PENTECOST: Come, Holy Spirit!
Catholic Times
You’ve Got a Friend

By David Eshle, Editor
Catholic Spirit. Even the simplest assertion of
faith can only be made by the help of
the Holy Spirit. Everything of peace and faith goes
beyond our human understanding and is
made known to us by the Holy Spirit. It is through the Spirit that we find truth.
Not the truth that comes from human
intelligence, but the truth that mystery is
what we use to serve and guide us. The Holy Spirit gives us strength. He
does not interfere to prevent us from
taking hold of the problems of our hearts.
Remember that Jesus faced rejection, pain, and
break of heart because of the love for mankind.
The Holy Spirit makes us understand the grace
to live the way of Jesus. It helps us to accept whatever happens to us
as Jesus did, with his kind of pa-
tience and absolute trust in God. Finally, the Holy Spirit leads us to
live in union with the assurance of God’s love for us. One of the most
important ways he does that is through
his action at Mass, enabling the priest
to offer that great sacrifice and present
us the real body and blood of Jesus
in our bodies so that we can
be participants in His Body,
the Church, and when he reminds us, he helps us to
understand the words of the Lord.”

Pope Francis canonized Blessed Marie-Alphonse and Blessed Mary of Jesus Crucified, along with
a few other saints whose names have
owed to them by the Church. They are the first modern
saints to hail from the territory that
made up historic Palestine.

“The Holy Spirit teaches us to follow him, to walk
to the Spirit of Love who pours
us and allows us to address God, calling him Father,
Dad, Abba, and this is not merely an expression, but a
reality. We truly are children of God.”

Pentecost is the day when the Holy Spirit descended
upon the disciples who had gathered in the Upper
Room at Jerusalem following Jesus’ ascension. This
day is known as “the birthday of the church,”
because those disciples, on being filled with the Spirit,
it, then went out to preach to the crowds of Jews who
gave that great sacrifice and present
us the real body and blood of Jesus
in our bodies so that we can
to the Holy Se.

With all of those celebrations, the day is a
closed of the Old Law and the beginning of the New.
It began on the 50th day after Passover. In the Old
Testament, it was originally an agricultural festival
celebrating the end of the spring harving and the
beginning of the rainy season of the year. The Jews
that “In Italy, it was customary to scatter rose leaves
beneath the altar. In Sicily and elsewhere,
that ‘In Italy, it was customary to scatter rose leaves
beneath the altar. In Sicily and elsewhere,
and the feast of Pentecost becomes

The feast commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and the Church on the day that Jesus promised that he would send an Advocate to be with us always, the
Father, and he will give you another
counselor, to be with you always, the
Spirit of truth, which the world can-
not accept, because it neither sees nor
knows it. But you know it, because it
remains with you, and will be in you.

So, I will ask the Father, and he will give you another
counselor, to be with you always, the
Spirit of truth, which the world can-
not accept, because it neither sees nor
knows it. But you know it, because it
remains with you, and will be in you.

The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, is something
in which the Church, and when he reminds us, he helps us to
understand the words of the Lord.”

“Christ glorified at the right hand of the Father con-
tinues until the First Sunday of Advent.

Catholic Times is on summer schedule!
This is the Catholic Times. During June, July, and August, we will only be
publishing special editions. Catholic Times publication schedule in September.

June 7 & 14 July 5 & 19 August 2, 16 & 30
We will return to our normal publication schedule in September.
St. John’s Nemesis Church’s Alpha Course a Huge Success

What is Alpha? Alpha is an opportunity to explore life and the Catholic faith in a friendly, open and informal environment. “It’s discussion and conversation among friends,” said Father David Sizer, more of St. John’s St. John Nemesis Church. The parish had nearly 400 individuals sign up to take the Alpha course that met from Feb. 5 to April 16. The course was so popular that the parish decided to expand it from one weekly session to three weekly sessions to allow a waiting list of interested participants.

