



Laetare Medal awardee announced

*Xavier president, civil rights
leader honored by ND*

Page 2

Child Abuse Prevention Month

*Church to focus on
awareness, healing*

Page 4

Catholic sports podcast debuts

*Interviewees discuss
intersection of faith, sports*

Page 11

PFW vespers

*Bishop prays with, answers
questions for students*

Page 16

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Volume 93 No. 14

50¢

TODAYSCATHOLIC.org

Young voices reflect joy of the Annunciation

BY BETHANY BEEBE

Announcing the Good News of the Gospel on the solemnity of the Annunciation, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades celebrated what he described as “a break for joy in the midst of Lent:” a Mass featuring worship music provided by the Pueri Cantores choir, who came together on the feast of Mary’s acceptance of her role in God’s plan of salvation.

At a Mass said at St. Charles Borromeo Church, Fort Wayne, the bishop was joined by students from across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend who participated in the annual choral event, lending their voices to the liturgy. Begun stateside in 1953, Pueri Cantores, the official “youth singing organization of the Catholic Church” offers students the opportunity to learn traditional Church music and culture, according to the organization and Brian MacMichael, director of the Office of Worship. This year approximately 350 fourth-12th-grade students, selected by their schools’ choral leaders, participated in the tradition, which has been embraced by the diocese since 2011. MacMichael described the Mass that serves as the culmi-

PUERI CANTORES, page 8



John Martin

Pueri Cantores, the official “youth singing organization of the Catholic Church” offered vocals throughout a Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades at St. Charles Borromeo Church, Fort Wayne, March 25. The singers come together from parishes and schools across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend once a year for the Mass.

Michelle Hittie: Devoted to the soul of Catholic education

BY JEANNIE EWING

It’s no small feat in the modern era to achieve a true balance between family and work, managing the home, finances and children while trying to serve God with the gifts He has provided. Former Superintendent of Catholic Schools Michelle Hittie achieved and even excelled at that balance, however, humbly serving both her family and God until passing away on Wednesday, March 27, at the age of 78.

Born in Pittsburgh, Hittie attended both high school and college in Pennsylvania. She completed a bachelor’s degree in edu-



MICHELLE HITTIE

cation in 1962, and after her first year of teaching, she decided to stay home and raise her children: William, Jr. (“Bud”), Mark, Craig, Carolyn and Sharon.

In 1980, she received a master of education degree from Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. She served at St. John the Baptist School, New Haven, as a fifth- through eighth-grade teacher from 1981 to 1986, then a junior high language arts teacher there from 1987 to 1990, afterward attaining her administrator’s license from IPFW in 1990. She became principal at the school and remained in that capacity until 1994, when she lent her leadership to St. John the Baptist School

in Fort Wayne for a year, and then to St. Charles Borromeo School in 1995. She received her highest accolade as an educator — that of superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend — in 2001.

She remained in the position until her retirement in 2006. During her tenure, she helped to initiate retreat days for principals through the Principal’s Association.

According to Mary Schreiber, a friend and colleague for 30 years, Hittie died peacefully, surrounded by her family, a day after receiving last rites from Father William

HITTIE, page 3



Students from across the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend came together March 25 at St. Charles Borromeo Church, Fort Wayne, for the annual Pueri Cantores Mass.



Photos by John Martin

The joy of the Annunciation, as expressed by the young vocalists, lies both in the promise of the Savior's birth and in Mary's role as the Blessed Mother.

The fourth- through 12th-graders performed liturgical music celebrating the solemnity of the Annunciation.



Concelebrating the Mass with Bishop Rhoades are, from left, Father Thomas Shoemaker, Msgr. Robert Schulte, Father Jason Freiburger, Father Zachary Barry, Father Bruce Piechocki and Father Jay Horning. Deacon José Arroyo, front, assists.

Conductor Dr. Richard Robbins rehearses the choir Monday afternoon.



PUERI CANTORES, from page 1

nation of their hard work and practice as helping the students get a sense of "everything Church music and liturgy could and should be."

Dr. Richard Robbins, director of choral activities at the University of Minnesota Duluth and choir director of the Cathedral of Christ the King, Superior, Wisconsin, serves as conductor for the American Federation Pueri Cantores. Speaking to *Today's Catholic* at St. Charles, he echoed the importance of the fine arts in the Mass. "I hope the students walk away with a renewed sense of reverence and beauty that is the Mass," he said. "It is so heartening for me to see young people joining their voices together in song."

Local representatives of the diocese agreed that beyond the opportunity to enjoy beautiful music at Mass, the program is good for the students. Terry Broberg-Swangan, associate for liturgy in the Office of Worship, said, "This opens up doors for them that might not normally be open."

Among those open doors is the opportunity to study music they may not have been exposed to otherwise: They also get the chance to meet students from other diocesan Catholic schools, a benefit appreciated by Amy Johns, associate superintendent for the Catholic schools. "What I love about it is that it brings both sides of our diocese together ... in unity," Johns said.

United in the notion that the event was more than just a day to get outside the classroom, the participating students appreciated many aspects of the opportunity. Michael Urbahns, a seventh-grade vocal enthusiast at St. Jude School, Fort Wayne, saw the experience as an outlet for individual expression. "You can be yourself. You can do what you want to do." Fellow seventh-grader Amarea Chandler, from St. Aloysius School, Yoder, saw it as a chance to deepen her faith. "I ... think it is beautiful to sing to Jesus," she said.

Although the transferrable social skills gained by the Pueri Cantores Mass, noted by many as important, Ryan Michaels, a

sixth-grader at St. Pius X School, Granger, also hoped to learn something that would make him better on the electric guitar he is learning to play. "It's good for guitar — for learning the notes," he shared.

Parental support of Pueri Cantores goes beyond the small participation fee, which is picked up by Notre Dame Federal Credit Union if a family is overly burdened by the cost. "I feel like it is a little piece of heaven to hear children sing," said Billie Lima of Sacred Heart Parish, Warsaw, as her son was rehearsing prior to the Mass.

In addition to the reminder provided by the students of the beauty of the liturgy, Bishop Rhoades spoke of the holiness of the Divine Child remembered on the solemnity, the day Gabriel announced to Mary that she would become the Mother of the Son of God.

The joy of today's feast is evident in your beautiful singing, the beautiful music of this Mass today. It reminds me of the beautiful music and celebration

"I ... think it is beautiful to sing to Jesus."

AMAREA CHANDLER, ST. ALOYSIUS, YODER

of the Jewish people when they would go up to Jerusalem and to the temple. Why were they so joyful? Because the temple was the dwelling place of God," and the resting place of the Ark of the Covenant, the "special place of God's presence in the exodus from

Egypt and later in the Jerusalem temple."

At the Annunciation, he said, Mary became "the special dwelling place of God in the new exodus."

"Mary is the new Ark of the Covenant and the new Tabernacle of the Lord. In her womb she carries not the Ten Commandments, but the Word of God made flesh. She doesn't carry the manna from the desert, she carries the Bread of Life from heaven. She doesn't carry the staff of Aaron the high priest, but she carries the heavenly High Priest, Jesus."

While all in attendance may have been thankful for the sound of the Pueri Cantores choir, Bishop reminded them of an ultimate reason for joy: "We can thank Mary today for saying 'yes' to being His dwelling place on earth."

The male and female students who comprise the Pueri Cantores vocalists are recommended by their schools and choir directors in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend for the once-yearly opportunity to provide accompaniment at a Mass with Bishop Rhoades.