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Criterion

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Christ the Cornerstone

Let Jesus comfort and challenge us during this difficult time, writes Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, page 5.

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Now is time to build new world without inequality and injustice, pope says

ROME (CNS)—As the world slowly recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a risk it will be struck by an even worse virus—that of selfish indifference, Pope Francis said.



Pope Francis

This dangerous virus is “spread by the thought that life is better if it is better for me and that everything will be fine if it is fine for me. It begins there and ends up selecting one person over

another, discarding the poor and sacrificing those left behind on the altar of progress,” he said in his homily at a Mass on Divine Mercy Sunday on April 19.

The current pandemic instead must compel people to prepare for a “collective future” that sees the whole human family as one and holds all of the Earth’s gifts in common in order to be shared justly with those in need, he said.

“This is not some ideology; it is Christianity,” and it mirrors the way the early Christian community lived, the pope said at the Mass, celebrated privately at Rome’s Church of the Holy Spirit, which houses a shrine dedicated to Divine Mercy.

The Mass was celebrated on the 20th anniversary of St. John Paul II’s declaration that the Sunday after Easter would be celebrated as Divine Mercy Sunday. The Divine Mercy movement was founded in the early 1900s by Polish nun St. Faustina Kowalska, who said Jesus told her he wanted a feast of Divine Mercy as a refuge and shelter for all souls.

In his homily, Pope Francis noted that St. Faustina said Jesus told her, “I am love and mercy itself; there is no human misery that could measure up to my mercy.” The Lord always patiently and faithfully waits for people to recognize their failings and sins and

See POPE, page 2

‘I’ve drawn closer to God’



Nurse practitioners Katie Kennedy, left, and Gina Catanese are two of the dedicated health care workers who are taking care of COVID-19 patients at Community Hospital East in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)

Health care workers rely on their faith as they serve on the front lines of pandemic

(Editor’s note: The Criterion interviewed three health care workers on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic in Indiana, asking them to share their experiences in caring for people infected with this deadly disease—and how their Catholic faith has helped them during this challenging time. Here are their stories.)

By John Shaughnessy

Katie Kennedy quickly realized the devastating impact of COVID-19 after she offered to assess infected patients—so that only one person from her group would get exposed to the deadly virus.

The nurse practitioner at Community

Hospital East in Indianapolis saw how some patients declined rapidly—“from being fine, to being on a ventilator 12 hours later, to multi-organ failure.”

She was also there for the touching moment when her younger sister, Emily Norton—a nurse in the hospital’s intensive care unit—held the hand of a patient who was dying from the virus.

Then came the moment when the 35-year-old mother of three young children faced her own struggles with the deadly virus after working 12 straight days with

about 10 patients.

She had a fever, back pain and shortness of breath that was so bad that she soon found herself at home “sitting in the middle of our steps to rest when going up or down them” and while walking to the mailbox.

When she tested positive for the coronavirus on March 30, she wasn’t surprised, but the fears were still there. She became one of the nearly 9,300 health care workers in the

United States infected by the disease, according to an April 14 report from the

See KENNEDY, page 10



Katie Kennedy

Amid crisis, doctor finds hope in ‘the loving ministry of Jesus’

By John Shaughnessy

Dr. Heidi Dunnaway has an interesting perspective on the coronavirus crisis from her view in the southern part of Indiana.

It’s a perspective that comes from being the chief medical officer at Ascension St. Vincent Evansville with oversight responsibilities for the Catholic health care system’s five smaller, rural hospitals in Bedford, Boonville, Brazil, North Vernon and Salem.

“In some ways, we’ve been blessed in the southern part of the state because we’ve not been hit as hard as in the central and northern parts of the state,” she says. “Being in a more rural area is a benefit. We don’t have the population density. We’re a little more spread out. We’ve just had a small number of cases so far. We are sort of holding our breaths.”

She’s also holding onto her faith in this uncertain time



Dr. Heidi Dunnaway

when everything “just changes so rapidly.”

“My faith helps me personally quite a bit as we’ve been facing it,” says Dunnaway, a member of St. John the Baptist Parish in Newburgh, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese. “It was very useful to me going through Lent. This feels a bit like going to the desert. I think of Christ’s 40 days in the desert. There’s the simplicity and being laid bare. And Easter this year had a lot of meaning.

“It’s the symbolism of Easter—the new life, the hope that we’ll get through this. There’s a strength we have to have through this. Personally, I’m not sure I’d be able to do this without my faith. It’s so foundational to all the things we’re being asked to do.”

One of the emphases of Ascension’s approach to health care is “our respect for end of life,” she says—“how we take care of our patients, how we take care of our

See DUNNAWAY, page 10



Pope Francis celebrates Mass on the feast of Divine Mercy at the Church of the Holy Spirit near the Vatican in Rome on April 19. The church houses a sanctuary dedicated to Divine Mercy. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

POPE

continued from page 1

to offer them to him “so that he can help us experience his mercy,” the pope said.

Even the disciples, and especially St. Thomas, experienced fear and doubt, failing to believe in the risen Lord right away, the pope said.

Jesus doesn’t scold them with a sermon because “he wants us to see him not as a taskmaster with whom we have to settle accounts, but as our father who always raises us up,” just like any father would when his child falls, the pope said.

“The hand that always puts us back on our feet is mercy: God knows that without mercy we will remain on the ground, that in order to keep walking, we need to be put back on our feet,” he said.

Right now, he said, the world is undergoing a “time of trial” and, like St. Thomas, “with our fears and our doubts, [we] have experienced our frailty. We need the Lord, who sees beyond that frailty an irrepressible beauty,” like a crystal that is delicate, but precious and transparent before God who lets his light of mercy “shine in us and through us in the world.”

The most beautiful message on the feast of Divine Mercy, the pope said, comes from St. Thomas, “the disciple who arrived late,” but for whom the Lord waited, not leaving him behind.

“Now while we are looking ahead to a slow and arduous recovery from the pandemic, there is a danger that we will forget those who are left behind. The risk is that we may then be struck by an even worse virus, that of selfish indifference,” he said.

The COVID-19 pandemic “reminds us that there are no differences or borders between those who suffer,” he said. “We are all frail, all equal, all precious.

“May we be profoundly shaken by what is happening all around us: the time has come to eliminate inequalities, to heal the injustice that is undermining the health of the entire human family,” the pope urged.

“Let us welcome this time of trial as an opportunity to prepare for our collective future,” the pope said, because without a vision that embraces everyone, “there will be no future for anyone.

“Let us show mercy to those who are most vulnerable for only in this way will we build a new world,” he said.

The prayers of the faithful at the Mass asked God for consolation, mercy and strength for the Church, government leaders, priests, Christians, health care workers, volunteers and the homeless during the global pandemic.

“May priests always administer the sacrament of reconciliation with a merciful heart and in this period of enforced solitude, may they offer forgiveness and consolation through every means,” one petition prayed.

“May all the baptized not let themselves be intimidated by the inconveniences and sufferings from these weeks, but may they know how to give spiritual comfort and material support generously to all those who are in a precarious situation,” said another petition.


After Mass, before praying the “*Regina Coeli*,” the pope said Christians must respond to life’s storms with mercy and compassion toward everyone, especially those who suffer, are abandoned or in need.

“May Christian mercy also inspire the just sharing among nations and their institutions in order to face the current crisis in solidarity,” he said.

