



Different debuts

East spoils Mike Ruff's City-Catholic debut at Bishop Kearney with a runaway win; McQuaid hoop Coach Joe Marchese saw his first varsity win. See Pages 10 and 11.



Tickled pink

A saucepanther and other phantasmagorical figments of their imaginations helped teach students at one elementary school that writing can be fun. See Page 12.

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World & Nation in Brief from NC News

World

Married men to be ordained?

Jakarta, Indonesia — Pope John Paul II has promised to consider allowing the ordination of married men in Indonesia on a case-by-case basis, a conference official of the Indonesian bishops' said. Bishop Paschalis Soedita Hardjasoemarta of Purwokerto, conference secretary general, said Nov. 13 that Bishop Petrus van Diepen of Manokwari-Sorong in Irian Jaya had asked the Vatican for such permission. A Vatican official who asked to remain anonymous said it is unlikely Pope John Paul would approve such ordinations.

Magazine criticizes proposal

Rome — A Jesuit magazine sharply criticized a proposal in the Italian Parliament to legalize sexual relations between adults and children as young as 12 years old. The proposal, the Rome-based magazine *La Civiltà Cattolica* said, would encourage sex maniacs to exploit adolescents. The proposed legislation, which has been under debate for more than a year, would lower the age limit for victims of "presumed sexual violence," or statutory rape, from 14 to 12.

Nation

Bills draw bishops' outrage

Trenton, N.J. — Surrogate motherhood is "a legal outrage and a moral disaster," the bishops of New Jersey told a state legislative committee studying bills that would legalize and regulate the practice. The bishops' position was outlined in a letter to the chairman of the state Senate Judiciary Committee by Elmer M. Matthews, an attorney for the New Jersey Catholic Conference. Matthews said the Senate committee had sought the Catholic conference's views on the issue.

'Not a death pill,' doctor says

Washington — A new pill for contraception and early abortion is "not a death pill," the French doctor who invented it said at a Washington press conference Dec. 5. Dr. Etienne-Emile Baulieu of the University of Paris, inventor of the still-experimental drug RU-486, told reporters at a pre-conference press briefing that RU-486 is now being tested in several parts of the world and is about to be marketed in several European countries. Other countries considering approval of it include India and China, he said.

Supreme Court rejects appeal

Washington — The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected an appeal by a New York City Methodist congregation seeking to demolish a church which a city commission declared a historic landmark. The congregation, supported by other local and national religious groups, said the "landmark" designation violated the constitutional right to free exercise of religion by forcing the parish to maintain and repair a building that does not meet its religious needs. The church could face criminal penalties for failure to make the repairs.



Father Matthew Kawiak tells the fifth-grade class his story about finding Curby.

Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal



A fourth-grade student prepares to add her old friend to the collection of stuffed animals.

A Mass for Curby

Two years ago, Father Matthew Kawiak found a stuffed animal along the side of the road. The abandoned animal was dubbed "Curby," and each year he makes his appearance at a special stuffed-animal Mass Father Kawiak says for children. This year, the children of St. John the Evangelist School, Greece, brought their abandoned toys to a special Mass on December 5. The animals collected were given to the Catholic Family Center, Hillside Children's Center and Alternatives for Battered Woman for distribution to needy children.

Diocese requests study of Mass schedules

By Teresa A. Parsons

Acting through the Diocesan Office of Liturgy, Bishop Matthew H. Clark and the Priests' Council have asked parishes and institutions to consider how best to keep Sunday from becoming just another hectic day. No longer do most Catholics and their fellow Christians set aside work for prayer and recreation on the Sabbath. For some it's work-day; for others, it's a chance to squeeze in shopping, errands and tasks-left undone during the week.

To prevent Sunday Mass from becoming just another task for the celebrant and ministers as well as the congregation, the liturgy office is distributing a document entitled "Celebrating Sunday," which directs all parish leaders to study how the quantity of their weekend and daily Masses affects the quality of liturgies.

"What we're saying is 'Let's take a minute and ask ourselves why we're doing what we're doing,'" said Father Thomas Mull, liturgy office director. "The bishop has asked that the study go beyond how many Masses there are — that we should look at how we're celebrating Sunday."

For the past year and a half, the Priests' Council has been discussing the current practice of Sunday Eucharistic celebrations and how they will be affected as the number of active priests in the diocese continues to shrink.

In a final motion, passed last May, they concluded that: parishes should have only one Saturday anticipatory Mass after 4 p.m.; pastors and chaplains should eliminate Masses that detract from the true purpose of Sunday gathering; at least 90 minutes should be provided

between Sunday Eucharistic celebrations; daily Masses should not become a burden on individual priests; regional pastors and chaplains should avoid competing with one another and should determine how best to serve the faithful together; creative opportunities for prayer led by lay persons should be explored.

"Celebrating Sunday" includes the Priests' Council motion as well as a scriptural and historical background of Sunday eucharistic celebrations. It also recommends that parishes "seriously consider eliminating and combining Masses which hinder a sense of community, find the church only partially filled, or place a serious physical and moral pressure on the parish priest and liturgical ministers."

Each of the diocese's 11 regional coordinators are charged with coordinating the "Celebrating Sunday" process. The liturgy office offers two suggestions for doing so: Process A, in which priests gather, receive information, take it back to parishes and other institutions, meet with liturgy committees and parish councils, develop recommendations, and bring them back to a regional assembly; or Process B, by which all interested people are invited to a regional assembly and then return to conduct discussions in their local parish communities.

The whole process is expected to wind up in July, when those parishes that decide to alter their Mass schedules or make other changes will announce them.

According to Father Mull, all parishes are required to participate in the study, but the diocese does not require that they make any

changes. "Through the Priests' Council, the bishop has directed each parish to do this process," he said. "Whether or not a parish changes its Mass schedule is arbitrary."

In the case of Saturday vigil Masses, "Celebrating Sunday" notes that the liturgy office will make exceptions, depending on the individual parish situations.

Most priests have so far responded positively to the diocesan initiative, according to Father Mull. "Basically, they see it as a positive thing that has to be done," he said. "The fact that this is a diocesan-wide effort gives it emphasis, so that people won't think it's an isolated thing that's only happening in their parish."

Whether they're in urban, suburban or rural areas, parishioners across the diocese are beginning to feel the impact of the shortage of priests that has long been predicted.

By the year 2,000, diocesan leaders forecast that only half as many priests will be in active service as there are currently.

Some regions still have a relatively com-

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For this week's installment of the 100 Neediest Cases in the diocese, see Page 17.