Action

Summer Camps Blossom
After Spring Conference

Mission Conference
Movies & Social Structure

Holiness in Marriage
Wisdom from Jeanne DeCelles

God's Alive
But Can He Be Filmed?
On July 2, children played and adults relaxed in the heat after enjoying the traditional barbecue at the end of an Action trip in Allendale.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Getting Real

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We’re concerned about practical matters in the People of Praise. Ours is a Christianity of houses, vans, food, money, sickness, healing and forgiveness. We are known for being careful thinkers and for digesting the toughest of books in our seminars and conferences, but we do this because we want to learn how to live.

In a talk called “Holiness in Marriage,” which appears on page 16, Jeanne DeCelles offers the kind of wisdom that comes from living. She speaks of picking up dirty socks, of making five peanut butter sandwiches every morning, of “difficult, irksome sacrifices.” She offers us gems which are unpolished and yet, as she presents them with her characteristic wit, style and grace, they attract.

Jeanne served in many capacities over the years that stretch from 1971, when she was one of 29 founding members of the community, to her death in April. She was a wife, mother, women’s group leader and handmaid, as well as a writer and editor. She edited *New Heaven/New Earth*, a magazine published by the community from 1983 to 1992, and she wrote numerous articles, including some for *Vite & Branches*. Mary Frances Sparrow unearthed her talk on marriage and began passing it around near the time of Jeanne’s death. It seemed fitting to offer Jeanne one more chance to shine brightly on these pages.

In Christ,

SEAN CONNOLLY, Editor
The 113 participants came from our new starts in Shreveport, Indianapolis and Evansville, and included some South Bend and Servant Branch members who work for the community’s program offices. Nick Holovaty led the conference.

The planning team’s objective was for participants to achieve fluency with ten elements that are essential to communities like ours. (I served on the team along with Nick, Nano Farabaugh, Mary Frances Sparrow, Paul DeCelles, Anne Osterhouse, Chris Vieck and David Salmon.) These elements have academic names: ideal, solidarity, function, roles, hierarchy, honor, authority, localism, pluralism, superiority. But the social realities in which they operate are mundane: weddings and funerals, work projects, community meetings of all types, household dinners. How do you bridge the gap between concept and reality?

The subjects of community conferences shift from year to year, but the flow and rhythm of these conferences have largely stayed the same: talks and presentations punctuated by discussions or personal prayer. The subject matter of this conference called for a different strategy. The challenge of learning these abstract social-structure concepts and applying them in concrete situations led the planning team to design a conference with a different rhythm.

The conference was divided into 90-minute sessions, and each session began with a movie clip depicting a social situation. The first clip, from the 1990 film *Avalon*, showed three generations of a family of Polish Jews celebrating Thanksgiving dinner in Baltimore in the early 1950s. The family’s discussion wandered to the mid-1920s when the father of the family stepped off the boat and joined his family in the US. We heard family members arguing about the weather on the day the father arrived. They recalled how they gave ten percent of their income to support him. As a result the father was so well-situated in the new country that he “never had to drink water,” only mineral water or his favorite whiskey! We see younger family members poke fun at older ones and look bored with their stories.

We watched this clip from round tables, where we were seated with our discussion groups. Then we talked about what we had seen and heard in the scene. These discussions stuck to the observable facts, without speculating about character motivations or debating the artistic merits of the movie.

Next up was a short talk, aimed at fleshing out one or two of the ten elements that are essential to communities. For the first session, Peter Coleman (campus division, Indianapolis) explained how all communities have an ideal, that is, a “shared, deeply felt sense about what is good and important.” Habitat for Humanity, for
example, has as their ideal ensuring that everyone has adequate housing. Peter’s talk, like every talk of this conference, lasted no more than 20 minutes.

On the heels of the talk came a 30-minute small-group discussion with a different goal—analyzing the movie scene using the social-structure terminology. For example, someone could point out that the older family members in Avalon appeared to have different ideals than the younger members. The older ones valued giving their money to support a relative who had newly arrived in the country. The younger ones valued making as much money as possible.

We repeated this process ten times over three days: first a 10-minute movie clip; next a 20-minute see-and-hear discussion; then a 20-minute talk; then a 10-minute break; finally a 30-minute analysis discussion.

The movie clips showed a wide variety of social situations: protest marches in Malcolm X and Gandhi, life in a tightly knit Italian neighborhood in Marty, an awkward wedding reception in Last Chance Harvey, life in two traditional families, one Jewish, the other Muslim, in Arranged, the struggles of a dockworkers’ union in On the Waterfront.

Between sessions, we gathered to learn and sing hymns in four-part harmony, an experience that brought joy and unity to the group. The conference also included two prayer meetings with time for prophetic words. At the closing prayer meeting Nick spoke of our call to grow in personal love and affection for one another, pointing out that these social structure elements are tools we can use to love one another better.

The material of the conference was new for many but, perhaps as significantly, the rhythm of the conference created a new atmosphere for learning. The discussions drove the learning, while the talks, though important, took more of a back seat. We spent twice as much time discussing as we did listening to talks, and the discussions spilled over into breaks and meals. As the conference rolled along, an eagerness grew among us to go home and begin looking with new eyes at our real situations, where we can see these elements at work and use our knowledge to strengthen the People of Praise in our new starts and throughout the whole Mississippi Valley.

Peter adds, “I’m so grateful to the founders of the community for seeking out the wisdom we need to be the vibrant community the Lord has called us to be.”
In his memoir *A Distant Grief*, author Kefa Sempangi describes some subtle changes that took place in his prayer times following his move from Uganda to the United States in 1973. Kefa and his family fled the persecutions of the brutal dictator Idi Amin, arriving in Philadelphia, where Kefa became a theology student.

Sempangi recalls a prayer time in Philadelphia about a year after his move: “I was about to get up from my knees when I heard the convicting voice of the Holy Spirit. ‘Kefa, who were you praying for? What is it you wanted? I used to hear the names of children in your prayers, the names of friends and relatives. You prayed for Okelo and Topista, for Dr. K. and Ali, for Nakazi and your father. Now you pray for ‘the orphans,’ for ‘the church’ and your ‘fellow refugees.’”

John Zwerneman says that, like Sempangi, he had many chances to pray for specific people and their needs while he was principal branch coordinator of the South Bend branch. (John concluded his term in October.) He points out that only the PBC is in a position to know about all of the struggles branch members face, including marital problems, child raising difficulties, financial stresses and the like. “When you’re pastoring people, you’re not dealing with an issue, but a person who needs help. You are talking, crying, praying with a real person with a real name. A lot of the time my prayer was focused on praying for the folks in the most trouble and the folks suffering the most.”

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He says the role of PBC also put him in a unique position to see much of the good happening in the branch. “I was deeply moved to find out the secret and unnoticed
ways that people were showing loving kindness to one another, either by serving or almsgiving—all of the quiet saints who every day choose to get up and do love.”

As PBC, John was “a gifted teacher and communicator,” as Craig Lent put it. At one branch meeting, John illustrated the abundant and overflowing life of God by pouring a bottle of red wine into a glass until it overflowed, delighting many in the branch. He introduced new acronyms: the SEH (Spontaneous Eating Happening) and the TDG (Targeted Dessert Giveaway), ideas that reflected his love for the ways good food can build community.

