VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL BRINGS SIMPLE FAITH TO CHILDRENS’ LIVES
The Faith of Children

By David Erickson, Editor

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

As Catholics, we place important value on the teachings of Jesus that help us to grow in faith and to share that faith with others. During Vacation Bible School (VBS), our children must learn that religion is how we live every day of our lives, and the Bible stories teach us how we are to play our faith in everything we do. Perhaps we adults need to also spend some time in vacation Bible School (VBS) this week: reading simple tales of Jesus that help us to remember what Jesus did, teaching others about God, and not with the popular culture that threatens to overwhelm us.

FAITH IN LATIN AMERICA

BY LEANDRO M. TAPAY

Diocesan Mission Director

Latin America is home to nearly half of the world’s 1.2 billion Catholics. But lately, the Vatican has been anxious about the dramatic decline of Catholicism across the region in the last decade. What used to be known as the “continent of hope” has now become the “continent of concern.”

The situation in Brazil and Mexico, the world’s two largest Catholic nations, gives us an alarming picture of what is happening in that region of the world. According to Brazil’s 2010 census, 65 percent of the population is Catholic, compared with 90 percent in 1970. Similarly, between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of Mexicans who identified themselves as Catholics dropped from 88 percent to the largest decline recorded to date.

In Chile, Honduras, Belize, Argentina, and Peru, the percentage of Catholics also has dropped to 10 to 25 percent during the last three decades, some far worse than Pope Paul VI Stringham of Sao Paulo to lament, “We no longer say Latin America has a Catholic soul.”

If this trend persists, by 2023, about 50 percent of Latin America will be Catholic, down from approximately 70 percent today. Such a drop would affect any gains the Church might make in its new continental hopes—Africa and Asia.

As the Catholic population is declining in Latin America, it’s also becoming the home to what has been termed a “marketplace of faith”—Protestantism, Pentecostalism, Buddhism, New Age, and other expressions among others.

The Church in Latin America is faced with the challenge of being able to train catechists and youth ministers, to develop its pastoral programs, and to promote the poor – Africa and Asia.

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PRACTICAL STEWARDSHIP

None

Have you seriously considered your children during the past two weeks? Your children can be your own, they can be your students, they can be friends, they can be a part of your parish, or they can be part of your community. It is a fact that they will be the ones who will have to live with the decisions we make today. Think about some of the things we have inherited from prior generations, especially the "Greatest Generation" of the World War II era. As one example, we have much prosperity and have born fruit for which to be thankful. What have we done with it? To be sure, we have done some wonderful things, but we also have wasted and squandered some opportunities. Overall, I would say that the good has surpassed the bad. The question for today is "Have we used the right tools to continue the good?" I remain very doubtful that we have spent much of our efforts in the right direction.

As a parent of two of my children, I believe that the future of our country lies in the hands of our children. What we are doing today will have a long-lasting impact on their future. I believe that it is our responsibility to help our children develop the skills and values that they will need to succeed in life. In order to do this, we need to provide them with a strong moral foundation. It is important that our children learn to make ethical decisions and to be responsible for their actions. They need to understand that every action has a consequence, and they need to be willing to take responsibility for their choices.

As a parent, I believe that the most important thing we can do for our children is to provide them with a strong moral foundation. This means teaching them about the importance of hard work, honesty, and responsibility. It also means teaching them to respect others and to treat them with kindness and compassion. We need to instill in our children a sense of purpose and a desire to make a positive difference in the world.

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Our children are the future of our country, and it is our responsibility to help them grow into responsible, ethical, and moral adults. We need to provide them with the tools and resources they need to succeed in life. This means teaching them about the importance of hard work, honesty, and responsibility. It also means teaching them to respect others and to treat them with kindness and compassion. We need to instill in our children a sense of purpose and a desire to make a positive difference in the world.