The Alpha course helps participants to understand their own beliefs, and to consider what they believe about the Christian faith, a place of grace and support for all Christians. The parish had nearly 400 interested in the Alpha course, filling us with compassion for the needs of others,” said Father Sizer.

“My goal is to have 100 percent of the parishes involved in some type of discipleship activity, whether that is through education or service, so that we live out our faith and prove that we are Catholic through our actions and our words, not just to the living but to the dead,” Father Sizer said.

Moses Scholarship Recipient

Mary Beth Moses, a 2007 graduate of Columbus St. Francis DeSales High School, is the inaugural recipient of the Dr. Jacob Moses Scholarship.

The nonrenewable scholarship from the Mount Carmel Educational Foundation will be awarded directly to Mount Carmel and will help cover tuition, fees, room, board, and any other direct educational expenses. It is to be awarded to an incoming senior from a Columbus diocesan high school and is being administered by The Catholic Foundation, successor to the diocesan Office of Education and to honor and establish to further nursing education and to honor and memorialize Moses, who died on July 27, 2007, after a nursing career in which she saw countless changes in medical care over seven decades, much of it alongside her husband of 63 years, Dr. Jacob Moses. She had six grown children, all of them college graduates and five of them graduates of Columbus St. Coughlin High School. She was a great supporter of Columbus, St. Charles Preparatory School, St. Coughlin High School, and The Ohio State University.

The nonrenewable scholarship from the annual distribution of the fund will be paid directly to Mount Carmel and will help cover tuition, fees, room, board, and any other direct educational expenses. It is to be awarded to an incoming senior from a Columbus diocesan high school and is being administered by The Catholic Foundation, successor to the diocesan Office of Education.

Moses was an athletic director at DeSales and a member of the school’s athletic hall of fame. Sarah Gant, said Finotti “has planned, organized, and successfully implemented our school’s (inter)disciplinary and extracurricular activities. She genuinely seeks to serve and to bring our students the joy of learning.”

She also has been a four-year varsity letter winner in soccer and a cheerleader for four years.

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HOLY WATER FONTS

At the entrance to our worship space, we have a classic-looking baptismal font with a water fall. Encrusted around the top edge are the words, “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Since we dedicated this space 10 years ago, we have been going in this font upon entering and leaving church and marking ourselves with the sign of the cross as a reminder of our baptism. (This, according to our liturgical architect, is what it was designed to be used for.) Now, some parishioners have asked (and our pastor has agreed) that holy water fonts be attached to the wall (within two steps of the font). They say that it is inconvenient for people to walk the extra distance to the font and that children cannot reach the water in the font. Our pastor points out that the font, as it is placed forward, is to be used only for baptisms.

I don’t understand the theology of this. When the font was built, we were told that it was the gift of the community and that the parishioners on the importance of approaching the font whenever they were entering or leaving the church. Can you explain this for me and many of my fellow parishioners? (Virginia)

A fair number of churches now have a baptismal font, which flows continuously, reminding congregants of the “living waters” of baptism. Those arriving at the fonts acknowledge their own baptism into Christ. Often, I would follow by a luncheon. A fair number of churches now have a baptismal font, which flows continuously, reminding congregants of the “living waters” of baptism. Those arriving at the fonts acknowledge their own baptism into Christ. Often, I would follow by a luncheon.

Perhaps your pastor is simply placing the smaller fonts in the comfort of the environment with water, recalling their own baptism into Christ. I often think that water is technologically not “holy water,” since it is during the baptismal ceremony itself that the water is blessed for the sacrament. Perhaps your pastor is simply placing the smaller fonts in the comfort of the environment with water, recalling their own baptism into Christ. I often think that water is technologically not “holy water,” since it is during the baptismal ceremony itself that the water is blessed for the sacrament.