He left a mark on the branch’s anniversary celebrations, creating the branch olympics, an annual competition among the five areas. Most of the contests, which John created each year, had a scriptural or a Trinity School tie-in. There were roles for runners, jumpers, hoppers, skippers, hummers, singers, kazoo-ers, and also for the wiser folks on the sidelines who would know the answers to trivia questions.

He led the branch to a decision to begin sending branch children to Servant Camp rather than to run its own summer camp, as the branch had done for many years. He also led a difficult but ultimately fruitful discussion about the size of wedding receptions and their impact on branch life.

“He always had time for me,” notes Paul Barrett, who served as an area coordinator during John’s tenure. Paul points out that John exemplifies the words found on a plaque inside the home of Clem and Julie Walters: “a good friend: someone you can think out loud with.”

He did this while working the equivalent of two full-time jobs. He rose early, and often drove 40 or 50 miles to serve as a psychiatrist in hospitals throughout northern Indiana. He spent his afternoons and evenings at the branch center, in meetings and on the phone handling PBC-related matters, while also fielding phone calls that came in from the hospitals. He and Amy cared for their five children and took in three of their aging parents. “I look back and don’t know quite how I made it work,” he admits.

John says his life is easier now that he is back to just one full-time job, and yet he is very eager to find new ways to serve the community. He expects to begin some work in the branch relations office in the fall of 2015, and he continues to serve on the community’s board of governors.

He says that he misses his role as pastor and intercessor for people in tough situations. “I do think that there’s a grace associated with the job, and I see that grace now in the new PBC, Rich Was, in how enlivened and energized and creative he is.”
Joel Kibler

Joel Kibler is in Portland now, living in the Brotherhood household that he was part of 17 years ago, before his move to Minnesota and his 12-year run as principal branch coordinator of the community’s largest branch.

He’s freer now than he has been in recent years. This fall he will begin a tour of the community’s branches, making presentations at branch meetings. It’s part of a new assignment he’s accepted from the board of governors to begin a fundraising campaign in support of our mission work in the Mississippi River Valley. For the past few months, Joel’s been leading two young men through a Brotherhood study program, rewriting the program as they go along. He’ll also be giving retreats to the men in the branches in Buffalo and northern Virginia.

Joel still has phone conversations with Bill Wacker and Bob Brickweg (both Servant Branch) to continue developing the Marriage in Christ seminar, and he’s also working alongside Eric Shreves on a new outreach to young men in the Portland area. He still serves on the board of governors.

Tom Caneff, Servant Branch’s current principal branch coordinator, says that, when a concern arose in the branch during Joel’s tenure, Joel “had the energy and the ability to act on it, form a committee and get something done.” During his time as PBC, the branch undertook a property search which eventually led to the construction of the new River Ridge building. On his watch the campus division in Dinkytown grew, and the Action Division as well, and Joel created a 24-hour silent retreat that some 180 branch members have benefited from. He also helped develop the Marriage in Christ seminar, a new branch outreach on the West Side of St. Paul, adult education seminars and efforts aimed at helping older members.

“Joel never put off till tomorrow what he could do today,” recalls fellow Brotherhood member Mike Wacker (Servant Branch). “He knew that urgent situations always come up and he wanted to be ready for them. I would often find him on a Friday night after dinner working on a talk for a community meeting a month away. He used his time well so that he could be available when needed.”

Often, what he was needed for was conversation.

Jim Grill (Servant Branch) remembers telling Joel, his head, that he was losing his job at a company that he had helped to found. He was surprised at Joel’s reaction, “Joel just said, ‘That’s got to hurt. I would encourage you to pray for [the man responsible for the layoff].’” Jim adds, “He immediately pointed me back to the Lord.”

Kati Ritchie (Servant Branch) credits a conversation with Joel with inspiring her to become an icon painter. At the time, she was facing health problems and the recent death of her father. “What am I going to do?,” Kati recalls asking Joel. “Would it give you joy to do icons?” he asked.

Servant Branch’s Chris Milliren, a River Ridge Trinity alumnus who met Joel as a high school student, says, “I wouldn’t be in the People of Praise if it wasn’t for Joel building a relationship with me.” He adds, “I had a really good friendship with Joel, and I felt like he put a lot into it. I slowly realized that I’m not the only guy who feels that way. It’s amazing to me that he had enough time to be so influential in so many people’s lives.”

Tom sat in on years of coordinator meetings with Joel. “We had freewheeling conversations that went back and forth,” Tom says, “discussing issues, agreeing and disagreeing. Joel would steer the conversation and lead it, but he was very collaborative. He knows the Holy Spirit speaks through brothers and sisters.”

“He brought unity to the coordinators,” adds Sam Claassen (Servant Branch), who also got to know Joel well in coordinator meetings. “He was very open to other people’s ideas. He listened to people very well.”

“He spent a lot of time at handmaid meetings asking for our opinions,” adds Jo Zimmel (Servant Branch). “He really wanted to know what we were thinking.”

Joel says that what he misses most about being PBC are the relationships: “I related to people from five years old to 90 years old. I miss the richness, the collaboration with people in leadership in the branch, both men and women. We were able to do a lot together for the Lord and for the brothers and sisters in Servant Branch and for the People of Praise as a whole.”

Lek Kadeli

Dennis Burke is one of Lek Kadeli’s oldest friends. He has known him since the 1970s, when they were students in the New Life youth group at Bishop O’Connell High School in Arlington, VA (where they came into contact with several other future community members). “Lek has encouraged so many people over the years. He has been God’s voice bringing healing to the brokenhearted. He is a steady presence.”

Lek’s 12-year tenure as principal branch coordinator ended in February, but his work for the Lord continues as husband, father, friend and colleague. He says he didn’t think of the role of PBC as a job—it was just one more way to serve his brothers and sisters.

As Frank Bassett points out, “Lek was fond of saying, ‘People in the NOVA branch serve until they are carried out in a casket.’” As PBC, Lek was a leader who “spent many hours behind the scenes meeting with folks who were dealing with serious personal issues or questions about our community life,” Frank says.

Terry Cassell recalls Lek stopping by his house after work to offer advice on a home renovation project that had been puzzling Terry and his wife, Alicia. When Lek spoke, Terry says, “It was as if all indecisiveness had moved out and clarity moved in.”

Lek has always had a heart to serve the young, to befriend the young, to love the young. This desire can be traced back to those years when Lek was a high-school leader in New Life, helping put on retreats, Bible studies and prayer meetings. A few years later, as a college senior, Lek was the youngest person to join the newly formed branch of the People of Praise in northern Virginia. In the 1980s, Lek participated in ACTS (Accept Christ This Summer), a branch evangelization outreach to area college students. Jim Mysliwiec recalls that, in
their years working in ACTS together, he and Lek prayed with 120 people to be baptized in the Spirit, 18 of whom are now covenanted members in the People of Praise. After the relaunch of Action in 2002, Lek became the branch’s first Action coordinator, a role he played until he became PBC.

During Lek’s tenure as PBC, the branch launched an outreach to college students at George Mason University. It grew from two underway students in 2011 to 23 by the end of the 2014/15 school year. In 2012 Nanci Panos rented out the townhouse she had lived in by herself for 15 years so she could buy a much larger house near George Mason together with Tony and Nadia Fraga. That house now serves a household that includes Nanci, Tony and Nadia, the four Fraga children and four college men.