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QUESTION & ANSWER
by FATHER KENNETH DOYLE
Catholic News Service

**Praying to family members:**

**Rules for liturgical ministers**

**By Catholic News Service**

Catholics need to put aside any partisan differences they may have on the immigration issue and come together to pray for the welfare of their brother and sister immigrants and for Congress to pass much-needed-for comprehensive immigration reform, said Bishop David M. O’Connell of Trenton, N.J.

Special prayer petitions were being prepared and materials and distributions to inform the Catholic community of the U.S. bishops’ support for comprehensive reform as outlined in their 2003 pastoral letter titled “Strangers No Longer: Together in America.”

The principles enunciated in that letter – among them a call to citizenship for the undocumented, a desire to keep families together, and various types of worker visas – were echoed in a recent pastoral statement on immigration from the Catholic bishops of New Jersey, advocating the reform of “a badly broken system in our country.”

“Something significant and substantial needs to be done,” Bishop O’Connell said. “How best to approach these issues will be a source of debate, even division within our nation.

But at other times, I pray in...
Hobby Lobby wins injunction against HHS mandate

A federal judge in Oklahoma City granted a temporary injunction to the arts and crafts chain Hobby Lobby on July 19, saying it would not have to comply with the federal health care law mandating that employers provide coverage of contraceptives in their health insurance plans. U.S. District Judge Joe Heaton issued the preliminary injunction and gave the government until Oct. 1 to consider an appeal.

The Christian owners of Oklahoma-based Hobby Lobby have specifically argued that providing emergency contraceptives coverage to their employees, as required by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, violates their religious freedom. The company, founded sixteen years ago after a federal appellate court ruled that Hobby Lobby's religious objections to covering “preventive contraceptives” would need to be reviewed and could not automatically be overridden. However, the injunction comes several weeks after a federal appellate court ruled that Hobby Lobby can exercise religious objections to the contraceptive mandate.

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The order is a victory for the Becket Fund called the decision a major victory for the company and a minor victory for those who believe that the law applies only to the largest organizations.

They say that when the air is cold, the body is the warmest place to be... Perhaps in our limited understanding of the world, we see a world purely mechanistic and purely utilitarian, but I am one of many people of faith who believes it is an act of spirituality. There is a difference between something and something else; it is the difference between the world and the inner world, and the measure is the least restrictive method of achieving that interest.

Final rules for implementing the HHS contraceptive mandate, part of the Affordable Care Act, do not exempt for-profit corporations from the mandate, even as owners are opposed to it.
Religious education doesn’t stop when the school year ends.
For most of the last two months, young people have been mixing summertime fun with lessons from Scripture and Catholic history at vacation Bible schools throughout the Diocese of Columbus. Through stories, skits, games, crafts, and other activities, they have been learning how their faith has an impact on all aspects of their lives, as a style that’s much more informal than that of a parochial school or Parish School of Religion classroom.

Most vacation Bible schools are designed for children from preschool age through sixth grade, with older students and adults serving as aides and leaders. “Besides seeing what VBS does for the boys and girls taking part, I’ve loved watching how it impacts the teens,” Fishpaw said.

“If you love how with some of them, their confidence grows as they lead and see the kids are responding to them. I’m sure it helps some of the leaders become more confident about themselves. This is my first time running a VBS, and I’ve also gotten more excited as the week went on.”

The program at Our Lady of Victory had 57 students and 35 aides taking part in morning sessions from Monday to Thursday, June 24 to 27, with an evening ice cream social on the final day. It was a visit by the Knights of Columbus, who displayed the plumed hat which fit the castle-style set. Jessica Greer played the same role in the evening. Jackie Guisinger, who as the day’s overall bookkeeper Chris Roberts, who designed the stage setting for the program, signed the stage setting for the program, said. “The entire parish staff pitches in all week. Volunteers come in and form a lot of friendships and keep coming back. For the kids, it’s just a fun way to meet other kids and learn about Jesus and the church in a fun environment. Once they get past sixth grade, lots of them become volunteers and some keep coming as adults. I’ve heard some of the adults say they don’t want to leave when the week ends because it’s such a great chance to get closer to their kids and to be a little bit of a kid themselves.”

