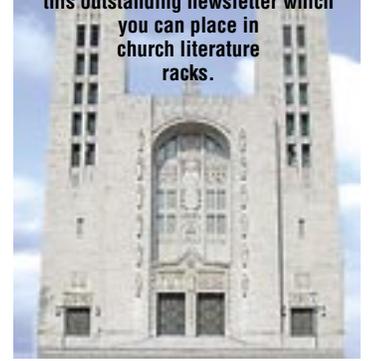
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