“Lek was very instrumental and supportive to me personally. He met with me to help me sort out my role in Campus, and to give me some realistic guidance to help me determine if moving was indeed what I felt the Lord was calling me to do,” Nanci says.

Bob Pawlosky can picture Lek at Buffalo camp, rising early in the morning to head to a local shop to buy fresh doughnuts for the ninth and tenth grade campers. “In this way, he honored them for their service on work projects around the camp,” Bob said. Lek worked with the ninth and tenth graders side by side throughout the day and stayed up with them well into the night. “His example was one of constancy, diligence and purpose, but if he thought people needed cooling off he had the perfect remedy—into the pond they went!”

Last year, Jim, Dennis and Lek made a three-and-a-half week pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago in Spain, where Jim noticed Lek reaching out to young and old alike. Jim says, “Lek always knows the right question to ask, his ear is always ready to listen, his tongue always ready with a word of encouragement.”

Lek hiked the Camino de Santiago, a medieval pilgrimage trail across Spain last November with Jim Mysliwiec and Dennis Burke.
SONGS, CAMERAS, ACTION!

Photos by Patricia Olson, Jennifer Kenning and Margaret DeCelles

TWO HUNDRED STUDENTS AND ADULTS came to South Bend in April for the first Action conference in three years. They got right to work: preparing activities for summer camps, filming scenes using their smartphones, writing music and planning Action events for the coming school year. Freshman Cameron Huntington summed up the experience: “Never have I seen so many people devoted to what they are doing and focused on God.”

Above, from left: Jim Ingram (Servant Branch), Maria, and John Broxup (Buffalo) enjoyed a moment during the 50 Weeks of Action track at the Action conference.

Page II, top, from left: Grace, Barb Bittner (Servant Branch) and Maddie learned about running People of Praise summer day camps by creating one for children in the South Bend branch on Saturday morning.

Page II, bottom from left: Christian, Peter and Josh worked together to produce a short film in eight hours as part of the video track.

Page 12, top: John Gruber (center, Servant Branch) worked on writing a song with Claire Raway (left, campus division, Indianapolis) and Louise Fossen (Servant Branch) as part of the music track.
Page 12, bottom, from left: Angie, Isabel, Ellen Putzier (Indianapolis CIM) and Callie prepared materials to make braided, beaded headbands at the camp on Saturday morning. Genevieve and Anna are behind them on the right.

Page 13, top: Tom Staffelbach (South Bend) and his group had the idea to provide a large space on a wall for the Saturday campers to be creative.

Page 13, bottom: Elizabeth Grams (South Bend) helped run the video track. In the foreground is the team that produced the video chosen as best of the track. Starting from left clockwise: Joe, Tess, Ruth, Christian, Chris and Stephen.
Marriage is a holy institution. God has instituted it, and its purpose is to provide a means by which we can re-create the earth through procreation, control our natural God-given sexual appetites, and become holy—that is, to know, love and serve God and be happy with him in heaven. It is also a way in which we can help others and, in particular, our husbands, to reach holiness.

I would like to quote from a traditional exhortation given to the couple before marriage. Some of you may have heard this exhortation read at your own marriage.
Dear friends in Christ: as you know, you are about to enter into a union which is most serious, a union which was established by God Himself. By it, He gave to man a share in the greatest work of creation, the work of the continuation of the human race. And in this way He sanctified human love and enabled man and woman to help each other live as children of God, by sharing a common life under His fatherly care.

Because God Himself is thus its author, marriage is of its very nature a holy institution, requiring of those who enter into it a complete and unreserved giving of self. But Christ our Lord added to the holiness of marriage an even deeper meaning and a higher beauty. He referred to the love of marriage to describe His own love for His Church, that is, for the people of God whom He redeemed by His own blood. And so He gave to Christians a new vision of what married life ought to be, a life of self-sacrificing love like His own. It is for this reason that His Apostle St. Paul clearly states that marriage is now and for all time to be considered a great mystery, intimately bound up with the supernatural union of Christ and the Church, which union is also to be its pattern.
This union, then, is most serious, because it will bind you together for life in a relationship so close and so intimate that it will profoundly influence your whole future. That future, with its hopes and disappointments, its successes and its failures, its pleasures and its pains, its joys and its sorrows, is hidden from your eyes. You know that these elements are mingled in every life, and are to be expected in your own. And so, not knowing what is before you, you take each other for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death.

Truly, then, these words are most serious. It is a beautiful tribute to your undoubted faith in each other, that, recognizing their full import, you are nevertheless so willing and ready to pronounce them. And because these words involve such solemn obligations, it is most fitting that you rest the security of your wedded life upon the great principle of self-sacrifice.

And so you begin your married life by the voluntary and complete surrender of your individual lives in the interest of that deeper and wider life which you are to have in common. Henceforth you belong entirely to each other; you will be one in mind, one in heart, and one in affections. And whatever sacrifices you may hereafter be required to make to preserve this common life, always make them generously. Sacrifice is usually difficult and irksome. Only love can make it easy; and perfect love can make it a joy. We are willing to give in proportion as we love. And when love is perfect, the sacrifice is complete. God so loved the world that He gave His Only begotten Son; and the Son so loved us that He gave Himself for our salvation. “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

No greater blessing can come to your married life than pure conjugal love, loyal and true to the end. May, then, this love with which you join your hands and hearts today never fail, but grow deeper and stronger as the years go on. And if true love and the unselfish spirit of perfect sacrifice guide your every action, you can expect the greatest measure of earthly happiness that may be allotted to man in this vale of tears. The rest is in the hands of God. Nor will God be wanting to your needs; He will pledge you the life-long support of His graces in the Holy Sacrament which you are now going to receive.
Recently, at our son’s marriage, this exhortation was read. I was struck by several things:

First, the church reminds us on this wildly joyous occasion—usually an occasion that is a celebration of young love—that it will not always be so. The church tells the couple, you will not always be so young, so handsome and so beautiful. Your life is an unknown to you. You have plans, yes, but your actual life is shrouded in mystery. You cannot know what sorrows, difficulties and pain may be there in the future.

Second, the church gives the pattern for successful marriage, and it has nothing to do with what modern-day psychologists and sex therapists say. The church says that what is needed is sacrifice—irksome, difficult sacrifice. Only love can make it possible, and perfect love can make it a joy.

Sacrifice starts with that unreserved giving of self to the other. The cost of that is great. Self is where my opinions reside. Self is where my desires are number one, where my will reigns supreme.

Sacrifice looks like this: (These are my examples; you will have your own.)

Cooking what he likes, with onions or without, with mushrooms or without.

Spending hours on the dessert he loves, rather than 20 minutes on the one I prefer.

Pushing aside the fatigue of the day in order to make love.

Letting the mess pile up on his bureau because he wants it that way, until cobwebs are growing around the piles of papers.

It’s the decision not to pursue a career, to stay home and make a place for him and for the family. Or the decision to go to work because of financial need when you would prefer to stay home.

It’s picking up the dirty pair of socks every morning at the corner of the dresser, year after year, and finally even thanking God that the socks are still there every morning.

It’s sleeping with the windows closed tightly . . . or open wide.

It’s him never or rarely going fishing or hunting with the guys because you need him at home, or so that you can spend the day out shopping by yourself.

It’s him watching the television programs you like rather than his own favorites.

It’s him smoking his pipe or cigar in the backyard because the smoke bothers you.