The pope ended his midday address by offering Easter greetings to Orthodox and Eastern Catholics celebrating according to the Julian calendar and thanking those Eastern-rite Catholics who were also celebrating the same day as a gesture of ecumenism and fraternity.

Because of restrictions in place to curb the spread of the coronavirus, the Divine Mercy Mass was celebrated without the presence of the public, with only a small choir and with only two concelebrants: Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, and Msgr. Jozef Bart, the parish’s rector.

St. John Paul visited the church in 1995 and canonized St. Faustina in 2000, proclaiming the second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday throughout the world. The Polish pope’s death in 2005 came on the eve of Divine Mercy Sunday, and his beatification in 2011 and canonization in 2014 were celebrated on Divine Mercy Sunday. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

No public events scheduled at this time.

FEMA issues guidelines to ensure ‘equal protection’ for all COVID-19 patients

WASHINGTON (CNS)—National Right to Life on April 16 praised the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for issuing guidelines to ensure equal protection for all patients with COVID-19 to prevent rationing of health care.

“We thank President [Donald J.] Trump and FEMA Administrator Phil Gaynor for efforts to protect the most vulnerable in our society,” said Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life, adding that the guidelines “will help ensure that regardless of ability or disability, age, origin or chronic health issues, patients are treated equally.”

Titled “Ensuring Civil Rights During the COVID-19 Response,” the FEMA guidelines for its “state, local, tribal and territorial partners” were issued in its Civil Rights Bulletin. They state:

“Make medical treatment decisions, including denials of care under crisis standards of care and allocation of ventilators, after an individualized consideration of each person, free from stereotypes and biases, including generalizations and judgments about the individual’s quality of life or relative value to society, based on the individual’s disability, age, race, income level or any protected basis.

“This individualized consideration should be based on current objective medical evidence and the expressed views of the patients themselves as opposed to unfounded assumptions,” the guidelines said.

A couple of weeks before the FEMA guidance the Office of Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued its own.

Across the country, a critical shortage of personal protective equipment for medical personnel who are treating patients who have the highly contagious virus as well as a lack of equipment such as ventilators has prompted some U.S. hospitals to consider instituting a blanket DNR, or “do not resuscitate” order, for COVID-19 patients

despite their wishes or those of their family.

“Our health care system is designed to save lives,” Tobias said in her statement. “No one facing the serious health issues from a coronavirus diagnosis should worry about whether they will receive the care they need because of their age or disability.”

On April 3, the chairmen of three committees of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issued a joint statement on the fear the coronavirus pandemic is creating about limited resources for treating patients, especially the most seriously ill.

The statement was signed by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Doctrine; Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities; and Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

They acknowledged the difficult decisions about care confronting health care workers, and urged them to read a number of important statements from Catholic health care and medical ethical organizations reminding them—and the general public—of ethical and moral principles to be applied in these difficult circumstances.

“The Catholic Health Association of the United States, the Catholic Medical Association, the National Association of Catholic Nurses-USA, and the National Catholic Bioethics Center have all published excellent reminders of these principles and guidelines,” they said. “We ask people, especially medical professionals, to read these documents and apply them appropriately in their work.”

Others urging ethical decision-making with regard to providing care for all COVID-19 patients and calling for the rejection of any moves toward rationing such care include Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York. †

Share your stories on first Communion, the importance of the Eucharist

The Criterion is inviting our readers to share your stories of first holy Communion.

Maybe you have a story to share from making your first holy Communion.


Maybe you have a story to share from your child or grandchild preparing for and/or taking part in this wondrous sacrament.

Maybe you have a story to share as a teacher or catechist who prepares children for the first time to receive

Christ into their hearts and their bodies in this special way.

And maybe you have a story or thoughts to share about how the Eucharist still is a meaningful part of your life.

Please send your stories to John Shaughnessy by e-mail at jshaughnessy@archindy.org or by mail in care of *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached. †




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Father William Munshower built community in two parishes for 41 years

By Sean Gallagher

Father William Munshower, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on April 14 at the Westminster



Fr. William Munshower

Village North retirement community in Indianapolis. He was 88.

Because of measures prohibiting large public gatherings due to the coronavirus pandemic, a private committal service was celebrated at the priests' circle

at Calvary Cemetery in Indianapolis. A memorial Mass for Father Munshower is expected to be celebrated at a later time.

In a 2008 interview with *The Criterion* on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his ordination as a priest, Father Munshower described what was at the heart of his priestly life and ministry.

"Being a part of a Christian gathering, having a hand in the gathering and participating in that gathering, whether it be in the Eucharist or a parish picnic," he said. "A priest comes together with people and inspires them, encourages them and prays with them. I think of myself in those terms."

Before retiring from active ministry in 2015, Father Munshower spent 41 years taking part in such gatherings and inspiring people in faith in two Indianapolis faith communities: Holy Spirit Parish and St. Thomas Aquinas Parish.

Father Clement Davis, who served as associate pastor with Father Munshower at Holy Spirit from 1979-83, saw how much he enjoyed making connections with parishioners.

"He was so personable and genuinely interested in everybody and everybody's story and family," said Father Davis, who in retirement serves as senior parochial vicar of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus and sacramental minister of Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburg. "He

knew his parishioners. It was amazing to me how he would often know people's grandparents. It was amazing to me how he could keep so much of that in his head."

The motivation behind making these connections for Father Munshower wasn't simply on the human level, said Father Davis.

"He not only believed, but he celebrated that we are the body of Christ, the people of God," Father Davis said. "His delight was in getting to know as many of these people and being a part of their lives. He genuinely loved serving as a pastor."

Father Patrick Beidelman was one of the many people Father Munshower served as pastor at Holy Spirit. He was only about 9 months old when Father Munshower began his ministry at the Indianapolis East Deanery faith community.

From his childhood through his time in college, Father Beidelman admired his pastor, who was in part an inspiration of his own priestly vocation.

Serving now as the executive director of the archdiocesan secretariat for worship and evangelization, Father Beidelman sees a connection between Father Munshower's love of relationships with the Church's worship and proclamation of the Gospel.

"The principal prayers of the Mass are that we might be one with God and one with one another," he said. "I think Father Bill Munshower did that for thousands of people, probably tens of thousands of people throughout his life in ministry."

"He saw the importance of people being in communion with one another, working with each other to build the kingdom of God. That community building, I think, served the faith of many people over the years."

One of those whom it served was Manny Debono, a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish who experienced Father Munshower's ministry there in the 1960s and later in the 1990s and 2000s.

Debono, 83, saw no difference between

the way Father Munshower acted outside of worship and parish ministry and how he interacted with people in ordinary social settings.

"There was a continuity there," Debono said. "If he was in your home or talking during a meal, it was the same Bill Munshower that had given you Communion the Sunday before. He was just a good man who loved people and life. He projected that throughout his own personal life."

That continuity, Father Beidelman said, also extended to meditating on how the Gospel applied to contemporary issues.

As far back as his time in high school, Father Munshower protested racial inequality in society, including participating in Dr. Martin Luther King's 1963 March on Washington.

"You got the sense that he was always pondering something," Father Beidelman said. "When you'd meet him, you were often brought into that pondering. He didn't always get to an answer or a resolution. But he could ponder with the best of them."

Father Munshower also had a "special love for the lost sheep among us," Father Beidelman recalled.

"He made God approachable," he said. "That approachability made folks, who often would feel intimidated by priests or the Church or even faith and spirituality in general, to feel really connected to God through him."

William Glenn Munshower was born on Feb. 23, 1932, in Indianapolis to William and Catherine (Ashcroft) Munshower. He grew up as a member of St. Anthony Parish and the former Holy Cross Parish.