Lucius said key volunteers for the week included coordinator Julie Green and parish bookkeeper Chris Roberts, who designed the stage setting for the program, which had the theme of “Kingdom Rock: Where Kids Stand Strong for God.”

The closing session for the morning program had all the children and adults dancing to finger-snapping, hand-clapping music led with great enthusiasm by Jackie Guisinger, who as the day’s overall leader wore a cap, crown, and robe which fit the castle-style set. Jessica Green played the role in the evening.

The session was lively for the most part, but turned serious for a few moments as two young adults, Ben Bohman as Jesus and Jennifer DiGiovanni as a woman of Jerusalem – briefly depicted Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection.

The “Kingdom Rock” program was put together this year by Our Sunday Visitor for parishes throughout the nation. In the Diocese of Columbus, parishes using it included Resurrection, Our Lady of Victory, Delaware St. Mary, Logan St. John, Sunbury St. John Neumann, Westerville St. Paul, and parishes in the Scioto County Deanery, who conducted a joint VBS.

Each day’s program included a Bible memory buddy — an animal character connected to the day’s theme — as well as a Bible point, a Bible story, a key verse, a Catholic identity component, and a saint of the day.

On the first day, Bible memory buddy Truman the bulldog was used to make the point that God’s love helps us stand strong. The Bible story was the 23rd Psalm, the verse was “I love you, O Lord, my strength” (Psalm 18:1). The Catholic identity segment talked about holy oils, and the saint of the day was St. Patrick. Other saints highlighted during the week were St. Joseph, St. Margaret of Cortland, the Virgin Mary, and St. Jerome. Other daily Bible buddies were Duke the horse; Swift the falcon, Valiant the Lion, and Victoria the fox. At Resurrection, they were augmented by a Bratus Backage-style mascot, Chadder the Chipmunk. A VBS program titled “SonWest Roundup: A Rip-Roaring Good Time With Jesus,” from Liturgy Publications, was used this year in the diocese by parishes including Columbus St. Christopher, Holy Spirit, and Our Lady of Peace; Bucyrus; Lake Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and New Philadelphia Sacred Heart. Other parishes use a variety of other national programs from various companies, websites.
Ross, VBS and religious education direc-
ted all of them to get a broader view of
the west side of Columbus. “This was
for children from low-income families
the Run the Race Club, which provides
get around at night in the old West and of
symbols both of the way people had to
things up, it’s time for him to move down
Otis Leroy Sunday) comes along to save
villain (Dirty Daryl), until a hero (Sheriff
Haller). During the final evening, the children visited Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration
and were instructed by Father Bill Hahn on how to pray in front of the Blessed
Sacrament.

St. Margaret of Cortona Church’s VBS
Church will have its VBS this coming
year in most cases throughout the dio-
ceses. However, Plan City St. Joseph
Church will have in VBS this coming
Saturday, July 27. As of 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.,
while Columbus St. Margaret of Cortona Church’s VBS
will be from Monday to Friday, Aug. 5 to 9,
from 5 a.m. to noon.

This year’s VBS theme was “Every-
where Fishin’, where God’s world
comes together,” highlighting a differ-
ent nation each night – Mexico, Japan,
Australia, the Middle East, and
Tanzania.

Most students attending VBS pro-
grams at Catholic parishes are Catholic
churches and learning about their faith.
It’s only in the last two decades or so that VBS activities have become
widely in Catholic churches, partly
because parishes have grown in the number of
full-time religious education staff
members in parishes during that time, and
partly through requests from parents
whose children knew or had attended
VBS programs conducted by other de-
nominations.

The first vacation bible schools in Prot-
estant churches go back to the 1890s.
Standard Publishing, a nondenomi-
tional company whose clients are mostly
Protestant churches, has been printing
VBS material every year since 1922.
Some small communities have a joint
VBS in which all the children’s
churches may partake. That’s the case
in the town of Chillicothe, where Holy
Trinity Catholic Church joins with one
Lutheran and two United Church of
Christ congregations and a church that is
independent of any denomination.

