

Briefly noted

News in the [October 6, 2009](#) issue

Ten Maryland nuns—almost an entire religious community—converted from the Episcopal Church to Catholicism on September 3, saying that their former denomination had become too liberal in its acceptance of homosexuality. The ten members of the All Saints Sisters of the Poor who were received into the Catholic Church by Baltimore archbishop Edwin O’Brien will continue to live at their convent in Catonsville, Maryland, with two nuns who decided not to convert. The community’s chaplain, Warren Tanghe, also converted with the nuns. Members of the order had been considering conversion for seven years. Mother Christina Christie, superior of the order, told the *Baltimore Sun*: “We were drifting farther apart from the more liberal road the Episcopal Church is traveling.” The All Saints order, whose members wear traditional black habits with white wimples covering their heads, was founded in England and came to Baltimore in 1872.

Cardinal Sean O’Malley of Boston on September 2 defended his attendance at the funeral of Senator Ted Kennedy, a prominent dissenter from Catholic teachings on gay rights and legalized abortion. O’Malley wrote on his blog that it was “appropriate to represent the church at this liturgy out of respect for the senator, his family, those who attended Mass” and others praying for the Kennedys. “We are people of faith and we believe in a loving and forgiving God from whom we seek mercy.” The funeral for Kennedy, who died August 25 from brain cancer at age 77, was held August 29 at Boston’s Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, where the late senator regularly prayed after his daughter was diagnosed with cancer. Some conservative Catholics have said that the church sends mixed messages by protesting Kennedy’s stance on gay issues and abortion for years, but allowing him to have a Catholic funeral. Judie Brown of the American Life League said: “Spitting on Christ himself at his crucifixion could not have been any more disdainful than what we witnessed Saturday.”

President Obama highlighted the contributions of Muslim Americans during his first Iftar dinner marking the observance of Ramadan. “Islam, as we know, is part of America,” he said September 1, addressing diplomats, faith leaders and members of Congress gathered in the State Dining Room for the feast that traditionally breaks

the daily fast during the monthlong holiday. The president cited examples of Muslim Americans who have made contributions to American society, from Kareem Khan, a soldier from New Jersey who died in Iraq, to Nashala Hearn, an Oklahoma student who fought in court for the right to wear a hijab, or headscarf, to school. Obama said he was pleased that the dinner was attended by people of a range of faiths—including Christians, Jews and Hindus, as well as prominent Muslims.