After graduating from Cathedral High School in Indianapolis in 1950, he attended St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., before becoming an

archdiocesan seminarian and receiving priestly formation at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad.

Archbishop Paul C. Schulte ordained Father Munshower a priest on May 3, 1958, at the Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln in St. Meinrad. Father Munshower celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving the following day at St. Anthony Church in Indianapolis.

His first pastoral assignment was as associate pastor of St. Paul Parish in Tell City, where he served from 1958-63. He then ministered as associate pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis from 1963-71.

From 1971-73, he was the chaplain of the Newman Center at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

In 1973, Father Munshower became pastor of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, where he would continue in ministry until 1994.

During that time, he also served as administrator of St. Agnes Parish in Nashville from 1981-85.

After a sabbatical, Father Munshower returned to St. Thomas Aquinas Parish as pastor, serving there from 1994-2006, at which time he was granted permission to retire.

In retirement, Father Munshower ministered as a part-time sacramental minister at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis from 2009-15 and at Cathedral High School.

Surviving are his sister, Anne Delany, and brother, John Munshower.

Memorial contributions may be sent to Saint Meinrad Archabbey, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, IN 47577, www.saintmeinrad.edu/support-us, or to St. John's University, P.O. Box 2000, 2850 Abbey Plaza, Collegeville, MN 56234, www.csbsju.edu. †

Pope Francis' prayer intentions for May

- **For Deacons**—We pray that deacons, faithful in their service to the Word and the poor, may be an invigorating symbol for the entire Church.

See Pope Francis' monthly intentions at archindy.org/popessintentions.

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Editorial



Pope Francis greets members of the media as he prepares to leave in a car after celebrating Mass marking the feast of Divine Mercy at the Church of the Holy Spirit near the Vatican in Rome on April 19. At left is Msgr. Jozef Bart, rector of the Church of the Holy Spirit. The Mass was celebrated without the participation of the public as Italy remains in lockdown to fight the coronavirus. (CNS photo/Remo Casilli, Reuters)

Being joyful witnesses amid the coronavirus pandemic

We've heard Pope Francis, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, and many other Church leaders echo this sentiment, but it bears repeating: The celebration of Easter this year has been like no other in our lifetime.

We did not gather in our churches throughout central and southern Indiana during the Easter Vigil to welcome hundreds of catechumens and candidates into our family of faith. Our churches were not filled with weekly Mass attendees and "C and E" Catholics who gather with us on Christmas and Easter to celebrate Jesus Christ's birth and his resurrection.

The coronavirus has resulted in many changes where our lives of faith are concerned. Since mid-March, we have been unable to gather as community and attend Mass in our churches. Thanks to Archbishop Thompson and our priests throughout the archdiocese, we have been able to watch and pray with Mass online each day.

We also have not been able to receive the Eucharist, which St. John Paul II reminded us during his pontificate is the greatest gift of our Catholic faith.

First Communion and confirmations are on hold for our young people, as is the reception of other sacraments like reconciliation for many of us. Eucharistic adoration has also been suspended. The challenges mount as we try and fulfill our call to be missionary disciples. Fortunately, those who are close to death have had priests, in very difficult circumstances, make an extra effort to celebrate the sacrament of the anointing of the sick with them.

Listening to homilies online in recent days has reminded us of our call to ongoing conversion. In this context, it could mean exploring new ways to live out our faith. In a recent editorial, we suggested praying the rosary as a family each day.

Despite the challenges, the Easter season reminds us we are called to holiness and forgiveness.

Pope Francis told us last week that we are called to be joyful witnesses to Christ's victory over death—even amid the coronavirus pandemic.

In an editorial published on April 17 by the Spanish magazine, *Vida Nueva* (*New Life*), the pope said that those who take part in "the Lord's passion, the passion of our brothers and sisters, even living our own passion, our ears will hear the newness of the resurrection: we are not alone, the Lord precedes us on our journey by removing the stones that paralyze us."

"If there's one thing we've been able

to learn in all this time, it's that no one is saved alone," he wrote.

In his editorial, titled "*Un plan para resucitar*" ("A plan to resurrect"), the pope also acknowledged that an invitation to be joyful "may seem like a provocation or a bad joke in front of the grave consequences we are suffering due to COVID-19."

But like the women who went to the tomb, the Holy Father wrote, we are surrounded by an atmosphere of sorrow and uncertainty.

In today's precarious era, the pope said, the stone in front of the tomb symbolizes the worry and anguish that "buries hope," especially for the elderly, disabled people, families struggling financially, as well as health care workers and public servants who feel "exhausted and overwhelmed."

The weight of that stone, he added, "seems to have the last word."

Pope Francis wrote that despite their suffering and fear, the women disciples still went out to the tomb and did "not allow themselves to be paralyzed by what was happening."

While some Apostles fled, the women carried their spices and oils to anoint Jesus' body, much like the many men and women today who try to bring "the ointment of co-responsibility to care for and not risk the lives of others."

"We saw the anointing poured out by doctors, nurses, warehouse workers, cleaners, caretakers, transporters, security forces, volunteers, priests, nuns, grandparents and educators and so many others who were encouraged to give everything they had to bring a little healing, calm and soul to the situation," the pope wrote.

The good news of Christ's resurrection, he continued, is what brings hope and joy to all and shows that "our actions—our anointing, our giving, our vigilance and accompanying in all possible ways in this time—are not and will not be in vain."

"God never abandons his people; he is always close to them, especially when sorrow is most present," the pope wrote. This is a time, Pope Francis said, "to unite the entire human family" and to conquer the coronavirus through "the antibodies of solidarity."

We must especially remember our Holy Father's message as we celebrate the 50 days of Easter. And although we mark this season in a different way—with social distancing and stay-at-home orders—the message this Easter is the same: Alleluia! Jesus Christ has risen! He has indeed risen!

—Mike Krokos

Reflection/John Shaughnessy

Is this the best compliment someone can give or get?

The comment from the mom provided a hearty laugh—something needed even more these days.

As a friend told the story, the mom had been asked how homeschooling was going for her and her two grade-school children during this time when school buildings are closed for the year.

The mom smiled and replied with a touch of good-natured humor and exaggeration, "Two students were suspended for fighting, and one teacher was fired for drinking on the job."

The joy continued when another friend shared the news that one of his daughters had become engaged in early April, a moment that led to a celebration with both sets of parents—a celebration with appropriate social distancing.

Then there's the story of the 5-year-old girl who wanted to make a chocolate cake for her grandfather's birthday. When she saw her grandfather, she smiled and ran to give him a hug until her parents told her to stop, saying, "Remember, we need to keep our distance." Her smile disappeared until her grandfather told her they would soon celebrate together with a big hug and a big piece of cake.

All these moments remind me of what may be the best compliment I've ever heard one friend give another: "She's an Easter person. She knows that our faith is a faith of life ultimately. We know there's the resurrection, and it gets us through the crosses of our life. That's why there's a joy to her."

I find myself holding on, even tighter, to moments of joy during this time of the coronavirus crisis. I also find myself seeking the larger gifts these moments offer us.

So in the humor of a mother, there's joy and the hope for a better day.

In a couple's engagement, there's the commitment of a deeper love.

In the desire to share a hug and a birthday cake, there's the promise of a reunion that will uplift the heart and the soul.

All these characteristics help define an Easter person. So do the qualities of selflessness and faithfulness.