“We have, for both fun and from our parish
and the Run the Race kids, because it
ended all of them to get a broader view of
life and of what the Catholic Church is,”
Ross said.

“A format like this allows some things
to stick with kids in a way they never
would have taught in a regular classroom
setting,” Ross said. “In the diocese within
all of our parishes and the broader
community through Run the Race.”

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Tanzania.
We are taught to pray as Jesus himself did

The failures of U.S. international religious freedom policy

Dr. Thomas Farr of Georgetown's Berkley Center is one of the true good guys on the Washington scene. His June 13 testimony before the national security subcommittee on investigations of the House of Representatives and Government Reform was a thoughtful, searing reflection on the failures of U.S. international religious freedom policy.

Farr speaks with authority, for he was the first director of the State Department’s Office of International Religious Freedom from 1999-2003, and has been deeply involved in the battle for religious freedom around the world ever since. He has done so both from within the government, where he has fought to make the policy judgment religious freedom advances the cause of peace, for nations that violate the first freedom internally are, in the main, nations “that are unstable, economically, political, and foreign policies are of substantial concern to the United States.” So if the promotion of religious freedom abroad (like its domestic allotment) is both the right play and the smart play, why does the United States do it so often?

Why, to cite Farr’s testimony, is it “difficult to name single country in the world over the past 15 years where the United States has taken meaningful action to reduce religious persecution or to increase religious freedom in any substantial or sustained way.” Why is the opposite true: “in most of the countries where the United States has been most active or most engaged, the freedom to have no religion and the freedom to share it with others, to assemble, and to spread the word is being sorely violated.”

The parables on prayer which follow emphasize the need to keep asking in prayer. Abraham is a classic example. He pleads with the Lord twice and then shepherds the Lord.

Farr suggests several structural reasons why. First, the U.S. approach to international religious freedom is a largely ad hoc, annual report. Too many aspects are lists, not speeches, are made of egregious persecutors are published. None of this, however, has much effect on the persecutors.

That, in turn, suggests another structural reason why the efforts to promote religious freedom abroad are mandated by Congress, hasn’t it? He’s been swept away by the politics of the day. Or as Farr puts it, “If we are looking t o mixed messages, no president or secretary of state has made a concerted, sustained effort to “promote the advancement of religious freedom” abroad. Because of that, most professionals in the U.S. Foreign Service do not take religious freedom seriously as a foreign policy concern; indeed, Farr testified, “our diplomats are not being trained to know what religious freedom is and why it is important, let alone how to advance it.” And if the attention in the White House and in Foggy Bottom doesn’t insist that strategic policy planning include religious freedom issues, the “deep-seated skepticism in our foreign-policy establishment that religious freedom is in fact important for individuals and societies” (a skepticism that renews the faux-realist view that religious freedom is not “real foreign policy”) will remain the de facto position.

Which leads us to another, related structural problem. The Office of International Religious Freedom was established in the State Department by congressional mandate in 1998. But that office, like other permanent bureaus, is exceptionally skilful at theoretically setting off anything it regards as an alien body from the serious policy-making process. Thus the Office and the U.S. ambassadorial ambassador for international religious freedom (a person who has often been isolated within State, underfunded and cut off from access to mid-level State and other officers with real policy-making authority).

So if the promotion of religious freedom abroad is mandated by Congress, hasn’t it? He’s been swept away by the politics of the day. Or as Farr puts it, “If we are looking to mixed messages, no president or secretary of state has made a concerted, sustained effort to “promote the advancement of religious freedom” abroad. Because of that, most professionals in the U.S. Foreign Service do not take religious freedom seriously as a foreign policy concern; indeed, Farr testified, “our diplomats are not being trained to know what religious freedom is and why it is important, let alone how to advance it.” And if the attention in the White House and in Foggy Bottom doesn’t insist that strategic policy planning include religious freedom issues, the “deep-seated skepticism in our foreign-policy establishment that religious freedom is in fact important for individuals and societies” (a skepticism that renews the faux-realist view that religious freedom is not “real foreign policy”) will remain the de facto position.