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May Crowning Ceremonies in the Diocese

By Laura Koebel

Even after being a mother for 11 years, I could not identify with Mary as a mother. While I was up in the middle of the night nursing my children, I couldn’t picture Mary tenderly hugging her Son. And while I was trying to put to sleep my little munchkin, I couldn’t picture Mary potty-training Jesus. To tell the truth, I couldn’t picture Jesus as a little munchkin. I guess I saw Jesus as the perfect child, while a mother and a grandmother wouldn’t have needed to deal with the everyday problems that I did. So how could Mary understand my motherly concerns?

When I had my last child, Doug, who is physically and mentally handicapped, identifying with Mary became even harder. How could she understand my problems when she was the mother of the perfect child? What did the love of the endless hours I spent in the hospital with Doug? He had kidney surgery, eye surgery, tongue surgery, and hip surgery. During his hip surgery, his bones had to be broken, placed into his hip sockets, and then pinned into place. His incision took several hours to complete and required many months of recuperation in a full body cast. The pins, which were several inches long, had to stay in his hips until the cast was removed. Those pins protruded three inches out of the side of the cast. Doug had to be bandaged every two hours to keep from getting sores all over his body. Lying on those pins was part of his rotation schedule.

We brought him home, seated him in a hospital bed, and spent several months sleeping on a couch next to him. One night, as I sat next to Doug praying, the Holy Spirit settled on me and told me that I didn’t think it was fair that my innocent son had to suffer. I sensed her saying to me, “I know how you feel. My Son was innocent too.”

At that moment, I thought of Mary and all the different ways that my son suffered and how she must have felt holding her Son in her arms. At least my son didn’t have to watch his Mother suffer and not cry. I thought of Mary watching and crying.

The installation of the statue was made in the name of Bishop Campbell. The artist insisted that the gift to the bishop be made both in his name and in the name of the Bishop Ready High School.

The life-size statue will have several dedications, with each of the school’s religious classes creating its own ceremony. The statue is awe-inspiring,” said Ready principal Cesareo Seamus. “Schmael has created a piece of artwork that brings home the very spirit of what Pope Francis is teaching and preaching. Don’t look beyond the poor, the homeless, the unnamed. They all represent, in a very real way, the poor, the homeless, the unnamed. They all represent, in a very real way, the poor, the homeless, the unnamed.”

Laura Koebel lives in Gahanna.

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Holy Spirit and St. Philip have much in common

Holy Spirit Church in Whitehall, built in 1960 and 1961 for a parish founded in 1947 on a result of post-World War II growth in eastern Franklin County. (Photo by Tim Puet)

Holy Spirit and St. Philip churches have always been close to each other in terms both of geography and of having common roots in the housing boom that occurred after World War II in eastern Franklin County. Members of the two parishes, which are about two miles apart, have been attending each other’s Masses and special events ever since St. Philip was founded in 1956 in Columbus, nine years after the formation of Holy Spirit in Whitehall.

Today, they share an additional bond, with Father William Arnold serving as pastor of both since March 2013 as a result of the changes considered as a result of the new arrangement, but that both also have been able to retain, distinct identities.

“Holy Spirit (located at 4383 E. Broad St.) has about 800 families,” he said. “Whitehall was Columbus’ first true post-war suburb, and the parish grew with the city, which always was a diverse community and remains that way today. St. Philip (at 1573 Elaine Road, just off Livingston Avenue) has about 300 families, most of which is the result of people moving here after World War II.”

“The big growth years for both parishes were in the 1950s and ‘60s. Today, they’re more stable,” particularly St. Philip, he said. “That’s notable about them is that a lot of people who grew up in the parish continue to come back regularly, although they have moved out of the area.

That helps bring about a strong sense of community.

One thing that brings people of the parishes together every year is their biggest annual event, the Holy Spirit Festival, which this year is scheduled from Thursday to Saturday, Aug. 6 to 8. Besides attracting current and former parishioners, it also attracts people attracted by the carnival rides and games that are easily visible from the road on a drive down East Broad Street, the area’s main east-west thoroughfare.

