

FAITH & VALUES

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Community of Faith The Rev. Sidney Sider discusses Eastern Christianity at St. Athanasius Byzantine Rite Catholic Church. [B4]

Young, devout and hungry

Ramadan fast is challenge for student-athletes.

By Robert King... Ramadan fast is challenge for student-athletes. Muhammad Siddiq, a 15-year-old wrestler at Arlington High School, scores a takedown...



BRAMADAN FASTING: Serving themselves at a Ramadan dinner are (from left) Ahsan Shahzad, Joshwarah Abdul-Raboon and...

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fast. "He looked like he was in a dilemma," said the father. "So I told him to drink something if need be."

How does he feel? "Re-energized," he said. For Abdul-Raboon, the dancer who consumed the pie in the car, the month of Ramadan is not something she looks forward to. She is always hungry. And while the sense of food in Broad Ripple's cafe doesn't tempt her, fasting truly is a sacrifice.

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Like most Muslims, she rises long before dawn during Ramadan. In her case, she does additional stretches.

These days, her rewards are the eternal bliss Muslims see as their divine inheritance if they succeed in observing the fast. Also, to Abdul-Raboon's view, fasting imparts a greater empathy for the poor and starving.

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Jail's 'Christian tier' gives inmates a sense of renewal

By Jeff Coen... CHICAGO — Lutheran Members were invited for someone sitting at a metal table in the middle of a maximum-security tier in the Cook County Jail.



IN THE: Ed Fattalini (second from right), a pastor with the Salvation Army, sits with Cook County Jail inmates at the end of a Bible class...

"Look at my feet," members said, sliding one out on the concrete floor to reveal a beige, rubber slipper. "Shower shoes." In most parts of the jail, inmates would be afraid to keep them on in a dayroom, he said, because you never know when a fight will break out and you'll need good footing.

Members, 31, lives in the Life Learning Division 10. Despite the well-known cliché of finding religion behind bars, inmates and officials agree that problems in the "Christian tier," which opened in 2000, are negligible compared to the rest of the complex.

"If I see any disagreements there, they tend to be verbal," said Scott Kurovich, the jail's acting director. "They tend to talk and work it out."

Many of the inmates in the tier are young men, though what the Bible calls a reworking of the mind.

Such specialized programs have gained recognition in recent years, particularly after the 2003 dedication of Florida's Lawry Correctional Institution, billed as the nation's first "faith-based" prison. Officials across the nation have latched onto the idea that religion might be one step to violence reduction.

On a recent day, Ed Fattalini, a pastor with the Salvation Army, stood before the group now living in the Division 10 dorm.

There are five faith-based tiers at Cook County Jail, according to officials. The inmates, who study the Bible with an instructor from the Salvation Army, have asked to transfer in and request a cell elsewhere at any time, but they rarely do. Inmates stay an average of nine months to allow others the opportunity to come in. Those who leave often recruit inmates

He paced back and forth and urged the men to allow themselves to be changed for the better. No one can fix problems they don't admit they have, he told them. "It hurts for a while, but it helps."

"The truth is like surgery," he told them. "It hurts for a while, but it helps."

Fattalini said the classes allow the inmates to develop social and interpersonal skills.

WORD ON THE STREET

News and notes about religion and spirituality

Church groups declare food stamp fight victory

WASHINGTON — Religious groups are claiming victory in the fight to preserve funding for food stamps after a key Senate panel voted to keep \$7.4 billion for the program.

The Senate Agriculture Committee rejected proposed cuts that would have reduced the program to \$5 billion.

The victory may only be partial, however, because a similar bill passed in the House.

Most of western Oregon's Catholics named in suit

PORTLAND, Ore. — All but about 200 of the nearly 800,000 Roman Catholic parishioners in western Oregon are part of a class action lawsuit that will determine who owns parish churches, schools and cemeteries within the archdiocese of Portland.

The parishioners and parishes were named in the rare, defendant class action in July because of the archdiocese's argument that they — not the

archdiocese — are the true owners of an estimated \$200 million to \$300 million in parish property.

Parishioners had until Oct. 3 to bail out of the suit, and about 200 filed the necessary paperwork.

The ownership question is crucial to the 15-month-old bankruptcy of the Portland archdiocese, and is being closely watched for legal ramifications involving church property and parishioners.

If the parishes and parishioners are found to be the true owners, the property becomes off limits to priest sexual abuse claims who are suing the archdiocese for millions of dollars in damages.

FBI investigates tapping of altar during Mass

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. Four young people who disrupted a Catholic Mass Oct. 2 are being investigated by the FBI. One suspect is alleged to have tapped a portion of a 100-year-old marble altar while another preached against idolatry.

"What we're looking at is the possibility that there may have been a civil rights violation," said supervisory agent Michael A. Deane of the FBI's Huntsville office.

A federal violation could trigger stiffer penalties than the initial charge of criminal mischief.

The arrest of the four young people who disrupted a Catholic Mass Oct. 2 are being investigated by the FBI. One suspect is alleged to have tapped a portion of a 100-year-old marble altar while another preached against idolatry.

U.S. commission protects arrest of Afghan editor

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom is protesting

the Oct. 1 arrest of a journalist by Afghanistan on charges of blasphemy and "insulting Islam."

Afghanistan's attorney general ordered the arrest of Ali Mirhosein Nazari, editor of the women's rights magazine Harqooz, after the journalist questioned the use of traditional Islamic punishments such as stoning and public flogging.

Officials denied Nazari, 30, after the religious advisor to Afghan President Hamid Karzai filed a complaint against him. The editor faces a 15-year jail sentence for speaking out against Islamic law or Sharia, and allegedly stands in violation of a 2004 prom law.

The U.S. commission monitors the status of religious freedom abroad and offers policy recommendations to the U.S. government.

"Clearly, even today in Afghanistan, protections for human rights and democracy remain under threat from those who sponsor religious extremism," said chairman Michael Cromarty in a statement.

Greek Orthodox with award

NEW YORK — Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev will be honored by Greek Orthodox Americans with their annual Athanasios Human Rights Award at a banquet in New York today.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner will receive the award from the Order of St. Andrew, a lay group within the church. Previous winners include Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Mother Teresa and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel.

Gorbachev is credited with dismantling the Iron Curtain and opening the Soviet bloc to the West.

Gorbachev, a member of the Russian Orthodox Church, will receive the honorary title of Archon Great Officer from the current Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew.

— Religion News Service