It’s sitting up with him when he is sick, or him sitting beside you while you are in labor.
I take you for my lawful husband; I freely choose you, give myself to you and do it in a serious way. By the laws of the church, by the laws of God, and by the secular laws, you will be my husband and I will be your wife. We are not merely playacting as I did when I was a child. This is serious, genuine. I am freely choosing to become a wife to you. By so doing I choose to live my life no longer as an individual with no ties. I submerge my single life into the wider life we will share. I choose to make a place for our life to be lived out, to spend 20 or 25 years establishing, rearing, caring for a family. I take you for my husband, thereby becoming submitted to you in all things as the church is to Christ. To have you, to hold you, to care for you and about you, to put your needs first, to always be ready to be your wife in whatever circumstances, in whatever way you need or want me to be your wife, and I will turn to you as husband for my needs and wants in the same way. I choose to receive from you the care that you have promised to give me and for which you have the grace and the commission, to receive that willingly and joyfully from this day forward.

For better:
The wonderful days of our honeymoon, when it was such a joy to see our clothes hanging together in the same closet; when we realized joyfully that we no longer had to separate every night; when we joyfully found that it was wonderful to enjoy sex together and how grateful we were that we had both saved that wonder for each other; when we talked over and over about who we were, endlessly reveling in finding out more and more about the beloved; when I got sick and he cared for me (I got sick on our honeymoon—not seriously sick, fortunately); when we realized that we were done honeymooning and we wanted to get back to our own apartment and start real life together; laughing about the bed that fell out of the wall in our tiny apartment; laughing because I forgot and put mushrooms in the spaghetti sauce; walking, walking, walking all over Baltimore together; sharing books. Our first separation, when he had to go to California and I had to stay home alone in the apartment (the Lord sent one other couple so that I was not so alone). How joyful I was when he returned. When school started and I could sit in the window and watch for him to come down the hill from the university. Our first quarrel . . . and making up . . . and learning more and more what the other liked—in food, in movies, in books, in lovemaking. We had known each other for seven years but we didn’t really know each other at all!

The day that our first son was born . . . the agony of waiting to see him afterward . . . never was waiting so hard . . . and how excited I was. I told him that I wanted another one, ASAP! And we did, 12 ½ months later!

In some form, each of us has spoken the following vows:

I, Jeanne, take you, Paul, for my lawful husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part.

Jeanne helped organize the first several leaders’ conferences for women. This is from the 1989 conference, held at Greenlawn.
The places we have seen together: the Alps, Jerusalem, the beautiful view of Toledo, Spain, at sunset, Mont Blanc in the brilliant sunlight, Lake Michigan at dawn, at sunset, at high noon, the cathedrals of Italy, Spain, Germany.

The birth of our second son.

The birth of our first daughter.

The birth of our second daughter and third son, all healthy, all beautiful. The joy of knowing I was pregnant again . . . and the joy of knowing that I was not pregnant again!

**For worse:**
The terribly painful infection I had that first summer.
The awful morning sickness with my first pregnancy, and how hard it was to make five PB&J sandwiches every morning for him. The tiny stove with the funny thermostat (warm, hot, very hot). The funny little refrigerators that came up to mid-calf or mid-thigh, all defrosting at 2:30 a.m. on Thursdays, ready or not! The night the casserole of hot dogs and sauerkraut slid out of the stove and onto the kitchen floor and I cried (being large with child) and he said without a moment’s hesitation, “We’ll go out for dinner,” and we only had about $150 a month to live on! The night we spent our last nickel to satisfy my craving for a candy bar.

His mother’s visit that lasted a lot longer than expected, and it was so hot and humid in that tiny apartment, and I was so pregnant.

The child with allergies, who was up nights upon nights, gasping for breath.

The 10 moves in 11 years.

The day his mother died, the day my father died, the long weeks of suffering before my brother died.

The pain of children’s disappointments.

The pain of children hurting us, sitting up at night waiting for them to get in, worrying about them being out in the car, being afraid for them in a thousand and one different situations. Playing gin rummy on the bed together and saying to ourselves, Why did we say that she could stay out until 3:00 in the morning for those after-prom parties?

**For richer and for poorer:**
A tiny one-room apartment, furnished with funny old furniture, six floors up with cockroaches running around, thousands of them!

Finding a check for $150 smashed up in the back of the desk where we had forgotten it! That is RICH!

Crying when I broke a bottle of catsup, because it was such a luxury. Our first Valentine’s Day together, when I gave him a beanbag ashtray and I made the best chocolate cake with seven-minute icing I have ever made before or since! Rolling out pie dough with a round milk bottle since we didn’t own a rolling pin. Running our coffeepot twice with the same grounds. The two hilariously funny maternity dresses I bought out of a cheap catalogue, which were ugly, ugly, ugly! Our first unfurnished apartment—we bought all used furniture and we still have some of it. He bought a braided rug we could not afford, just because he knew how much it meant to me. Being without a single extra penny ever, and never, never feeling POOR!

**In sickness and in health:**
The Asian flu—taking one another’s temps to see whose was the lowest so that one of us could get up and feed the baby, who got his first tooth during that siege!

The terrible episode of pain I had during the first pregnancy.

Rushing to the emergency room with children with split lips, chins, skulls, knocked-out teeth and allergies requiring adrenalin.

Checking Paul Jr. out of the hospital and driving home through a late-night blizzard because they were not caring for him properly at the hospital.

Raging fevers that always seemed to happen in the middle of the night, usually on Christmas Eve, and whenever Paul was out of town.

Jeannette’s fever which caused a minor seizure (and Paul was out of town).

Jeannette’s accident in which she almost died.

Mary Frances, three years old and very, very sick.

Peter eating the deodorant cake out of a diaper pail.

John—so sick—and then miraculously healed.

The illnesses of friends . . . the pain of the death of friends.

[Photo: Courtesty of People of Praise Archives.]

Paul and Jeanne at the 1984 Notre Dame Catholic charismatic conference. Sharon Sklorenko (South Bend) sat behind Jeanne, and Bob Linczer (Oahu) behind Paul.
Till death do us part:
I have not yet had to live up to that part of my vow, but I want to read to you some words of a sister, Jackie Curran, who has lived that in her marriage.

At one point the doctor told me, “I’m just trying to keep him alive until all the children get here.”

The Lord did make it possible for every one of our ten children to be with their dad before he died.

He blessed us as never before in our children. How proud we were of them. What a joy to see the growth in them, and how much we could depend on each one of them. Whenever I am angry with one of them now, I just need to remember that experience.

The Lord was also with me in all the small sufferings which I usually find harder to bear than the big things. The Lord healed the inevitable little daily hurts and misunderstandings. He healed any unhappy memory I had from our nearly 29 years of married life. He gifted me with a love for John which was truly deeper in sickness than in health. At that time, qualities which used to irritate me terribly suddenly seemed absolutely charming. When John was on the respirator unable to tell us what he wanted or needed, I realized that I didn’t always know what he was thinking and that I had probably misjudged him many times. I wasn’t heartbroken, just genuinely contrite. The Lord forgave me, as I’m sure John did too. Since that time it has been easier for me to refrain from judging other people.

In his teachings, John had often spoken freely of “laying down our lives for the Lord.” What a great grace it was when we asked if he wanted us to continue praying for a miracle and he nodded his head yes; then we asked if he was ready to lay down his life for the Lord, and again he nodded yes. What an immense blessing to know that John had accepted the Lord’s plan for him.