Food specials at the festival include Cuban sandwiches, Italian sausage, ribs, muffuletta sandwiches, and corn on the cob. There is live entertainment each night, a bake sale, and, on Saturday, a silent auction.

“Have we left items? Sure, but I believe in the generosity of the parishioners,” he said. “It’s available at the auction, so St. Philip parishioner Fran Orr.

“We have SMART boards and tablet computers known as LearnPads, which are specifically designed for classroom use and easily monitored by teachers. The school also has purchased two interactive televisions for classroom use.

Holy Spirit School is a short walk from the new Whitehall branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library. The school has benefitted considerably from a $750,000 bequest left to the school library in 2008 by the late Carol Snowden, a longtime Whitehall children’s librarian.

“Our faculty and staff are dedicated to working together for the success of all our students academically, socially, emotionally, and physically,” he said. “We have leadership that includes Spanish, music, art, physical education, and computer learning.

St. Philip, which has 850 students in preschool through eighth grade, has been in existence since 1952. Linda Saelzler, who has been the school’s principal for almost half that period, spending 30 years at the school, including the last 13 years as principal. She will be retiring at the end of this school year after being a mathematics teacher at several diocesan schools.

“Today, I think we’re able to be service to families and to share the Gospel message more than ever,” Saelzler said. “All are welcome here. We serve a diverse community, and it’s reflected in our student population. About 60 to 70 percent of our students are non-Catholics.

Recently, we’ve begun serving a large number of students with an English-Only backdrop. Having a school with a strong faith component is extremely important to them.

“Some people want lessons in faith to be passed on to their children, and want lessons in faith to be passed on to their grandchildren. That helps bring about a strong sense of community.

Holy Spirit, St. Philip: Church, School

Left: Father William Arnold accepts offertory gifts from children making their first Communion at St. Philip Church. Church, Haven: Below, Parrishioners make first Communion liturgy banners. (Photo by Tim Puet)
PARISH COLLECTS BEYOND ITS BAA GOAL TO THE PARISH, SAVBISHO'S ANNUAL APPEAL, WHICH RETURNS ALL FUNDS NEEDED REPAIRS, ENCOURAGING DONATIONS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT, SPONSORED BY THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS.

GIFTS FOR THEIR PARENTS, AND A “TRUNK OR TREAT” NIGHT AT ST. PHILIP AND EASTER SUNDAY AT HOLY SPIRIT, A CHRISTMAS OF THE MONTH AT HOLY SPIRIT AND THE THIRD SUNDAY AT LAWRENCE HAVEN, WHICH THE DIOCESAN SVDP SOCIETY OPERATES SIX DAYS A WEEK, IN THE FORMER COLUMBUS HOLY CROSS SCHOOL BUILDING.

“THAT’S ALWAYS A GREAT EXPERIENCE,” ORR SAID. “WE FEED PROBABLY 150 PEOPLE IN AN HOUR, AND WE KNOW THE VOLUNTEERS WANT TO BE THERE AND THE CLIENTS APPRECIATE US. THEY’RE HAPPY, AND IT’S A HAPPY SETTING.”

A NUMBER OF GIVING TREE PROGRAMS TAKE PLACE IN THE PARISHES DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON, BENEFITING EVERYONE FROM CHILDREN SERVED BY WHITWALL’S COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PROGRAM TO SENIOR CITIZENS AT THE REGISTRY MANOR NURSING HOME. A SEPARATE MINISTRY KNOWN AS WARM HANDS, WARM HEARTS PROVIDES KNITTED OR CROCHETED HATS, SCARVES, GLOVES, MITTENS, AND OTHER WARM CLOTHING TO THOSE NEEDING SUCH ITEMS.

