

# FLORIDACatholic

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OF ORLANDO

## ELECTION 2008

### What's a Catholic voter to do?

JACQUELYN HORKAN  
of the Florida Catholic staff

**TALLAHASSEE**—Jan. 29's Presidential Preference Primary ballot will list nine Republicans and eight Democrats. Some will oppose abortion while supporting the death penalty. Others will take the opposite stance. Some will want to "get tough" on immigration while others will prefer to ignore the issue.

No one will be the perfect candidate, defining his positions based on centuries of moral teaching. So what is a Catholic voter to do?

Riding to the rescue are the nation's bishops and the Florida Catholic Conference. Although they won't tell you for whom to vote, they will help you decide.

The conference is publishing a series of e-mails based on the U.S. bishops' updated statement, "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship." The three e-mails explain to Catholics why they should form their consciences, how to do so and how to apply a well-formed conscience in the voting booth and the public square.

The gist of the task, according to the first e-mail: "As Catholics we bring both faith and reason with us to the polls. Our conscience, given by God, is that by which we determine what is right from wrong."

Metaphorically speaking, one might think of voting as the paperwork of democracy, the hard work comes before making one's mark on Election Day.

Mike McCarron, the conference's executive director, knows deciding is no easy task, especially when issues such as abortion and the death penalty are added to the mix.

PLEASE SEE **VOTER, A5**

## Apopka nuns receive recognition for helping the voiceless

JENNIFER TORRES  
Florida Catholic correspondent

**APOPKA** — They have been called tenacious and compassionate, determined and dependable, resolute and relentless. They have been an indomitable force of good in the lives of this area's poor for nearly four decades.

Catholic nuns Cathy Gorman, Ann Kendrick, Gail Grimes and Teresa McElwee weren't looking for any recognition for the countless good deeds they've done — but they got it anyway. The *Orlando Sentinel* editorial board has named the four Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur as their Central Floridians of the Year — an annual award bestowed upon the person or group who most benefited the community.

Upon learning of the recognition, Sister Kendrick said, "I felt humbled. We're just doing our job."

Referring to them as "the conscience of the community," Bishop Thomas Wenski of Orlando said they are an inspiration.

But Sister Grimes said it isn't they who inspire — it's the community they serve.

"The wonderful thing about what we do is that it's not us, it's the people," Sister Grimes said. "You can develop all the programs in the world but if you don't have relationships with the people it doesn't work."

Making her way from up north to Apopka almost 40 years ago, Sister Grimes left a teaching position to work with the farmworkers and poor in the area.

"I was a high school chemistry teacher and I felt there were a lot of good chemistry teachers around so I was looking for something to do," she said. "I came here to visit and it



FLORIDA CATHOLIC PHOTO BY CHARLES HODGES

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur pose for a photo during a farmworkers fundraiser Jan. 12 in Maitland. Front center is Sister Cathy Gorman. In the back row, left to right, are Sisters Teresa McElwee, Ann Kendrick and Gail Grimes.

just seemed like the right place."

Sisters Kendrick, Gorman and McElwee were already there and the four became fast friends.

The makeup of their community has changed over the years. In the 1970s the population consisted of mostly African-American and Caucasian migrant farmworkers. In the '80s an influx of Hispanic workers was followed by the arrival of numerous Haitians. The result today is a mix of ethnic groups living and working together as one community.

For years the nuns worked from a small, rented storefront providing social programs, guidance and support from a cluttered 800-square-foot space. Last year they finally received a bit of breathing room when the Hope Community Center opened Oct. 27. The new 8,000-square-foot facility provides plenty of space for the many programs they provide for children, teens and adults including youth groups, parenting programs, leadership development, tutoring, and educational enrichment activities

such as the "Shakespeare in the Park" program that introduces youths to art and culture.

Another successful program is a takeoff on the "Take your Daughter to Work Day." Through it, more than 100 young girls have been paired with women in business who take them to work, giving them insight into the many career options available.

Among the many programs for adults, one provides lessons on

PLEASE SEE **APOPKA, A3**

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## INSIDE: Time near for prayer, fasting, almsgiving **A4**

Quick Reads	A6	Diocese News	A2-4, 13-16	Scripture Readings	A10
Classifieds	A12	Editorial	A11	Vatican News	A6
Crossword	A9	Faith Alive	A10	Movie/DVD Reviews	A9
Diocese Calendar	A14	Your Viewpoint	A11	Florida News	A5-8