The Lord gave us the faith to believe that it truly could have gone either way, for “Nothing is impossible with God.” He answered our prayers for physical healings for others and he could have healed John too, but it was John’s time to die. Again, what a blessing to see that he was ready, to hope that the person you love most in the world is with God.
How do you love your husband well?

**Encouragement**

Tell him he looks good (and make sure that he does!). Thank him for everything he does, large and small. Spend time thinking about all the good things he has done over the years

**Support him**

Make it easy for him to do what God is calling him to do.

When Paul was a professor at Notre Dame, there were lots of demands on his time, but it wasn’t until the Lord entered our life that there was any tension about this. Because after that he was doing both: working at Notre Dame as a professor as well as serving the Lord in about 15 different ways. And I remember that I sometimes used to make it very hard on him. One thing that we need to remember, sisters, is that we are very powerful in this area: we really can wear him down. You can get your own way about almost anything.

I remember one time when he had been out a lot—and it was either right after our last baby or right before—and I was just wallowing in self-pity. There’s a way when your husband is just walking out the door that you can make him feel just absolutely miserable for doing it. And at one point in the conversation, it was like all life went out of him and he said, “You win. I’ll stop everything—the deacon training program, the Cursillo, building community.” He listed everything he was involved in except for his job and he said, “I’ll just quit.” I experienced great peace. It was as though God had lifted a million pounds off my back and I floated around. The next day, I was walking around in the backyard and the Lord nailed me. It had been a very false peace. It was a peace that only the enemy can give you.

You’ve got to be careful. You can wear your husband down. This doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t make your needs known to him, that you shouldn’t make input about how things are going with the children, with yourself, with the house. I’m not talking about being a doormat. But I am talking about the fact that we need to remember, sisters, is that we are very powerful in this area: we really can wear him down. You can get your own way about almost anything.

When you have blown it, repent and seek forgiveness and reconciliation. Learn to keep your mouth shut when he is disciplining the children instead of always undercutting him. If there is something he doesn’t know about, you can point that out to him later.

Support his headship of the household, of you and of the children. Don’t always have a better way to do everything (even if you do have a better way to do everything).

Give honest input. Don’t just shove it all down inside and say nothing and be a wonderful martyr. Tell him what you think about things, make your input, but let him make the decisions, and support them once they are made. If you only submit properly when you’re positive that he is absolutely right then you might as well not submit at all. I could tell you lots of stories when I have been positively, beyond a shadow of a doubt, completely certain that Paul was wrong about something and either he turned out to be right or God just blessed him because he was willing to be a head.

If a man lays down his life in this way, God is going to bless him, and he’s going to cover a lot of his mistakes if he does make mistakes. God really will protect both of you if you’re doing it the right way.

**Be affectionate**

If you ever pick up Mother Earth magazine, you’ll see their a section of personal ads, people looking for partners. Sometimes they are looking for a marriage partner, sometimes they are just looking for a partner, but in almost every case when it’s a man looking for a woman, what they mention is not good looks but affection, not sex but affection. So be affectionate, give lots of hugs.

**Is there trouble in your marriage?**

Most marriages have their share of difficulties and adjustments, but if you’re having a really serious problem in your marriage talk it over. And if you need to get some help, go to a coordinator and ask if you can talk to a handmaid or to a woman in the branch who could help you.

**Share in Women’s Group**

Learn how to share about your marriage in your women’s group in a way that never, never, never makes him appear less in their eyes.

**Practice hope**

Practice hope if there’s trouble, and then practice hope again, and then practice hope again.

**Children**

I have not talked much about children. There is not time here to say much, except that children are one of the blessings of marriage, but they will also be part of the pain in marriage. It is important that we love them, that we be affectionate with them. If I could do
May Almighty God bless you by the word of his mouth and unite your hearts in the enduring bond of pure love. May you be blessed in your children, and may the love that you lavish on them be returned a hundredfold. May the peace of Christ dwell always in your hearts and in your home, and may you have true friends to stand by you in joy and in sorrow. May you be ready with help and consolation for all those who come to you in need, and may the blessings promised to the compassionate descend in abundance on your home. May you be blessed in your work and enjoy its fruits. May cares never cause you distress, nor the desire for earthly possessions lead you astray: but may your hearts’ concern be always for the treasures laid up for you in the life of heaven. May the Lord grant you fullness of years, so that you may reap the harvest of a good life, and after you have served him with loyalty in his kingdom on earth, may he take you up into his eternal dominions in heaven, through our Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, who lives and reigns with him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

one thing different with my children it would be not to yell at them and to be more affectionate with them. It is important to train them, to discipline them, and to raise them up to be men and women of God. They should not be the center of our existence—God alone deserves that place. We can either put them too far away from us or we can make them everything, and both attitudes are wrong. They can be olive plants around your table, as Scripture says, or they can be poison ivy. It’s up to you. Knowing when to say “no” and when to say “yes” is hard. You’ll make a lot of mistakes. I made millions. You have to do your best and leave the rest to God, trusting that he loves them far more and better than we do!

Finally, stay close to the source of holiness in marriage: God himself. God knows all about marriage, all about sex, all about children. The marriage will be as holy as the two people who enter into it. If you stay close to God, if you stay close to his word and if you are faithful to prayer, then there will be holiness in marriage even if it’s not the happiest marriage in the world. It is the way that you have chosen and do not kid yourself that you should have gone off and been a cloistered nun somewhere because things aren’t going so well! Don’t take marriage for granted. It is not easy, it requires work and sacrifice. But God will not be outdone in generosity. If you give a little he will give more; if you give more, he will give still more; if you give it all you have, he will give you himself. He will dwell in your marriage, even a difficult marriage. And if God dwells in your marriage, that is everything. Marriage is not two people looking at each other; it is two people turned toward the Father, living in the fellowship of Jesus and in the power of the Spirit.

At my marriage and at many of our marriages, the celebrant said a blessing over us. I want to read that blessing.

Paul and Jeanne’s five children threw them a surprise party to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary in 1981. Paul, Jr., is on Jeanne’s right; Peter on her left. Mary Frances (northern Virginia) is on the far left of the photo and Jeannette to her side. John (South Bend) is not in the picture.
CAN GOD BE FILMED?

by Joe Gleason

Editor’s Note: Joe Gleason is the director of Greenlawn Films, which is part of the People of Praise’s communications office.

Imagine that you’re entering a funhouse full of mirrors, surrounded by reflections of yourself, but the mirrors are curved, so the reflections are distorted. It’s tricky to find your way without bumping into the mirrors. Reality becomes hard to distinguish from so many illusions.

That’s how I often feel watching movies. They can be like funhouse mirrors—warped reflections of reality with certain features grotesquely exaggerated and others shrunk to the size of a pinhead. They can make it difficult to distinguish reality from illusion. If I watch enough of them, I might start to wonder who’s living in the real world: the movie characters or me?

According to the majority of recent movies I’ve seen, God is not part of the real world. This isn’t communicated through argument, just through screen time. God is not a character in the story.

But it isn’t only God who gets ignored. Many aspects of reality are absent.

I recently watched a movie called God’s Not Dead. It’s a low-budget drama about a college freshman making the case to his philosophy class, taught by an aggressively atheist professor, that God is not dead.