THE TWO CHURCHES EACH HAVE SENIOR CITIZENS ACTIVITIES, TO WHOM THOSE FROM NEIGHBORING PARISHES (AND OTHERS) ARE ALWAYS INVITED. ST. PHILIP’S SILVER STARS MEET ON THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH FOR LUNCH AT THE MCL CAFETERIA IN WELLSFORD, AND HAVE A THANKSGIVING DINNER AT THE TAT RESTAURANT IN COLUMBUS.

HOLY SPIRIT’S HAPPY SPIRITS GROUP GATHERS ON THE FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH IN THE PARISH HALL. A JOINT PARISH PICNIC TAKES PLACE AROUND PENTECOST AT THE TAT. "THAT’S ALWAYS A GREAT EXPERIENCE," ORR SAID. "WE FEED PROBABLY 150 PEOPLE IN AN HOUR, AND WE KNOW THE VOLUNTEERS WANT TO BE THERE AND THE CLIENTS APPRECIATE US. THEY’RE HAPPY, AND IT’S A HAPPY SETTING.”

HOLY SPIRIT HAS A MOTHER’S CLUB WHICH SUPPORTS THE SCHOOL AND THE PARISH, SPONSORING EVENTS INCLUDING A WINTER CARNIVAL, CANDY SALE, FLOWER SALE, AND TEACHER APPRECIATION LUNCHEONS, AS WELL AS A MOTHER’S CLUB WHICH SPONSORS MONTÉ CARLO NIGHTS THREE OR FOUR TIMES A YEAR TO BENEFIT SCHOOL ATHLETIC PROGRAMS AND RECENTLY BUILT A MARIAN GROTTO OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.

OTHER ANNUAL EVENTS AT THE TWO PARISHES INCLUDE A MEAL BEFORE THE HOLY THURSDAY MASS AT HOLY SPIRIT, DAYS OF REFLECTION, AN ANNUAL RETREAT HOSTED BY ST. PHILIP AT THE BEGINNING OF LENT AT ST. THERESE’S RETREAT CENTER, HOSPITALITY SUNDAYS ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT HOLY SPIRIT AND THE THIRD SUNDAY AT ST. PHILIP. EASTER EGG HUNTS ON PALM SUNDAY AT ST. PHILIP AND EASTER SUNDAY AT HOLY SPIRIT, A CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA AT ST. PHILIP IN WHICH CHILDREN CAN BUY GIFTS FOR THEIR PARENTS, AND A “TRUNK OR TREAT” NIGHT AT HOLY SPIRIT, SPONSORED BY THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS.

BOTH PARISHES ARE IN THE MIDST OF RAISING FUNDS FOR NEEDED REPAIRS, ENCOURAGING DONATIONS THROUGH THE BISHOP’S ANNUAL APPEAL, WHICH RETURNS ALL FUNDS A PARISH COLLECTS BEYOND ITS BAA GOAL TO THE PARISH, SAVING THE PARISH THE OVERHEAD CHARGES A SEPARATE CAMPUS WOULD INCUR AND PROVIDING OTHER INCENTIVES.

“OUR PARISHES HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE OVER THE YEARS TO HAVE A NUMBER OF CATHOLIC RITES AND WOMEN DEDICATED TO HONING A CONTINUING CATHOLIC PRESENCE IN EASTERN FRANKLIN COUNTY AS THE AREA HAS UNDERGONE CHANGE OVER THE YEARS AND CONTINUES TO DO SO,” FATHER ARNOLD SAID. “I’M GRAeful TO ALL OF THEM FOR DOING THE WORK GOD HAS GROWN US TO DO IN THE PLACE WHERE WE ARE, AND I’M SURE HE WILL CONTINUE TO BLESS US WITH THE MEANS WE NEED TO SUCCEED TOGETHER.”

Both parishes are in the midst of raising funds for needed repairs, encouraging donations through the Bishop’s Annual Appeal, which returns all funds a parish collects beyond its BAA goal to the parish, saving the parish the overhead charges a separate campus would incur and providing other incentives. "Our parishes have been fortunate over the years to have a number of Catholic rites and women dedicated to honing a continuing Catholic presence in eastern Franklin County as the area has undergone change over the years and continues to do so," Father Arnold said. "I’m grateful to all of them for doing the work God has grown us to do in the place where we are, and I’m sure He will continue to bless us with the means we need to succeed together.