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The parables on prayer which follow emphasize the need to keep asking in prayer. Abraham is a classic example. He pleads with the Lord twice and then shepherds the Lord.

Farr suggests several structural reasons why. First, the U.S. approach to international religious freedom is a largely ad hoc, annual report. Too many aspects are lists, not speeches, are made of egregious persecutors are published. None of this, however, has much effect on the persecutors.

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Dr. Francis V. Dono

Funeral Mass for Dr. Francis V. Dono, who died Sunday, July 14, was held Thursday, July 18, at St. Alphonsus Church, Columbus. He was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., to the late Vincent and Mary Dono. He was a graduate of Manhattan College in Riverdale, N.Y., and received his doctor of philosophy in 1958 from the College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery in Denver, Iowa. He completed residency programs in obstetrics and gynecology in 1961 and surgery in 1964 at Doctors Hospital in Columbus and was a member of the hospital’s staff until 1962. He was appointed as the hospital’s chief of staff and executive vice president for medical affairs in 1985 and subsequently served as director of medical education and director for patient safety and quality improvement services. He also was teaching in affiliated clinical years.

Survivors include his wife, Marilyn; sons, Francis (Leslie) and David; daughters, Kathleen and Mary; and many grandchildren.

Kathleen Kirwin

Funeral Mass for Kathleen Kirwin, 90, who died Wednesday, July 3, was held Saturday, July 6, at Columbus St. Philip Church. She was preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Catherine Enright; her sister, Mary; and her brother, John; and sisters, Mary and Ann. Survivors include son, Daniel (Karen); daughter, Kathy (Jeschke); and grandchildren, Joseph, Nicholas and Catherine.

Submit Obituaries to: tpuet@colsdiocese.org

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LKKR: Lorraine A., 80, July 15
St. St. Pius X Church, Raymondburg
LORD: John M., 77, July 15
St. Charles Catholic Church, Columbus
LOCH: Edward D., 79, July 20
St. Agnes Church, Columbus
MACK: Samuel A., 85, July 18
St. Joseph Church, Columbus
MAHAN: Charles E., 73, July 14
St. John’s Church, Columbus
MCGIERNAN: Norah, 80, July 2
St. Francis of Assisi Church, Columbus
MCDONALD: Delores, 88, July 12
St. John Bruton Church, Columbus
MEYER, Mary, 67, July 12
St. John the Baptist Church, Columbus
MILLER, Charles W., 93, July 10
St. John the Baptist Church, Columbus
MORAN,James E., 61, July 14
St. John the Baptist Church, Columbus
MORGAN: Louise, 90, July 21
St. Mary Church, Marion
MURPHY, Edna O., 84, July 22
St. Peter Church, Columbus
MYERS: Loyd W., 66, July 23
St. Mary Magdalene Church, Columbus
NORAH: Noreen, 64, July 10
Holy Spirit Church, Columbus
PARKER, William, 82, July 14
St. Joseph Church, Columbus
RICHARDS: Evelyn G., 90, July 14
St. Paul Church, Westerville
ROSHA: Phillip, 78, July 18
St. Mary Church, Marion
SCHNELLER: Joseph A., 92, July 12
Incarnation Church, Louisville, Ky.
SERBA, Ervea, 68, July 15
Our Lady of Peace, Columbus
SHASHAL, Mary Y., 66, July 12
St. Alphonsus Church, Columbus
SHEPHERD: Richard A., 34, July 9
St. Elizabeth Church, Columbus
SKRIST, Lois L., 72, July 17
St. Francis de Sales Church, Newark
SMOCK, Henry E., 68, July 14
Church of the Assumption (Johnstown)
SMITH: Robert G., 82, formerly of Columbus, July 4
St. Agnes Church, Columbus
SNYDER, Joseph, 73, July 15
St. Francis of Assisi Church, Columbus
STOVER, Donald D., 56, July 7
St. John the Baptist Church, Columbus
WILLIAMS: Bridgett, 40, July 20
St. Thomas More Newman Center, Columbus
WILLISON: Charles B., 30, July 11
St. Paul Church, Westerville
WITTKE, Mary, of; Geen Rd., July 3
St. Mary Magdalene Church, Worthington
YOUNG, Daniel K., 77, July 10
St. Joseph Church, Columbus
ZIEGLER, Walter, 77, July 15
And St. St. Pius X Church, Raymondburg