Artistically speaking, I objected to many elements of the film. I was distracted by its technical shortcomings. I disagreed with elements of its theology.

But you know what else I saw in the movie? I saw Christians laying hands on someone. I saw a college guy looking up Scripture passages. I saw students discussing morality in the cafeteria. In other words, I saw normal Christian life; the stuff of our everyday lives that’s so rarely reflected onscreen.

There’s a scene in another film, The Tree of Life, in which the director, Terrence Malick, gets the mirror as flat as I’ve ever seen it. In this scene, there’s no need to claim that God is not dead, because he shows up on-screen alive. He’s a character with an active role.

The scene opens with a boy, Jack, kneeling beside his bed. He looks antsy as he lists off his intentions. “Help me not to sass my dad. Help me not to get dogs in fights. Help me be thankful for everything I got.”

He closes his mouth, but we hear him whisper, “Where do you live?”

He looks out the window, muttering, “Help me not to tell lies . . .”

We’re suddenly gliding through a playground in the late afternoon, full of children running and playing.

“Are you watching me? I want to know what you are. I want to see what you see.”

In this scene, there’s no need to claim that God is not dead, because he shows up on-screen alive.

We approach Jack from behind as he plays, then float upwards toward the trees and the setting sun.

When I saw this, I thought, I know what you’re talking about! I’ve had that prayer time! By watching someone else pray, I could see my own prayer more clearly. It also gave me insight into how God might experience my prayer.

God is a character in this scene. He does things. He listens. Those whispers—we are hearing what God hears! We watch—whose perspective are we seeing this scene from? God’s perspective! He speaks—Jack can’t understand it, nor do I, but he is speaking. It’s unclear if the shot on the playground is Jack’s mind wandering or if it’s God’s response to what he sees: I see you! And you are wonderful.

These films are hardly comparable, except that they both had moments when I saw the mirror angled in a way that brought reflections of reality closer to their proper proportions. They helped me to see reality more clearly.

It got me thinking, what else gets shrunk to nothing? What is the stuff of our lives that rarely shows up onscreen? What are our practices that are so common that we forget to notice them? A few things that jump to mind are household morning prayer, the words, “I forgive you,” headship, asking Geoff Kelleher to help you with your car if you live in the South Bend branch, Lord’s Day dinners, birthday honorings. What is the stuff of your life?

And what would it look like to film it?
Kathy Freeman (Vancouver-Portland) gets frequent requests for this easy recipe which she uses at showers, brunches and special family occasions. “It’s a dish that looks like it would take a lot of time but is really very easy, anytime you want to do something ahead of time and pop in the oven the day of,” says Kathy.
“Also, it’s a really pretty dish with the blueberries bursting, the bread slightly toasted and the creamy melted cream cheese. You top with maple syrup or the blueberry sauce, and it just tastes darn good! People go back for seconds.”

“I generally use fresh bread, but day old is fine,” Kathy adds. “I really think challah is the best. You just want to make sure once you add the custard mix that you push down the bread so that all gets soaked with the custard and keep it covered for the first 30 minutes of baking so the top bread doesn’t get too brown.”

Kathy usually serves it with fruit and either bacon or sausage.

**BLUEBERRY FRENCH TOAST**

**Ingredients**
- One loaf french bread or challah, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 8 oz. package cream cheese, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 12 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups half and half
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/3 cup maple syrup

**Directions**

1. Lightly grease a 9x13-inch baking dish and layer ingredients inside, in the following order: half of the bread cubes, followed by cream cheese cubes, then blueberries, and topped with remaining bread cubes.

2. In a large bowl, mix the eggs, cream, vanilla and maple syrup and pour mixture over bread cubes. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

3. Remove from refrigerator about 30 minutes before baking and preheat oven to 350 degrees.

4. Cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes.

5. Uncover and continue baking for 25-30 minutes (center will be firm and surface lightly browned).

Serve with warm maple syrup or the blueberry sauce below.

**Blueberry Sauce**

In a medium saucepan, mix 1 cup sugar, 2 tablespoons cornstarch and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil. Stir constantly for 3-4 minutes. Add 1 cup blueberries, reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes until the blueberries burst. Stir in 1 tablespoon butter.

**RESIST THE DEVIL**

**Conquering Envy**

By Charles Harris, C.S.C.

Envy is a sin against that charity which sincerely desires the other’s good. Its antidotes are contentment with one’s own lot and admiration of one’s neighbor, the ability to rejoice when good comes to another.

The Christian seeking to root out envy must cultivate contentment and gratitude to God for the goodness in himself and the goodness he receives as a gift. Realistic expectations help foster such contentment: a person who does not excel in every area is not thereby a failure. God expects faithfulness and diligence; he does not castigate the servant for starting with fewer talents but he is angry when the servant fails to use the talent he has to further his Master’s kingdom (Mt. 25:14-30). Christians must also remember that the Lord guarantees only treasure in heaven; on earth their greatest honor is to share the reproach which came to him (Jn. 15:18-21). The saints provide many examples of this godly contentment in which there is great gain (1 Tim. 6:6). As St. Paul puts it:

Not that I complain of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me (Ph. 4:11-13).

Besides contentment with his own lot, the Christian seeking to overcome envy would do well to admire and honor others for their achievements and to rejoice actively in their good fortune: “Outdo one another in showing honor. . . . Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:10, 15).

Resist the Devil: A Pastoral Guide to Deliverance Prayer is out of print, but the full text is available as a pdf in the People of Praise File Library. To access it, go to https://peopleofpraise.org/file-library/authors/17/.
TRIBUTES

CHUCK TYCHSEN
By Laurie Magill

Anyone who knew my father knew he loved to tell stories: of his courtship of my mom, his 28 years in the Air Force, serving stateside during WWII and in Japan during the Korean Conflict, his 30-year successful college teaching career. His keen sense of humor and good cheer allowed him to laugh humbly at himself. That humility stood out, given his accomplishments: finishing Princeton with honors at 20 (as a freshman, he fell off his bicycle to avoid hitting a pedestrian—it was Einstein) and earning three master’s degrees—plus his CPA at age 70!

Dad met Bette after college when he was an Army Air Corps liaison. After becoming involved in parish charismatic prayer meetings, they joined the northern Virginia branch in 1983. Tom Granahan recalls, “Chuck taught me how to share my life situations deeply, in a manly way. His impact on me as a husband, father and grandfather was truly extraordinary.” My parents opened their home in northern Virginia with legendary hospitality: for bridal and baby showers, Lord’s Days, singles’ dinners, community visitors and household. Pat Baldwin remarks, “In a book chronicling our branch’s history, Chuck and Bette would deserve a special chapter because of their incredible hospitality.”

In 1999 they were transferred to South Bend, and loved being near family and community neighbors. As his health declined, Dad always welcomed visitors and opportunities to be prayed with. The evening he died, he was surrounded by three daughters and a granddaughter, praying him into the kingdom, with peace and gratitude to the Lord.

facts

• Chuck was born October 28, 1922, and died December 23, 2014.
• He married Bette Dunlevy May 18, 1945, and they raised eight daughters and one son.
• Chuck and Bette made the covenant of the People of Praise March 31, 1985.
• Family members in the People of Praise include four of their children (Kim DeCelles, Julie Rubio, Lisa Tychsen and Laurie Magill) and five grandchildren (Matt Rubio, Elizabeth Rubio, Claire Rubio, Jacqueline Magill and Andre Magill).