ARE YOUR GIFTS FAITH-FILLED?

The Catholic Foundation is the only foundation in the diocese that invests your gifts in alignment with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Our portfolios follow the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ guidelines, and we carefully screen all charitable organizations that we fund to make sure they also follow Catholic values.
Ascension, Pentecost, and Corpus Christi: What Do They Mean?

The feasts of the Ascension, Pentecost, and Corpus Christi in the Church’s calendar, celebrated in Asia and in the West, are really the get the feeling of their importance, one must travel to other parts of the Catholic world. A person might expect these dates to be celebrated with fervor in certain Latin American or African nations and in Catholic hotbeds such as Malta or the Philippines. However, you would believe that Ascension Thursday is a non-obligatory feast in the Church, as well as many Scandinavian nations that barely have a Pope L therded, let alone a living Pope. But think about it. In most dioceses in the United States, Ascension Thursday was moved to the following Sunday due to the combination of a school holiday and a weekend. Some of the couples of disciples put so much effort into the church, but with a lot of joy, putting together an intricate flower decoration spanning much of the European Church. Some historians explained to me that all the signs and symbols of widows were, certainly, not the case, and especially to their ancestors at a time when few people were educated to the degree they work at. No doubt that some of the militant islamists in this country would try to take away the freedom of individuals. This is why in our pop culture, the cool and hip have seemingly moved past faith and, in their sad minds, have left faith in the hands of little old ladies who don’t know any better.

This all leads either to a truly decadent lifestyle full of ego and narcissism, as evidenced by a bounty of reality TV shows, or a very lonely lifestyle. It is a problem. Furthermore, it shows that so many seem enamored with in our modern world.

What Martin Luther claimed has come true, not only for his church but for many churches. Take away important feast days, leave Christmas and Easter as the only two days that many people go to church, and the rest of the year is a parade of meaningless masses. No wonder feel-good spiritual books and half-hour TV shows on the gods and goddesses of truth contained within the Catholic Church. What is coming is coming, but it is in the age in which we live.

We the faithful have the privilege of being in the modern age. The Supreme Court now seek to answer a question before the court is: what is marriage? The anticipated in the legal arguments on "Redefining marriage will have vast religious liberty implications. In states that are contained within it, least we hand over to nonbelievers in this country would try to take away the freedom of individuals. This is why in our pop culture, the cool and hip have seemingly moved past faith and, in their sad minds, have left faith in the hands of little old ladies who don’t know any better.

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BECOMING PEACE “Being Peace: One Person at a Time” will be the theme of a prayer service at 4 p.m. Sunday, May 24, at St. Reynoldsburg St. Pius X Church, 1051 W. Waggoner Road. The on-going event will be planned and presented by Sister Marian Shone, OP. The prayer service will be open to all.

The coalition’s mission statement is “to recognize that true peace is the commitment of each individual to nonviolent personal living, and life, and to work on behalf of the Catholic Faith Community Against Violence to promote a model of peaceful behavior and to encourage acceptance of the principles of nonviolence in the thinking and policies of people of all faiths.”

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Blessed Sacrament

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Serenity prayer key to peace and happiness, says priest-author

By Jan Kilby


In The Way of Serenity, Father Jonathan Morris examines the appeal and value of the popular “serenity prayer.” Its words are familiar to many: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

Father Morris, a Catholic priest serving in the Archdiocese of New York, is an analyst for the Fox News Channel and former program director of the Catholic Channel on SiriusXM satellite radio. He also serves in campus ministry at Columbia University and is the author of two previous books.

In his new book, he shares some profound insights related to the simple three-line prayer written by American Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. He organizes the book’s chapters into three parts, each devoted to one line of the prayer. Within each, he discusses what petitioners must accept that they cannot change. He cites these as the “unchangeable realities in our life.”