Catholic Times 7/28/13

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Mary, Mother of the Eucharist will be engaging the modern world. They teach in schools all over the United States, in highly rated religious life. Most recently, they made it to the finals of the Game Show Network’s Miss America Show. They have been the featured guests on The Oprah Winfrey Show, The Talk, and have been seen on Fox News and CNN discussing aspects of the Catholic faith and their vocation to live a religious life. Most recently, they made the finals of the Game Show Network’s highly rated American Bible Challenge. And now the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist will be known as recording artists as they release their first album with the Decca record label and De Montfort Music. This debut release of sacred music recorded live from the sisters’ chapel in Ann Arbor, Mich., reflects the Dominican spirituality they share so freely with the popular culture.

“We are thrilled that the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist recorded this enchanting collection of music,” said Kevin Fairbanks, co-founder of De Montfort Music. “To be able to release music reflective of their community is a true privilege. This recording will transport the listener to the gorgeous acoustics in their chapel and will inspire the pervasive joy of their community through their music.”

The sisters’ album, titled Mater Eucharistiae, is to be released Tuesday, Aug. 13, featuring songs in English and Latin and original compositions. Some pieces are accompanied by the organ, trumpet, and drums, while others enjoy the simplicity of a capella. Sister Joseph Andrew, OP, vicar general of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, said “Music has always been part of the daily life of our religious community. It is a most important medium through which we seek to express our deep love and hope of furthering our unique Dominican spirit through the gift of song.” The album’s producer, Blanton Alspaugh, won a Grammy award for 2013 as classical producer of the year “The Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist are a fervent group who are so richly rewarding to work with a choir that works so well together and who share an obvious love for music. We were honored to be invited to help the sisters with this recording and are thrilled to share it now with everyone who hears it.”

Beginning Aug. 15, EWTN will present a 30-minute special on the sisters, including a behind-the-scenes look at the making of their debut recording.

Our Lady of Victory School Reunion at Parish Festival, Saturday, Aug. 10

The laity of denne are coming to an end and school days will begin again soon. Remember those early days of grade school and high school? Gather- ing brand-new school supplies, sharpening your pencils, hemming your uniform skirt or pants, and pressing your crisp white shirts, all in preparation for the first day back at school.

The years rolled by. You moved ahead with your life and lost track of some of your closest school friends. But you never forget those fond memories of your early school years at Columbus Our Lady of Victory School.

There will be a chance to relive those days at the second annual Our Lady of Victory School reunion this Saturday, Aug. 10, the last night of the Our Lady of Victory parish festival. All alumni of the school will receive a commemora- tive button as a remembrance and a way of identifying other alumni as they browse the festival grounds.
CROWDS IN RIO SWARM POPE, WHO WANTED TO BE ‘CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE’

By Francis X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

Hundreds of thousands of cheering people welcomed Pope Francis to Brazil on July 22 as he made the first international trip of his pontificate to his native region of Latin America.

The papal plane touched down at Rio’s international airport at 3:43 p.m. local time. The pope emerged 18 minutes later to cheers from a relatively small group which included a children’s choir.

After exchanging greetings with Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff and other dignitaries for 15 minutes, the pope entered a compact Brazilian-made Fiat Idea for the ride downtown, accompanied by security vehicles and helicopters overhead.