In his recent message to the world,

Letter to the Editor

Archbishop Thompson demonstrates good judgment by suspending Masses, reader says

This is just to take a moment to show support for Archbishop Charles C. Thompson's decision to suspend live Masses and go to online liturgies until the COVID-19 crisis abates.

I've heard from many fellow Christians, including Catholics, who disagree with the decision and want to play Monday morning quarterback, saying, "If we love Jesus we should go [to church] anyway; God will protect us," and "Such a decision [to close churches] shows no faith."

In my area, a couple of churches even made the news by recently ignoring state stay-at-home orders and holding services anyway. Their pastors were quoted as saying, "You can arrest us and put us in jail, but we're not cancelling services." Some

Pope Francis focused on the people who have embraced selflessness and faithfulness during this pandemic. His list started with health care workers, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, transportation personnel, police officers, volunteers, priests, religious men and women, "and very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves." But his list didn't stop there.

He also included fathers, mothers, grandparents, teachers, people of "prayer and quiet service," and people who exercise patience and offer hope.

The pope's list is a reminder that during this time, *during all times*, we are all *essential*—and even more so in God's eyes. Through the inseparable connection of his death and resurrection, Christ shows his desire to walk through this life with us while inviting us to share an eternal life with him.

During my own walks with my wife during this time, I have become more keenly aware this year of the splendors of spring, soaking in the sunshine, the sudden burst of tulips and daffodils, and the beauty of the blossoms of the dogwood, magnolia and fruit trees in our neighborhood.

I also appreciate the signs of encouragement that some people have planted in their yards: DON'T GIVE UP, ONE DAY AT A TIME, WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER.

Most of all during our walks, I've savored the timeless scenes of life shared together—a father playing catch with his children, a mother hovering behind her wobbling, beginning-to-walk, 1-year-old daughter, another dad running and holding onto the back of a bike that his child is learning to ride.

Moments of joy, promise, love and hope.

Just as nature's blooms of spring fill us with hope after a long, dark winter, so it is the nature of Easter people to live with hope—even through the darkest of times.

It is the gift our Savior gave us with his resurrection. It is the gift that an Easter person is called to share with a longing world.

(John Shaughnessy is the assistant editor of *The Criterion* and the author of *Then Something Wondrous Happened: Unlikely encounters and unexpected graces in search of a friendship with God.*) †

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld. Send letters to "Letters to the Editor," *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to critterion@archindy.org. †

pastors and members now have COVID-19. Sacrificing one's in-person worship experience is an act of love done for one's neighbor. It's also the common-sense move. I'm reminded of the early Church and how they met in secret or even in caves, for safety and protection. Yes, they could have met in open and all been rounded up, tortured, and put to death, but then we'd have no Church today.

The archbishop's decision shows sound reasoning, good judgment and concern for the well-being of all Catholics, especially the most vulnerable.

Thank you.

Sonny Shanks
Corydon

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Christ the Cornerstone

Let Jesus comfort and challenge us during this difficult time

Christian life is a journey, and from the moment of our baptism all of us are “on the way” toward a better life. This new life begins here on Earth and, we firmly believe, culminates in heaven where God dwells with all his angels and saints.

What makes our Christian journey uniquely different is the fact that we are given many opportunities to encounter our Lord Jesus Christ along the way. Like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35), we are often blind to Jesus’ presence among us. We don’t recognize him—usually because we are too preoccupied with ourselves. But if we allow him, Jesus will break through our indifference and our hardened hearts to show us that he is with us every step of the way.

As we read in the Gospel for next Sunday, the Third Sunday of Easter, the disciples who encountered Jesus on their way out of Jerusalem were disillusioned and had given up hope. They were aware that the tomb in which Jesus was buried was found to be empty, but they did not know that their Lord had risen from the dead. Jesus chastises them saying, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” (Lk 24:25-26) If they had been paying closer attention on the many occasions when their Master taught them that the Scriptures were to be fulfilled in him, they would not have been so slow to believe!

Pope Francis tells us that Jesus is the face of God. When we encounter him, our eyes are opened and we see clearly despite our blindness. The disciples on the road to Emmaus were given a great gift. As St. Luke writes, “And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight” (Lk 24:30-31). To see Jesus, we must be ready and our hearts must be open to the miracle of his presence—in the Scriptures (God’s Word) and in the breaking of the bread (the Eucharist).

Word and sacrament are the gifts we have been given that allow us to encounter Jesus and, so, to see the face of God. But we may not hoard these gifts, keeping them to ourselves. We

are commanded by the risen Lord to go out into the world as evangelizers, as missionary disciples who share generously with others the precious gifts we have received from our Lord.

Their encounter with Jesus resulted in a profound change in the behavior of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Instead of fleeing from Jerusalem discouraged and without hope, their hearts were now on fire. As St. Luke says:

“So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered the eleven and those with them who were saying, ‘The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!’ Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread” (Lk 24:33-35).

The two disciples have become evangelists. They return to Jerusalem and share their experience with the rest of the disciples. Their eyes have been opened, and they have seen their risen Lord!

The journey each of us must travel

inevitably includes moments of doubt and disillusionment. This is especially true in times of crisis when our longing for Jesus, the face of God, is especially intense. During these times when we experience intensely our inability to receive our Lord in the Eucharist, it’s important to remember where we last encountered Jesus. Most likely, we last recognized him in one of three places: 1) in prayer and meditation on God’s Word; 2) in the sacraments; or 3) in selfless service to “one of the least of these,” Christ’s brothers and sisters.

If we return to these places of encounter frequently, conscious that the graces we received in our baptism and confirmation have linked us together in the spiritual communion of the Eucharist, chances are we will recognize Jesus and acknowledge him as our close companion and our journey’s goal. If we allow him to come close to us, Jesus will break through our indifference and our hardness of heart. He will challenge, comfort and guide us as we travel along the difficult roads of our life’s journey.

May our hearts burn within us as we long to encounter Jesus in the Scriptures and in the breaking of the bread. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Dejemos que Jesús sea nuestro consuelo y nuestro desafío en estos tiempos difíciles

La vida cristiana es un camino y desde el momento de nuestro bautismo, todos emprendemos un recorrido hacia una mejor vida. Esta nueva vida comienza aquí en la Tierra y creemos firmemente que culmina en el cielo donde habitan Dios, todos los ángeles y los santos.

Lo que distingue nuestro camino cristiano es el hecho de que recibimos muchas oportunidades para encontrar a nuestro Señor Jesucristo a lo largo de nuestro recorrido. Al igual que los dos discípulos en el camino a Emaús (Lc 24:13-35), a menudo no nos percatamos de la presencia de Jesús entre nosotros; por lo general no lo reconocemos porque estamos demasiado concentrados en nosotros mismos. Pero si se lo permitimos, Jesús atravesará nuestra indiferencia y nuestros corazones endurecidos para demostrarnos que nos acompaña a cada paso del camino.

Según leemos en el Evangelio del próximo domingo, el tercer domingo de Pascua, los discípulos que se encontraron con Jesús a la salida de Jerusalén estaban desilusionados y habían abandonado toda esperanza. Se habían enterado de que el sepulcro en el que habían colocado a Jesús estaba vacío, pero no sabían que el Señor había resucitado de entre los muertos.

Jesús los reprende al decirles: “¿Oh insensatos y tardos de corazón para creer todo lo que los profetas han dicho! ¿No era necesario que el Cristo padeciera todas estas cosas y entrara en Su gloria?” (Lc 24:25-26) Si hubieran prestado más atención a las numerosas ocasiones en las que su Maestro les enseñó que las Escrituras se cumplirían con él, ¿no habrían tardado tanto en creer!

