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John Paul's ministry, agony showed love of Christ

By CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope John Paul II's intense pastoral ministry, "but even more, the Calvary of agony and the serene death of our beloved pope let all people of our age know that Jesus Christ really was his everything," Pope Benedict XVI said.

Pope Benedict marked the second anniversary of Pope John Paul's death by celebrating a memorial Mass the evening of April 2 in St. Peter's Square.

The pope said his predecessor truly fit the biblical description of a "servant of God," which is the way the Church officially refers to him while "his process of beatification quickly progresses."

Pope Benedict, who had set aside the five-year waiting period usually required before a sainthood cause begins, told tens of thousands of people in St. Peter's Square that the initial, diocesan phase of Pope John Paul's



CNS/Serge Pagano, Reuters
Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre attends a news conference in Aix-en-Provence, France, March 30. The French nun believes she was healed from Parkinson's disease through the intercession of Pope John Paul II, who also had the disease. The healing could be the miracle needed for the late pope's beatification.

cause had concluded earlier in the day.

While the Church has not solemnly proclaimed Pope John Paul a saint in heaven, Pope Benedict said he is certain that "our beloved John Paul II" continues to accompany the Church with his prayers.

At the same time, he offered prayers that Pope John Paul, "our father, brother and friend," would enjoy eternal rest and peace in the company of God.

The pope praised his predecessor's ability to share with the world his faith, hope and charity, even as Parkinson's disease

gradually made it impossible for him to walk and, ultimately, to talk.

"Especially with the slow, but relentless progression of his illness, which little by little stripped him of everything, he made himself an offering to Christ, a living proclamation of His passion, in a hope filled with faith in the resurrection," Pope Benedict said.

"Like his divine master, he lived his agony in prayer," the pope said. "He died praying. Truly, he fell asleep in the Lord."

Sitting near the front of the crowd was Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre, the 46-year-old French nun who believes she was healed of Parkinson's disease through Pope John Paul's intervention.

Earlier in the day, during a ceremony marked by prayers, song and formal oaths in Latin, officials of the Diocese of Rome concluded the initial phase of Pope John Paul's sainthood cause.

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CT/istockphoto
Should the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, also known as Gardasil, be mandated in Wisconsin for all girls entering the sixth grade, unless their parents request in writing beforehand that they not be vaccinated?

Proposed HPV vaccine mandate disregards parents' rights

By KATHRYN HUSING
Catholic Times Correspondent

LA CROSSE — Religious people are often criticized for wanting to impose limits on sexual behavior. But a new vaccine for a common sexually transmitted disease has turned the tables, and now those promoting sexual permissiveness are demanding a new bill be passed to dictate healthcare for children.

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, also known as Gardasil, has received a lot of publicity since the Food and Drug Administration approved it in June 2006. The vaccine boasts of protecting against four strands of the prevalent STD that cause up to 70 percent of all cervical cancer. It has been recommended for girls and women ages 9 to 25.

Publicity has focused less on the merits of the vaccine than on the push to have the three-shot

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Divine Mercy takes to highway

By FRANZ KLEIN
Staff Writer

MADISON — The image depicts a bearded man dressed in white, his right hand raised in benediction, while rays of red and white emanate from his side. At the bottom appear the Polish words "Jezu Ufam Tobie," or "Jesus I trust in Thee."

Yes, the bearded man is Jesus; but no, the image is not a masterpiece of Michelangelo or Raphael. Instead, the very first Divine Mercy depiction was painted in the 1930s by an obscure artist named Eugene Kazimirowski, at the meticulous direction of an uneducated Polish nun named Sister Faustina Kowalska — whom Pope John Paul II canonized St. Faustina Kowalska in 2000.

Those who have seen the Di-

vine Mercy image probably came across it in church. Pope John Paul II had a great devotion to Divine Mercy, and officially named the second Sunday of Easter "Divine Mercy Sunday." And now Divine Mercy has even more visibility, thanks to the efforts of Mark Endres of Madison.

"I would see a lot of Jesus bumper stickers, but I didn't see any Jesus Divine Mercy bumper stickers," Endres said. "That's how I got started, because of this great devotion I have to the Divine Mercy image of Jesus, and wanting to promote it. I'm such a believer in it from my personal experiences."

About 10 years ago, Endres' mother gave him a copy of St. Faustina's diary, which takes the

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Expanding the vision

CT/Contributed photo
A step ahead of the eye mission optometrists, local volunteers conduct eyesight tests in February at the temporary clinic at Casa Hogar in Lurin, Peru. According to Franciscan Skemp's Dr. Steven LaLiberte, who heads the La Crosse-based optometry outreach, new Peruvian government interest in providing eye care to its poorest citizens should allow future missions to provide surgery. See the full story on page 11.

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God-inspired art

Using the Book of Genesis for her overall theme, artist Julie Daul has painted murals on the hallway walls of three floors at St. Paul School in Mosinee, including this chorus of blue angels. Her story is on page 9.