

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Charity and justice are both essential to serving those in need

BY MARLENE A. ZLOZA
Northwest Indiana Catholic

VALPARAISO – From the early Church through the work of today’s Catholic Charities, charity and justice have been at the forefront of Catholicism.

Yet Catholic Social Teaching “is a branch of theology” that “speaks not to us and our internal workings, but rather to the Church in the world,” according to Father Mark Pranaitis, CM., Ph.D., executive director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Gary, in a presentation March 7 at St. Paul.

“I think it is something we don’t know enough about, but rooted in the theology of the Church,” Father Pranaitis added. “It



Father Mark Pranaitis, CM., Ph.D., executive director of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Gary, lists the seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching during a Lenten Discussion Series program on March 7 at St. Paul in Valparaiso. He addressed the seven principles, reviewed the 14 papal documents that make up the Catholic Church’s instruction on social teaching and discussed the work of Catholic Charities in the diocese. (Marlene A. Zloza photo)

is something that has been built over time.”

Speaking as part of the parish’s Lenten Discussion

Series, Father Pranaitis provided a brief history of the Church’s social teaching, noting that the “early

Church was all about charity, and not so much (about) justice.”

In 17th century France,

St. Vincent de Paul, who with Louise de Marillac founded the Daughters of Charity, expressed the philosophy “that it was okay to keep your wealth, because he wanted people to choose to be charitable,” Father Pranaitis said, and in 19th century France, Frederick Ozanam helped others to help the poor by joining other students to found the Conference of Charity, later known as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

“Noblesse oblige” was the philosophy in the early 20th century U.S., said Father Pranaitis, when the wealthy believed it was “the obligation of the nobles” to “deign to care for those below us.”

By the mid-20th century, U.S. thinking was influ-

enced by Vatican II, the Civil Rights Movement and other social issues, and the definitions of charity – how we meet immediate needs – and justice – bringing about change in unjust systems – evolved. “I think the two are twins, but not identical,” Father Pranaitis said. “Both are essential, but they are a challenge. You choose to be charitable or not, which is softer, while justice has a tone of fairness to it, a harder tone.”

The history of modern Catholic Social Teaching is reflected in 14 papal documents on the subject, from “The Condition of Labor” by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 to “Laudato Si’: Care for Our Common Home,” the

SEE SOCIAL, PAGE 15

ENGAGING THE SPIRIT

Evangelization, formation tie Tapped In to synod goals

BY VANESSA NEGRETE
Northwest Indiana Catholic

Twenty minutes before the speaker was set to grab the microphone on a recent Wednesday, the dining room at Gelsosomo’s Pizzeria in Michigan City was packed. A few scattered seats remained, and people walking in the door were offered a chair in an adjacent room with a television stream of the event.

Servers ducked in and out between tables and booths while people talked, laughed and ate.

“I definitely feel we’re evangelizing,” Eileen O’Shea said.

O’Shea is head of the Tapped In team at Queen of All Saints parish in Michigan City. The team has hosted the speaking series for several seasons, but with the synod in action, the purpose of the series takes on more meaning.

Bishop Donald J. Hying was the speaker that night, and his talk was titled, “Perpetual Virginity of Our Lady.” Other speakers for this Mary-focused series of talks were Father Kevin Huber, Father David Kime and Deacon Mike Green.

Bishop Hying said he sees the Tapped In program tied to evangelization and formation, both of which are among the eight ecclesial areas of focus for the synod.

“Events like this really expand the walls of adult formation beyond just one parish so that we’re really forming people on a much more global level,” he said. “I think there are people who are really hungry to learn more about the faith, and if I have one goal for the synod, it’s that it would light that fire in people’s hearts to want to know Jesus, want to understand the faith better and share it with others.”

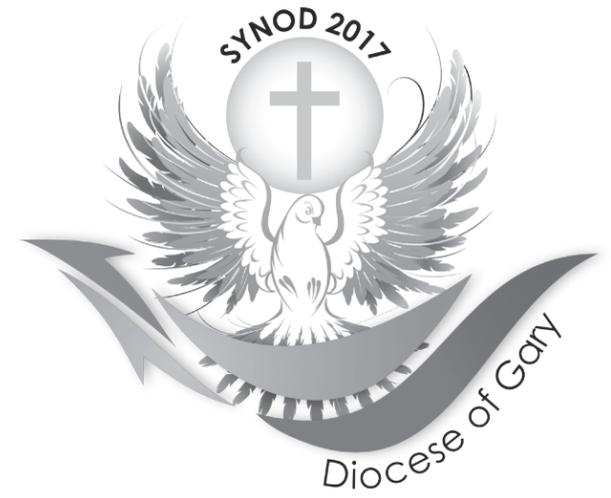
O’Shea counted 118 attendees on the night Bishop Hying spoke.

“To have this many people come out at one time, I think is awesome,” O’Shea said.

She credits the popularity of the program to the speakers and topics but also the setting and the invitation that expands beyond Queen of All Saints parishioners. All are welcome.

“People like to have a night out, and we always get new people,” she said. “I don’t think we would have as many if we had it at church.”

Aside from using traditional means, such as bulletin



announcements, O’Shea advertises the program in advance on social media and also live streams part of the talks to reach more people. Each talk also is recorded in full and then posted to the parish YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQXMY5pq6gamlGjEtKMadaA/> videos.

One man came in to pick up a pizza while Bishop Hying was talking and asked a Tapped In member for information on where he can watch the full talk because he always wondered about Mary, O’Shea said.

Bishop Hying praised the success of the Tapped In program.

“If somebody is doing something great, then everybody should just tap into it, pardon the pun,” he said. “Things like this not only are teaching moments, but they also teach people how to share the faith with others, which is so vitally important so that they can articulate to people they work with or live with, ‘Hey, why do Catholics honor Mary? Did Jesus have brothers and sisters?’ Those are things that people get asked all the time.”

The next Tapped In talk is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Mar. 28 at Gelsosomo’s Pizzeria, 5184 Franklin St., Michigan City. Father David Kime is scheduled to talk on the topic “Devotion to Mary.”

To tell us how your parish is following the Holy Spirit’s lead in this synod process, contact Vanessa Negrete at vnegrete@dcgary.org or (219) 769-9292, ext. 246.

COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICES

Following are opportunities to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation during Lent, listed by deanery and date. Unless otherwise stated, services begin at 7 p.m.

SOUTH LAKE DEANERY

- March 23**
- Ss. Peter and Paul, Merrillville (1 p.m.)
- March 26**
- St. James the Less, Highland
- March 28**
- Holy Name, Cedar Lake

GARY/NORTH LAKE DEANERY

- March 26**
- St. John the Baptist (with Whiting/Robertsdale parishes)
- March 27**
- St. Stanislaus, East Chicago
- March 28**
- St. John Bosco, Hammond

PORTER DEANERY

- March 23**
- Nativity of Our Lord, Portage
- March 24**
- Our Lady of Sorrows, Valparaiso (10:30 a.m.)
- March 26**
- St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Student Center, Valparaiso (6 p.m.)
- St. Helen, Hebron

LAPORTE/STARKE DEANERY

- March 26, 27, 28**
- Queen of All Saints (6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.)
- March 27**
- Notre Dame, Michigan City, private confessions, 6:30-8 p.m.

Please contact your parish office if you do not see a listing for your area.



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