El papa Francisco nos dice que Jesús es el rostro de la misericordia. Cuando lo encontramos, nuestros ojos se abren y vemos claramente a pesar de nuestra ceguera. Los discípulos en el camino a Emaús recibieron un enorme obsequio. Tal como escribe san Lucas: “Al sentarse a la mesa con ellos, Jesús tomó pan, y lo bendijo; y partiéndolo, les dio. Entonces les fueron abiertos los ojos y lo reconocieron; pero Él desapareció de la presencia de ellos” (Lc 24:30-31). Para poder ver a Jesús, debemos estar listos y nuestros corazones deben estar abiertos al milagro de su presencia, tanto en las Escrituras (la Palabra de Dios) como al partir el pan (la eucaristía).

La Palabra y los sacramentos son los obsequios que hemos recibido para poder encontrar a Jesús y, de esta forma, poder ver el rostro de

Dios. Pero no debemos acumular estos obsequios ni guardármolos para nosotros mismos. El Señor resucitado nos ordena que vayamos por el mundo como evangelizadores, discípulos misioneros que comparten generosamente con los demás los valiosísimos regalos que hemos recibido de nuestro Señor.

Su encuentro con Jesús produjo un cambio profundo en el comportamiento de los dos discípulos de camino a Emaús. En vez de huir de Jerusalén desanimados y sin esperanza, ahora sus corazones ardían. Tal como lo expresa san Lucas:

“Levantándose en esa misma hora, regresaron a Jerusalén, y hallaron reunidos a los once apóstoles y a los que estaban con ellos, que decían: ‘Es verdad que el Señor ha resucitado y se ha aparecido a Simón.’ Y ellos contaban sus experiencias en el camino, y cómo lo habían reconocido al partir el pan” (Lc 24:33-35).

Los dos discípulos se convirtieron en evangelistas y regresaron a Jerusalén para compartir sus experiencias con los demás discípulos. ¡Sus ojos fueron abiertos y vieron al Señor resucitado!

El camino que cada uno de nosotros debe recorrer incluirá inevitablemente momentos de duda y desilusión. Esto es especialmente cierto en

momentos de crisis cuando nuestro anhelo de Jesús, el rostro de Dios, es particularmente intenso. En esos momentos en los que sentimos con mayor intensidad nuestra incapacidad para recibir a nuestro Señor en la eucaristía, es importante recordar dónde encontramos a Jesús por última vez. Lo más probable es que lo hayamos reconocido por última vez en alguno de estos tres lugares: 1) al orar y meditar sobre la Palabra de Dios; 2) en los sacramentos; o 3) en el servicio desinteresado a “uno de los más pequeños” de los hermanos de Jesucristo.

Si regresamos frecuentemente a estos lugares de encuentro, conscientes de que las gracias que recibimos en nuestro bautismo y confirmación nos han unido en la comunión espiritual de la eucaristía, es probable que reconozcamos a Jesús y nos percatemos de que es un compañero cercano y la meta de nuestro camino. Si le permitimos acercarse a nosotros, Jesús atravesará nuestra indiferencia y nuestros corazones endurecidos, y nos desafiará, nos consolará y nos guiará por los caminos difíciles de la vida.

Que nuestros corazones ardan con el anhelo de encontrar a Jesús en las Escrituras y al partir el pan. †

Catholic app adds features to help people cope in pandemic

CHICAGO (CNS)—In 2018, Alessandro DiSanto quit a promising job in finance to join friends in starting an app for Catholics centered around meditation and prayer.

That app, Hallow, is now the top Catholic app in app stores, has 150,000 downloads in 50 countries and has been used to pray more than 1 million times, according to DiSanto.

The Hallow team also recently launched special features related to the coronavirus for the many people who must stay at home during this time.

DiSanto and some friends with whom he attended the University of Notre Dame came up with the idea when they found they were all struggling with being connected to their jobs all the time and finding little peace in their lives.

“My experience personally was coming from this perspective of being just stressed, having rising anxiety living in a constantly connected world where my life was being run by my e-mail inbox at work,” DiSanto told the *Chicago Catholic*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

He was working extraordinarily long hours and looking for a way to reduce his stress. People told him that meditation and practicing mindfulness would help. They recommended the apps Headspace and Calm, which he downloaded and used.

“But the more that I created peace

in my life in the sense of absence of activity, the more I realized that what I was actually searching for were deeper questions about purpose and what I should be doing with my life,” he said.

“That was inherently a faith-based question for me, and really not addressed by those secular meditation apps.”

In spring 2018, DiSanto’s friend Alex Jones developed a rudimentary version of an app where friends recorded passages from Scripture and spiritual books that they all could use for mediation.

The more time they spent using it and developing it, the more their friends and family showed interest in using it too.

The turning point came when a friend told DiSanto that she had used the app to discern a vocation to religious life.

“That was an ‘Oh, wow’ moment. Certainly, we didn’t do anything. That was God’s grace that moved her heart,” he said. “But it kind of hit us in the head, and we thought maybe we should spend time discerning whether we’re being called to build this as a resource for the world to help them find God’s call in their lives.”

So the friends quit their jobs and launched Hallow in December 2018.

It wasn’t easy for any of them to walk away from promising careers in the secular world, but all felt like God was calling them to make the leap.

They launched a Kickstarter campaign to raise initial funding to build the app. Now they have what they call “angel

investors” who support their work. They also formed partnerships with parishes and Catholic groups around the country to promote subscriptions.

The app is subscription-based but free to download. Parts of the app are free to users, and those areas are updated regularly. That’s a deliberate choice by DiSanto and his co-founders to make it accessible to people who can’t afford a subscription.

Subscriptions cost \$60 a year or \$9 a month. There is usually a seven-day free trial period for the premium version, but that has been extended to three months because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The app has several sections, such as “lectio divina,” which is a meditative way of reading the Bible; a daily “examen”; traditional prayers like the rosary and Stations of the Cross; and “prayerlists.”

There are several options for meditation, such as one that walks users through the words of the Our Father, prayer challenges and “minute meditations” for when someone just

wants a quick check-in with God.

To help people during the pandemic, the Hallow team also released a 15-session “stuck at home” playlist with sessions focused on the power of prayer and finding peace in trusting God.

They are also releasing a function within the app to allow users to create friends and family groups, helping people stay connected to their communities of faith during this time.

(For information on Hallow, visit hallow.app or e-mail info@hallow.app.) †



Pope Francis postpones World Meeting of Families, World Youth Day

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis has agreed with a recommendation by the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life to postpone by one year the next gatherings of the World Meeting of Families and World Youth Day.

“Because of the current health situation and its consequences on the movement and gatherings of young people and families,” the World Meeting of Families in Rome will be pushed

back until June 2022 and World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal, will be pushed back until August 2023, the Vatican announced.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell, prefect of the dicastery, told Catholic News Service on April 20 that now is the time his office would be signing contracts with hotels and airlines if the World Meeting of Families were still to be held in 2021, “but no one knows what will happen,”

so it seemed prudent to push the meeting back a year.

The dicastery also would not hold two large gatherings during the same summer, so that was one reason World Youth Day was pushed back, he said.

The other reason, Cardinal Farrell said, is that although people are talking about “returning to normal” and government leaders are making plans for phasing out lockdowns and reopening businesses, “we do not believe travel will be that extensive” anytime soon.