These include “parents, siblings, education, talent (or lack thereof), trauma and tragedies, our good and bad choices and their consequences,” he says. “We are asking God for the serenity to let go of the reins when hanging on to them is doing us no good anyway,” he says. “If we let him, he will bring forth from our trial a greater good than anything we could ever imagine.”

This requires trust in God in “working out the drama of our existence” and patience, he states.

In the second part of the book, he focuses on the desire of the prayer’s petitioner for courage to change what they can. This process often means changing themselves first and “leading with mercy,” he says.

Father Morris explains what can prevent this from happening. “Disenchantment normally shows itself when we stop looking at God (for whom all things are possible) and become fixated on ourselves (who can do nothing without him),” he reminds readers.

Finally, he examines the prayer’s line asking for the wisdom to know the difference between what must be accepted and what can be changed.

“Wisdom is not really about knowing many things, but rather knowing (discerning) what is important,” he says. Citing the advice of St. Ignatius of Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises, Father Morris advises that we “evaluate our present actions by considering what we will appreciate on our deathbed.”

This can be difficult to know, he says, because God reveals his desires “in whispers” to our conscience. But Father Morris asserts that wisdom ultimately means “to live for others, always” because “getting to heaven is what matters most.”

Clergy and lay readers of all faiths should enjoy this inspiring book. Kilby is a writer in San Antonio.

Dublin St. Brigid of Kildare School sixth-grade students from left to right: Caitlyn Styres, Anne-Marie Arnold, Ellie Hanson, Bryndley Pittman, and Rachel Hare were chosen as state finalists in the National Letters About Literature writing contest. They were among 165 Ohio students whose letters were selected for judging by the Library of Congress staff in Washington, D.C.

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Hare’s letter was about the importance of self-abandonment to God’s will. “It was a calm cry in the darkness of our own insufficiency to a greater power to whom they had attached their will and hopes,” he said. “It was the purest and most genuine act of self-surrender to God’s will I have ever witnessed.”

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Mount Vernon St. Vincent de Paul School completed a successful fundraising campaign with a ground-breaking ceremony on Monday, May 11.

The campaign raised nearly $500,000 in gifts and pledges, which will be invested in the first addition to the school building in more than 60 years, creating a more secure and welcoming entrance, as well as expanded learning space for students. In addition, windows installed in the 1930s will be replaced with modern, energy-efficient updates. The work is scheduled to be completed by the time classes resume in August.

The initiative has benefitted from strong support by St. Vincent de Paul Church parishioners and area businesses, as well as leadership gifts provided from the Knox County Community Foundation and the Ariel Foundation.

“We asked parishioners and school parents what mattered most to them, and they gave us great guidance about how to continue building on the positive impact the school has on the lives of our students and their families,” said school principal Martha Downs. “The incredible generosity of families and friends from the parish and community allows us to make investments we know will pay dividends for generations to come.”

The fundraising effort, with the theme “There Is Unity in Community,” was led by Air Force Col. Chris Salvucci, a parishioner. “It’s gratifying to see this all start to take shape – from drawings and ideas to the real world – thanks to a very supportive and thoughtful group of dedicated donors willing to invest in helping our kids, and not just the school kids, but all the families who will be able to benefit from the improvements,” Salvucci said.

Remodeling of the school cafeteria was included in the overall fundraising effort. Dollars raised for this initiative allowed the space to be updated and modernized as a meeting area available to the school and parish community.

Father Mark Hammond, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul and the Knox-Licking Consortium of Catholic Parishes, said, “It is truly a blessing and fortifying for all of us at St. Vincent de Paul to see that so many come together to invest in the future of our students and parish community. We are continually blessed and nourished by the goodness of this incredible generosity. Whenever I have asked for support, I have been overwhelmed by the spirit of charity and giving our community shares in its response.”