At some points, the motorcade was separated from ordinary rush-hour commuters by nothing more than a median strip. As the pope’s car drew closer to the center, he passed increasingly large groups of people standing, cheering, and waving. About 20 minutes into the ride, clusters of people began pressing against the vehicle, reaching out to touch the pope, and had to be pushed away by the security detail. At one point, the press of crowds brought the vehicle briefly to a standstill, and the pope emerged to kiss a baby.

Apparently attempting to avoid the crowds, the motorcade turned into a stretch of ordinary traffic. Shortly thereafter, the papal car found itself repeatedly stuck between vehicles and crowds. Security officers could be seen vigorously pushing back bystanders who reached out to touch the pope.

The 13.2-mile ride took 44 minutes.

At the city’s cathedral, the pope boarded an open popemobile. Joined by Rio’s Archbishop Orani Tempesta, he made a 25-minute circuit of downtown streets. Crowds contained behind police barriers cheered and waved as confetti rained down on the pope, who occasionally stopped to kiss a baby or small child.

Brazilian Fernando Samapio said he brought his three children -- Miguel, 6, Gabriel, 8, and Pedro, 10 -- to see Pope Francis, and he said he also would take them to World Youth Day events at Copacabana beach. The family also is housing pilgrims from Croatia, France, and Mexico.

Samapio said Pope Francis “wants to renew the church, and I like him because of his humility and concern for the poor.”

Mercedes Maunier, 18, and Emilia Ruiz, 19, of La Plata, Argentina, said they were headed toward the cathedral for the 6 p.m. Mass for Argentines.

“I am very proud to be Argentine at this moment, but I think the pope will help youngsters from the entire world,” said Maunier.

Wanda Araujo, 83, called the visit “a blessing for all of us.”

“We were in need of a ‘people pope,’” she said. “Europeans don’t really know what is like living in Latin America.”

Just days before the trip, Pope Francis made the decision to circulate through downtown Rio de Janeiro so, as Archbishop Tempesta said, the pope could be “close to the people.” The decision exemplified the spontaneity that already has become a trademark quality of Pope Francis’ young pontificate.

According to his original itinerary, the pope would have proceeded directly from the airport to a welcome ceremony in the Guanabara Palace, the office of the governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro, about 12 miles away.

Instead, following the popemobile ride, he rode in the Fiat to a military airfield and boarded a helicopter that took him across the city to his meeting with Rousseff and other officials at the governor’s palace of Rio de Janeiro state. It was before 6 p.m., and lights already were shining in the twilight of the Southern Hemisphere’s winter.

The government has provided heightened security for the papal visit, with more than 28,000 police officers assigned to the week of events, which culminate in the celebrations of World Youth Day.

As the pope toured the city, Brazilian television reported that on the morning of July 21, police found a homemade bomb inside a bathroom at the sanctuary of Our Lady of Aparecida, which the pope was scheduled to visit July 24.

Photo: Pope Francis waves from his popemobile after arriving in Rio de Janeiro on July 22. The pope is making his first trip outside Italy to attend World Youth Day, the international Catholic youth gathering.

CNS photo/Stefano Rellandini, Reuters

DIOCESAN PILGRIMS TO WYD

Among the 2.5 million people attending World Youth Day celebrations in Rio de Janeiro are at least 12 pilgrims from the Diocese of Columbus.

Most are part of a group from the Perry County Consortium of Catholic Parishes which includes six young people from the consortium and is being led by Father James Csaszar, pastor of the four churches in the consortium.

The group also includes Father Dan Dury, pastor of Columbus St. Catharine Church; Father Jonathan Wilson, pastor of Newark Blessed Sacrament Church; and seminarians Anthony Davis and Sean Dooley.

Also in Brazil for the event is Maria Damo, a sophomore at Xavier University in Cincinnati, who is a member of Worthington St. Michael Church. She is part of a contingent from St. Michael Church in Flint, Mich. Arrangements for her to join the group were made with the assistance of Mike Hall, director of the diocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

A report from area World Youth Day participants will be featured in the Aug. 11 Catholic Times.