The dicastery has canceled all international meetings until January 2021, although it is planning for a few young

people from Panama, where World Youth Day was celebrated in 2019, to hand the World Youth Day cross to a few young people from Lisbon on Nov. 22, the feast of Christ the King.

The handoff originally was scheduled for April 5, Palm Sunday, but was postponed because of the lockdowns and travel bans in place to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

If the young representatives from Panama and Portugal are not able to travel to Rome in November, Cardinal Farrell said, Panamanians and Portuguese already living in Rome will participate in the event. †



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Retired Pope Benedict, celebrating 93rd birthday, is well, secretary says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Retired Pope Benedict XVI “is well,” although the coronavirus pandemic restrictions meant he received no visitors on April 16, his 93rd birthday.

“Thank God, all of us in the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery are well,” Archbishop Georg Ganswein, the retired pope’s personal secretary, told *Avvenire*, the Italian Catholic newspaper.

The retired pope, the archbishop and a group of consecrated women live in the former monastery in the Vatican Gardens.

Usually for his birthday, Pope Benedict is joined by his older brother, Msgr. Georg Ratzinger, who turned 96 in January, but Archbishop Ganswein told Vatican News that, this year, the two spoke on the phone. Msgr. Ratzinger’s call was just one of many birthday calls the retired pope received.

Despite the lockdown, Archbishop Ganswein told *Avvenire* on April 16, the day was “more festive” than usual in the monastery. And, he told Vatican News, it featured the singing of Bavarian folk songs.

The day began, as usual, with Mass in

the monastery chapel.

The retired pope, the archbishop said, prays each day for the sick and for those suffering because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“He was especially struck by the many priests, doctors and nurses who have died while caring for those sick with the coronavirus, particularly in northern Italy,” Archbishop Ganswein said.

The archbishop also said the retired pope received a special present, a pre-publication copy of *Benedikt XVI: Ein Leben (Benedict XVI: A Life)*, an almost 1,200-page biography written by Peter Seewald, who collaborated with the retired pope on several best-selling books. The volume will be released in German in May.

“Seewald intended to give it to the pope emeritus in person,” the archbishop said, “but, unfortunately, the pandemic made that impossible.”

The retired pope was born on April 16, 1927, in the Bavarian town of Marktl am Inn and was ordained to the priesthood in 1951. Before his election as pope in 2005, succeeding St. John Paul II, he served for 24 years as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Pope Benedict stunned the world in 2013 when he announced that he would step down, becoming the first pope in almost 600 years to resign. †



Pope Benedict XVI

Faith *Alive!*

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Use critical thinking, Gospel values when evaluating digital media

By Sr. Nancy Usselmann, F.S.P.

As a media literacy educator, I watch a lot of movies and streaming shows to be able to reflect on theology and the popular culture.

Many times when I meet parents, teachers and ministers they share that their biggest concern is to help youth live mindfully in today's digital media environment.

How can we integrate a reflective, spiritual life with all the media we consume and create?

I believe this requires us to be critical engagers of the culture. It's a learned practice that takes discipline, something our culture sorely lacks.

Everything moves so quickly that we do not take stock of how we are living and why. The deep existential questions that philosophers of old reflected on have fallen by the wayside and been replaced with fast-paced communication that necessitates lack of deep reflection.

So, what is a Catholic to do? Practice media literacy that integrates faith—that is, media mindfulness.

That sounds simple, but it takes effort. What is media literacy anyway?

According to the Center for Media Literacy, based in Malibu, Calif., it is the ability to “access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate” in the media we encounter. That is, we stop and reflect on all that we see, hear and feel when we engage with media messages.

It is important to know how media are created so we know the techniques involved to grab our attention. However, that is only one part of being media literate.

The crucial part is asking questions: Why is this message being sent? What values, ideologies or points of view are being communicated?

For Catholics, the faith perspective means that we bring Gospel values and the example of Jesus into conversation with those messages. This is media mindfulness.

It follows a four-step methodology of theological reflection (listen, reflect, dialogue, act) helping us to go deeper as we ask critical questions of the media experience.

We ask first: What is going on? What am I seeing, hearing and feeling?

Second, we question: What is really going on? Who pains? Who gains?

The third step connects our Christian



A man in Karachi, Pakistan, works at a television station on April 11, 2018. Catholics should use critical thinking when evaluating digital media in light of Gospel values. (CNS photo/Akhtar Soomro, Reuters)

values: What difference does it make? What Christian values does this media experience support, ignore or oppose?

This step helps us question the values the media artifact communicates to examine if that is in accord with what we believe and what the Church teaches. It has to do with morality, the good and bad of actions, but also with spiritual values and our existential longings.

Finally, we examine: What difference can I make? What response seems appropriate in light of my Christian beliefs?

This is the hardest step to concretize. What do I take away from this media experience? Does it challenge me? Does it reveal some social issue that begs my concern? Does it open me up to different points of view? If so, what

action will I take as a result?

Take the movie, *Just Mercy*, as an example. Even though movies are about making money, they are also powerful storytellers that give us a glimpse into a world we may not know about otherwise.

Following the first step of the media mindfulness process, we ask: What is going on?

The film, directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, presents a narrative based on the true story of Harvard graduate attorney Bryan Stevenson (played by Michael B. Jordan) who moves to Alabama to give legal representation to death-row inmates, many of whom were often wrongfully convicted. He helps Walter McMillian (played by Jamie Foxx) to clear his conviction and save him from execution.

We ask: What is really going on? The film addresses serious issues with regard to racism and how we judge other people who are different from ourselves. It can lead to a discussion on our legal system that convicts people with less-than-substantial evidence.

The third step is essential: What difference does it make? How would Jesus treat others? This step helps us examine what our faith values really mean in our everyday lives. What does it mean to love our neighbor? Do we really understand this Gospel maxim?

Last, we ask: What difference can I make? My takeaway could be that I will examine my prejudices and seek to respect every person I encounter. I could also look into volunteering with organizations that lobby to end the death penalty.

With each step of the media mindfulness method, we begin to reflect more deeply and profoundly on our media entertainment. This can be done for streaming shows as well as social media posts.

All media require of us to be critical thinkers and examine well our relationship to the messages they communicate, as well as what we ourselves create. To live our faith in our daily actions means to grow in discernment skills, living each day reflectively and purposefully.

We are called, as Catholics, to live our faith in the here and now, in the concrete and tangible experiences of our lives, and that includes our digital media experience. When we do, we may be surprised by the grace of God that is reflected back to us from the art of popular culture to challenge us to be holy and engaged digital citizens.

(Paulist Sister Nancy Usselmann is director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies in Los Angeles. She is a media literacy education specialist, theologian, international speaker, writer, film reviewer and blogger for bemedia mindful.org and Catholicism.com. She is the author of *A Sacred Look: Becoming Cultural Mystics, a book on the theology of popular culture.*) †



Children watch *Bedtime Stories*, a PG-rated movie, during a youth group event at Resurrection Parish in Wilmington, Del. Movies are powerful storytellers that give us a glimpse into a world we may not know about otherwise. (CNS photo/Don Blake, The Dialog)

Corrections Corner/Deacon Steven Gretencord

Ministering to the incarcerated is a gift, not a burden

Recently, I was enjoying my evening repast at a local restaurant when I was approached by a man who had been seated a couple of tables away. He began the conversation by saying, "I know you probably don't remember me, but you ministered to me in the county jail about six months ago." He went on to tell me that he had found a job



that paid him well enough to get by, and that he had reconnected with his estranged sons. The gentleman then told me how he and some of the other offenders had eagerly awaited the Saturday afternoon visits from the Catholic community. He explained how important the sessions had been in his life and repeatedly thanked me for my involvement.