TONY LANGENFELD, SR.
By Paul Langenfeld

My dad led by example, and he tried to set a very high standard for those around him. He’s the only person I know to screech the car brakes stopping for a yellow light. He never spoke a foul word or consumed alcohol, even in moderation.

When he was 12, his job in cold weather was to ride a horse from the family farm to start the wood-burning stove in the one-room schoolhouse so it would be warm when everyone else arrived.

In his twenties, Dad saved the lives of several people whose car crashed, leaving sparking, high-voltage wires lying across the vehicle. They panicked and wanted to get out, but with his courage and leadership Dad convinced them to stay safely inside until help arrived.

But even more than people’s lives, Dad cared about their souls. His life had one primary, steadfast focus. He wanted to teach people about God, and help them to know him and to love him. This was clear in his work as a volunteer at church, in catechism classes, at prayer meetings, in raising a family, and even in his last years at Regina Nursing Home, where he was playing the accordion and singing Christmas carols for the other residents a week before his death. He never lost sight of this mission of bringing people to God, and he continued in that role with a passion . . . the passion of a saint.

facts

• Tony was born January 18, 1926, in Vermillion, Minnesota, and died December 23, 2014, in Hastings after 89 years of service to the Lord.
• Tony and Elizabeth Kostelnik were married January 2, 1961, at Saint Boniface Catholic Church in Hastings, and they raised five children. My mother and I are also members of Servant Branch.
• He served in the US Army during WWII, stationed in the Philippines, and later worked as a regional salesman for Nature’s Plant Food Company.
• Tony and Elizabeth made the covenant of the People of Praise March 31, 1991.
JEANNE DECELLES
By Tom Noe

Jeanne was one of the first women leaders in the US Cursillo retreat movement, an early leader in the Catholic charismatic renewal, an activist in right to life causes, publisher of the community’s New Heaven/New Earth national magazine, and for many years a handmaid with wide and far-reaching influence on our community teachings and our pastoral practice. Yet her most pervasive impact occurred in person, by her simple presence, in the small, day-after-day decisions she made in and for her family, as well as among her brothers and sisters. Jeanne followed God’s will, guided by his powerful grace and her own immense focus and clarity of purpose. Did anyone know her to shirk from serving, especially on behalf of those who were sick or in distress? No, she served constantly, creatively, with the confidence of a nurse and with the heart and the exquisite smile of a mother.

Often a whirlwind of energy, she even walked down the halls at Greenlawn fast. She was courageous, and could tackle the most distressing pastoral situation with a direct and sincere confidence that God would do as he had always done, bring the best out of the worst. In one moment she could generate a sparkle across a whole room, and in the next moment she’d be settled down in a far corner, listening, leaning in close for an intense one-on-one.

On a personal note, when I was in household with her she changed my life, and a lot of us could say the same thing.

facts
• Jeanne Cross was born December 26, 1933, and met Paul DeCelles in high school after her family moved to Kansas City, Missouri.
• Paul and Jeanne were married June 16, 1956, and raised five children. Also members of the community are their children Mary Frances Loughran and John DeCelles, and grandchildren Sarah Loughran and Michaela Loughran.
• As one of the founding members of the community, Jeanne made the covenant of the People of Praise a moment after Paul did, on the night of October 15, 1971.
• She died April 17, 2015, in South Bend, after a long illness.

LEO ROBERT SHERPA
By Mark Elio

Our brother Lee was an active, enthusiastic and multidimensional individual whose life was always outwardly focused and directed by the Lord, whom he loved and served vigorously and faithfully. Because of his patriarchal presence, Lee was affectionately known as “the don” by the brothers in the branch, and loved by all.

After military service, Lee formed the Lee Sherpa Trio and Quartet and played trumpet and drums with Gene Krupa, Harry James, Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman and Frank Sinatra. Over the years, Lee also taught music. (He had a firm desire to instruct students in “real music.”)

Lee always delighted in the exuberance of the branch children. Lee and Gen invited them over for special occasions, such as the Fourth of July fireworks display, viewed from the Sherpas’ high-rise apartment balcony. Lee was also an adamant Miami Dolphins fan and would proudly display a photo taken of him with quarterback Dan Marino.

Every thing in Lee’s life was focused on the Lord and on his deep, abiding relationship with his wife of 71 years, Gen.

In every endeavor, serving as Christ’s ambassador was Lee’s primary purpose in life. He especially took his responsibilities as a permanent deacon very seriously, as he provided Communion services to the elderly and shut-ins. He was a great model of a Christian husband, father and friend to all of his brothers and sisters in the branch, and is profoundly missed by all. Be at peace in the kingdom, brother Lee!

facts
• Lee served in the US Navy during World War II and played in the Navy and Army Band. He was the first permanent deacon ordained in the Catholic Diocese of Colorado Springs, serving for 22 years.
• Lee and his wife, Gen, came underway in Colorado Springs early in 2001, and made the covenant September 15, 2002.
Births:
Welcome to our youngest brothers and sisters in the community:
Bennett Tin Yun, born January 25 to Rachele (Saskatoon) and Clement Ng.
Marya Lucy, born February 13 to Nathan and Miriam Hollenbeck (northern Virginia).
John-Thomas Eric, born March 23 to John and Paige Shaw (Indianapolis).
Cecilia Ann, born April 11 to Bryan and Monica Thompson (Corvallis).
Sarah Emily, born April 15 to Lisa (Vancouver-Portland) and Mick Brady.
Kateri Marie, born April 21 and adopted by Justin and Cathy Walters (Indianapolis CIM).
Gabriel Edmundson, born April 22 to Dave and Maggie Temeles (northern Virginia).
Juniper Martin, born June 9 to J-T and Hannah Kelly (Indianapolis CIM).
Weddings:
Best wishes to John Bowar and Colleen Murray (both Allendale CIM), who were married March 28 the Cathedral of St. John Berchmans in Shreveport.
Congratulations to David Mattingly and Laura Gleason (both South Bend), who were married June 20 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in South Bend.

Anniversaries:
Pete and Monica Wolney (Servant Branch), 30 years on April 20.
Pete and Mary Lu Barrett (Servant Branch), 35 years on May 9.
Brian and Beth Couch (South Bend), 30 years on May 23.
Hugh and Joni Springer (Servant Branch), 35 years on May 24.
Bob and Eileen Cramer (South Bend), 25 years on May 26.
Tom and Lynda Seasly (South Bend), 30 years on June 1.
John and Claire Kurdelak (South Bend), 15 years on June 3.

Retirements:
Congratulations to Roy Somerville (South Bend), who retired in July, 2014, after 32 years with the Office of Information Technologies at Notre Dame.
Congratulations and best wishes to Irene Mead (South Bend), who retired at the end of December after over 29 years of work for the community’s LaSalle Company.
Best wishes to Jim Rolland (Servant Branch) who retired this spring after 19 years teaching music, art history, medieval history, German and other courses at Trinity School at River Ridge.
Jodi Engles (South Bend) is retiring this summer after a 35-year teaching career, which included time serving as a literacy coach and curriculum writer. She was the South Bend school system’s Teacher of the Year in 1999.
Ruth Sanford (South Bend) recently retired from Trinity School at Greenlawn, where she taught for 29 years, served as dean of girls for a number of years and at one point ran the school’s tutorial program.
Jo Zimmel (Servant Branch) is retiring from teaching after 18 years at Garlough Environmental Magnet School in West St. Paul. A physical education teacher, Jo was one of five nominees from Minnesota for LifeChanger of the Year, an award presented by National Life Group.