This is not the first time I have had the pleasure of hearing from former offenders. There have been several instances when the former inmates

have approached me on the street to express their gratitude to me and the other Catholic volunteers for the impact we have had in helping them get their lives back in order.

So often I hear people ask if ministering to the incarcerated is really worth my time and effort. There have also been times when I have wondered whether we are really doing any good, but then come the moments when I have been allowed to hear the words of gratitude that can turn an otherwise bad day into a day to be remembered.

Ministering to the incarcerated is a gift, not a burden. These success stories strongly bring this fact home. They are not as frequent as I would desire, but they do exist, which gives me hope and re-energizes my efforts.

The purpose of this ministry is not to solve the problems of drug and alcohol addictions that are often the root cause of incarceration. The purpose is not to end poverty or the cycle of domestic violence. The purpose of this ministry is to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to people

who have forgotten this joyous news and to others who have really never heard it, helping the offenders understand that it is only through Jesus Christ that they can ever hope to be truly free of the bonds that have dragged them down and caused them to run afoul of the laws of society.

Is ministering to the incarcerated worth my time and effort? Absolutely! Through the ministry to the incarcerated, are we really doing any good? We certainly are having success. Although the successes are not as frequent as I would wish, they occur often enough to remind me that I plant the seeds, while it is God who takes care of the harvest. Ultimately it is always nice to have my supper interrupted by someone who appreciates the work and efforts put forth by the volunteers of the Catholic ministry to the incarcerated.

(Deacon Steven Gretencord ministers at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Terre Haute and is a member of the archdiocese's Corrections Advisory Committee.) †

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

Fight against spiritual and moral maladies like we do against COVID-19

It's been amazing how much people have learned about the coronavirus since the pandemic spread to the U.S.: its



symptoms, incubation period, morbidity rate, how it can be spread to other people and how we can slow the spread.

Just a few months ago, relatively few people had heard of COVID-19. Now we've all taken a crash

course in it and are taking bold action upon that knowledge.

We've given the virus this attention for good reason. If the social distancing measures that are so commonplace now weren't taken, our hospitals would be overrun and the number of deaths due to the virus would skyrocket.

I am confident that these measures, as difficult as they have been, will allow us to return as soon as it is safe to the practices of our daily life that we've had to put on hold for more than a month—most especially the public celebration of the Mass.

But consider for a moment: if we are willing to make great efforts to get a hold on this highly contagious and dangerous physical disease, imagine what great good could happen if we were willing to similarly cooperate with God's grace to battle the spiritual and moral maladies that run rampant among us?

The outward symptoms of these illnesses are seen in a hyper materialistic or sexualized view of the world, human relations and daily life. Sufferers try, unsuccessfully, to treat the dissatisfaction they ultimately have with these views through addictive behavior and sometimes, sadly, by suicide.

These maladies are rooted in an inward orientation of life in which sufferers focus more on themselves than on God or others, in which they seek fulfillment in this world through self-assertion rather than seeking it ultimately in heaven through self-giving here and now. It's been around long enough that we've all been exposed to it and show its symptoms to one degree or another.

This spiritual virus is fought primarily in marriage and the family. And that we haven't taken aggressive measures to battle these spiritual and moral illnesses like we have with the coronavirus is suggested in the fact that our marriages and families over the past generation have been overrun, broken down and redefined.

Unfortunately, there is no vaccine for these maladies, for as long as we humans have free will, we can always choose to let these conditions take hold in us.

There is, however, what might be called a powerful antiviral treatment that can break the hold of these debilitating conditions on people and our society. It's God's grace, which surrounds us every day like the air we breathe.

The most effective way to deliver grace so that it directly attacks these illnesses is in the sacraments of the Church, especially the sacrament of penance. It is there that the grace of God's mercy can do wonders to heal our souls, our families and our society.

Our marriages and families may suffer grievously because of this spiritual and moral pandemic, but there is always hope.

Pray daily for your own family and others. Commit each day to cooperate with God's grace to reverse the effects of these illnesses in your family. And take one grace-inspired action at a time to make it so.

As your family starts to recover from these maladies, it will show other families that it is possible, hopefully inspire them to do the same, and spread spiritual and moral healing throughout our society. †

For the Journey/Effie Calderola

Jesus teaches us love is all God is and everything God is

Are you the one to come? That plaintive question fills our hearts this Easter. It was asked in the Gospel of Matthew 11:3, when the imprisoned John the Baptist sends two of his disciples to Jesus. Are you the Messiah? Are you the one for whom we've been waiting?



As I sat bundled on my couch on a blustery, chilly Easter morning, participating in my parish's Mass online, I felt such a sense of unity with my faith community, such a sense that I could say affirmatively, yes, you are the one who is to come.

But faith does not always overwhelm us with its presence. We all struggle with doubt, and in a time of plague and physical isolation, we often struggle with a nagging sense of sorrow.

I find the Scripture readings that discuss Jesus' resurrection and its aftermath to be an antidote to despair. There, we can sit with the real risen Christ. But who is he?

John the Baptist wasn't the only one wondering if Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise. The Jewish people, a people familiar with oppression, were straining under brutal Roman rule, and some of them yearned for a liberator.

Many in Israel hoped that the Messiah would be a new David—the mighty one with the slingshot who would bring down the Roman Goliath and set the people free. They looked, some of them, for a Messiah who would wield the sword, a military hero.

When Jesus came curing the sick, giving sight to the blind, even raising someone from the dead, many hoped he was the one who was to come. Some of the crowds who hailed him as he came into Jerusalem must have hoped for political liberation, and some of those who later turned on him and demanded

his crucifixion must have felt disappointment in his seeming inability to bring down wrath upon the empire.

There are still Christians for whom this image exists: a belief that weapons and military might are the gods that will save us. They look past the Jesus of Scripture who presented such a different idea of righteousness, who continually decried greed and power and who spent his time with sinners, outcasts, the marginalized, those struggling along the borders of society.

During our liturgy, we often hear the powerful words, "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." They fill me with such a desire to be one of his own.

In the readings following the resurrection, Jesus again does not come as the conquering hero. No bells and whistles, no fireworks, no displays of triumph. Instead, he comes quietly, not appearing to the many but to the few—to those who were his own in this world.

Not, I hasten to add, to the faultless but to sinners. He came to Peter, the denier, and to Thomas the doubter. He came to his fragile and sinful little community of friends.

I remind myself of this when I feel down on myself: He did not appear to them because they loved him so well; he came to them because he loved them so well.

So, we see moments of great intimacy. We see Jesus cooking a breakfast for his friends near water's edge. We hear Mary of Magdala recognizing him in the garden when he calls her name. He offers his body, his woundedness, to Thomas so that he might believe. He joins in a dusty walk to Emmaus.

This, we learn, is who God is. John tells us God is love. That is all God is and everything God is.

(Effie Calderola writes for Catholic News Service.) †

Amid the Fray/Greg Erlandson

Abstaining from Eucharist is eighth corporal work of mercy

There are strange gifts wrapped in this terrible pandemic.

During a trying Lent of lockdowns and quarantines that is stretching past Easter, almost all of us have found ourselves abstaining from the sacraments. Our eucharistic fast has stretched on for weeks. This has been disconcerting for many. That is not necessarily a bad thing.