Graduations:
Congratulations to these brothers and sisters who graduated this spring:
Hana Shin (Indianapolis), B.S. in biology, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis.

Amy Cramer (Indianapolis), B.S.W. (social work), Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis.

Anne Raway (Indianapolis), B.A. in philosophy, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis.

Mrika Kadeli (northern Virginia), B.S. in public health, George Mason University.

Martha Olson (Vancouver-Portland), B.S. in mathematics, B.S. in physics, University of Portland.

Patrick Gaffney (Servant Branch), B.A. in English and history, University of Minnesota.

Joan Mattimore (Indianapolis), B.S. in medical ethics, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis.

Laura Brummer (Allendale CIM), associate degree in applied science, occupational therapy assistant, Bossier Parish Community College (December).

Work and Achievements:
Sheila Timler (South Bend), Mary Clare Luckjohn (Servant Branch), Christine Gaffney (South Bend) and Mary Durand (northern Virginia) recently started a blog, “Uncommon Motherhood” (uncommonmotherhood.wordpress.com), which addresses the question, “What does motherhood look like when we put Jesus in charge of our lives?”

Jim Winner (northern Virginia) was selected to serve on the board of directors for Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce.

Alanna Crimmins (northern Virginia) was one of two George Mason University students recognized for academic excellence by the school’s Department of English Literature with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes Academic Achievement Award.

Kati Ritchie (Servant Branch) recently allowed several of her icons to be reproduced to raise money for Action. About $2,500 has been raised so far.

On May 3, David Smith (Servant Branch), a Roman Catholic priest and professor emeritus of theology at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, was honored at a reception by the school’s Department of Justice and Peace Studies, which he founded 30 years ago.

Angie Hass (Indianapolis CIM) started a new job in May as an independent living advocate for AccessAbility, assisting blind and visually impaired persons over 55 to live independently.

Deaths:
We’ve received word of the deaths of these members of the People of Praise. We pray for their families and friends in this time of loss.

Jeanne DeCelles, (South Bend) died on April 17, 2015. Jeanne was a founding member of the People of Praise, and a tribute article is on page 27.

Colin LaVergne, Servant Branch, died June 25, 2015. A tribute article will follow in an upcoming issue.

Executive Office Announcements:
On March 16, 2015, the board of governors confirmed the appointment of Abe Olson (Indianapolis CIM) as a mission coordinator. Mission coordinators have an indefinite term of office.

On April 23, 2015, the board of governors authorized the appointment of Dan Brewer (South Bend) as legal general counsel for the community and for People of Praise, Inc.

On June 11, 2015, the board of governors elected Craig Lent to a second term of office as overall coordinator. The new term, which begins on November 3, 2015, will last for six years.

Muncie:
Gerald and Linda Wright were released from the covenant of the People of Praise on July 6, 2015.

South Bend:
Art and Julie Wang were released from the covenant of the People of Praise on March 10, 2015.
As Carrie Gouveia lay dying from a chronic illness in a Hawaii hospital in 2006, her covenanted brother Tom Duddy made her a promise. “I told her she didn’t have to worry about her husband Ron, that I would always watch out for him,” Tom says.

The Gouveias and the Duddys had been in community together since the early 1980s. After Carrie’s death, they began looking for more ways they could share their lives. They considered moving together into Ron’s spacious home, but there were obstacles and they eventually shelved that idea. They shared Lord’s Day celebrations, holidays, weekly dinners, family gatherings, and they all wanted more, but the 20-minute drive between their houses always posed a basic, practical problem.

Then, in May, 2014, Tom heard an off-hand comment from his neighbor: he was planning to move and the townhouse he was renting would be going on the market. It was unit #16, one unit down from the Duddys in the same building.

Tom thought of Ron.

They spoke the next day, and Ron resolved to pray about buying the townhouse. He wasn’t moving, so he had plenty to consider. His adult son, Jonathan, lived with him and had a great attachment to their house.

Two days later, as Ron recalls, “It occurred to me that I could be discerning while the townhouse could be selling!” as Ron recalls. He decided to call the owner, a former community member who had moved away from the island.

After Ron expressed interest, the owner said, “I want you to have it.”

Ten minutes later, the owner’s realtor called and said he was under orders to sell the townhouse to Ron.

This is a little quicker than what I had in mind, Ron told the Lord.

A few days later, he brought Jonathan, along with his daughter, Sharon, to check out the condo unit. Jonathan expressed some doubts, and Ron assured him that they wouldn’t be moving without his agreement.

Later that night, Jonathan came to talk to Ron. “Dad, I don’t pray often, but I just prayed, and I said to God, ‘I want to be peaceful in being open to this move.’ I want to tell you that I’m open to moving, if that’s what we should do.”

“When I got that ‘yes,’ I knew the Lord was really serious about it,” Ron says. “By Sunday night, I knew it was what I wanted to do.”

The next Monday, Ron made an offer on the condo—for less than the asking price.

The owner called Ron the next day. “I’m saying ‘yes’ because it’s you.”

“In Hawaii, houses regularly go for more than the list price,” Tom says, “so it was the Lord’s generosity, and the former owner’s generosity, to accept his offer.”

Ron signed a purchase agreement on May 27, 10 days after Tom first learned the condo was going on the market. Then, in another twist, Ron was able to pass on his home to Sharon and her family. He moved into the townhouse in November.

Since then, common life has come much more easily. The two households share cars. They begin each Lord’s Day with prayers at Ron’s place and then proceed to the Duddys’ for dinner. Tom schedules regular movie nights with Jonathan, and Tom and Mary’s grandson, who lives with them, often stops in to visit Ron after school.

“It’s a far greater impact on our lives than we expected. You just don’t realize until you live really close to someone how many opportunities it provides,” says Tom.

“I love it!” says Ron. “What can I say? It’s just the Lord from beginning to end!”

**You just don’t realize until you live really close to someone how many opportunities it provides.**

by Elizabeth Grams
Community Gardens

Top left: Liz Meehan (New Orleans) likes to pray on her front porch, where she can see her red gladiolas—reminders of her family home destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

Top center: Behind Christine Barnitz (New Orleans) are a pine tree and red lilies, four o’clocks, ferns, palmettos, palm trees and a cedar tree.

Top right: A small section of Ruthanne Seitz’s garden (and the Seitzes’ car) on Yale Street in Allendale.

Middle left: Prizewinning bromeliad-grower Ed Konczeski (Tampa) checks the progress of the bromeliad he rooted for fellow branch member Bonnie Folvarcik.

Middle: Susan Weilbacher (Tampa) has grown thousands of beautiful flowers in her garden over the years. Here is something different that caught her attention one day: a common brown anole lizard.

Middle right: Phil Ehemann (Colorado Springs) with his hydrangeas.

Bottom left: In addition to a hill full of hostas, Joni Springer has flowers all around the outside of her Burnsville, MN, house, including morning glories, daisies and these lilies.

Bottom center: Phil Ehemann keeps a garden of succulents, a type of plant that stores water internally so that it can live in areas where water is scarce.

Bottom right: Fruit trees in Christine Barnitz’s garden.
“Israel shall blossom . . . and fill the whole world with fruit” (Is. 27:6).