I have gone to my parish several times since public Masses were banned. Even sitting in the darkened nave illuminated only by the light passing through the stained-glass windows showing the seven corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy, I felt an invisible communion of souls bonded by our shared deprivation of the Mass.

In this unprecedented time of restraint, it is as if there is an eighth corporal work of mercy. We cannot visit the sick or the imprisoned, but we are being asked to give up something as dear as reception

of the Eucharist for a little while for the sake of our fellows.

The confounding truth of the COVID-19 virus is that someone who is infected has no symptoms, whether for a little while before the fever comes, or perhaps never any discernable sign of illness. Yet that person remains contagious.

Which means that any of us could be the unwitting cause of another's death. If I am infected but asymptomatic, I may feel free to spend time with you.

You then become, at least at first, asymptomatic. And you go visit your parents. Or your friend with hypertension. Or your spouse battling lupus. And suddenly my decision to spend time with you has endangered the lives of four others.

John Milton's great line in his Sonnet 19, "They also serve who only stand and wait," takes on special meaning now. For this is a moment we serve in our isolation. We offer up our eucharistic hunger to save others. We stay in place to save lives.

Such a sacrifice conforms to Catholic morality and Catholic social principles. We are willing to sacrifice this good for a little while out of respect for the lives of others.

There are some who have had their

Caiaphas moment, viewing individuals as expendable for the sake of the economy, calculating the likely risk to the elderly or the infirm so that, to paraphrase the Gospel, the whole nation's economy may not perish. It is a profoundly unjust and anti-life calculus.

Our sacrifice for the sake of others is a small imitation of our Savior's sacrifice for us. This will soon pass, but there are lessons here for us. For the sake of the defenseless, we abstain. For the sake of the weak, we fast. How we respond will be our measure.

And those other works of mercy? Those that can be done are needed now: By supporting Catholic Charities and other aid organizations, we can feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty. We can clothe the naked and shelter the homeless.

And we can pray for the living and the dead, and ask God in his mercy to bring an end to this terrible plague.

Though deprived of the bread of life and cup of salvation, this is a most Catholic moment.

(Greg Erlandson, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.) †

Third Sunday of Easter/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 26, 2020

- Acts of the Apostles 2:14, 22-33
- 1 Peter 1:17-21
- Luke 24:13-35

The Acts of the Apostles again furnishes the first biblical reading for Mass this weekend. Almost every Sunday in the Easter season features a reading from this book of the New Testament.

In this reading, St. Peter again preaches to the crowds in Jerusalem. Catholics are quite familiar with preaching. All Americans are very accustomed to impassioned preaching. They hear it in their own churches. They hear it on the radio, television and online.

Preaching, by definition, is not simply lecturing or speaking aloud. At its best, it is speaking in the name of God.

Those who preached, by ancient Jewish standards, were privileged people in this sense. None chose to be a preacher. Rather, a preacher was selected by God. Peter stood before crowds after having been called to preach. Most importantly, he spoke in the place of Jesus.

He preached the words of Jesus, on behalf of Jesus. This reading makes three points. First, it establishes the identity of Peter. He is an Apostle. Second, he is the chief of the Apostles. He speaks in the names of them all.

Finally, through Peter and the other Apostles, the salvation given by Jesus still reaches humanity. They continue the Lord's work.

The First Epistle of St. Peter provides the second reading. It is an admonition, direct and clear, firm and explicit. In effect, it calls upon Christians to put first things first, to love the Lord above all things and to follow the Lord always.

It calls a spade a spade, so to speak. The Christian life is unworthy of the name if it is occasional, quailed or half-hearted.

St. Luke's Gospel provides the last reading.

It is another resurrection narrative, looking back to the Emmaus story, reporting the walk of two disciples to a small town outside Jerusalem. They were

joined along the way by the risen Lord, but only recognized him in the "breaking of the bread" or Eucharist (Lk 24:35).

In the passage immediately after the Gospel reading for this weekend, Jesus appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem after the pair who walked to Emmaus returned to tell them of their experience. Jesus was no longer bound by location or time. Risen from earthly life, victorious over sin, Jesus now lived in the fullness of eternity, but still in the Incarnation, true God and true man.

He showed them his pierced hands and feet. Indeed, these disciples were encountering the Crucified Lord, but he had overcome death and had lived!

This reading is a magnificent testimony to the divine reality of the Eucharist, the "breaking of the bread." In the Eucharist, in actual communion with Jesus, the disciples find clarity.

Reflection

The Church continues to summon us to the joy of Easter celebration. Jesus lives! The readings once more this week exclaim the Church's great trust in and excitement about the resurrection. Jesus is not history. He is now.

In all these readings, the Church calls us to the fact that our redemption is in Jesus. He rescues us from death, from the living death of sin and hopelessness, from eternal death.

As did the Lord, all people—even all believers—must live and eventually die. As Jesus rose, they too will rise if they stand firm with the help of God's grace in their love of and obedience to God. Thus, all believers can anticipate the gift of eternal life with and in God.

Christians further can rejoice in the fact that salvation did not pass away when Jesus, who lived for a time on Earth, ascended into heaven. His mercy and power remain. His Gospel endures. God has provided for us, so that we too may have salvation. We may encounter Jesus.

We reach the risen Jesus, and we learn of him from the Apostles. We encounter the Lord in the Eucharist, in the "breaking of the bread." In communion with Jesus, we solve the riddles of life. †



Daily Readings

Monday, April 27

Acts 6:8-15
Psalm 119:23-24, 26-27, 29-30
John 6:22-29

Tuesday, April 28

St. Peter Chanel, priest and martyr
St. Louis Grignon de Montfort, priest
Acts 7:51-8:1a
Psalm 31:3cd-4, 6, 7b, 8a, 17, 21ab
John 6:30-35

Wednesday, April 29

St. Catherine of Siena, virgin and doctor of the Church
Acts 8:1b-8
Psalm 66:1-3a, 4-7a
John 6:35-40

Thursday, April 30

St. Pius V, pope
Acts 8:26-40

Psalm 66:8-9, 16-17, 20
John 6:44-51

Friday, May 1

St. Joseph the Worker
Acts 9:1-20
Psalm 117:1bc, 2
John 6:52-59

Saturday, May 2

St. Athanasius, bishop and doctor of the Church
Acts 9:31-42
Psalm 116:12-17
John 6:60-69

Sunday, May 3

Fourth Sunday of Easter
Acts 2:14a, 36-41
Psalm 23:1-6
1 Peter 2:20b-25
John 10:1-10

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Diplomatic agreements of the Holy See are prudential decisions open to criticism

QI was surprised to read in the Catholic Press an article criticizing Pope Francis' agreement to allow the Communist



government to nominate candidates for bishops in China. So, my question is this: Are those under the pope's authority allowed to question publicly such an arrangement made by the Holy Father? (Ohio)

AThe answer to your question is "Yes," but first some important background.

The provisional agreement that you reference was made in September 2018 after years of careful negotiation. Previous to that, in a dispute going back for more than half a century, the approximately 12 million Catholics in mainland China were more or less equally divided between an underground organization that recognized the pope's authority to name bishops and a state-supported Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association that named its own bishops.

Under the 2018 agreement, the excommunication of seven bishops who had

been ordained with government approval was lifted, and new bishops are now proposed to the Vatican by the Chinese government after it receives input from the Chinese bishops' conference and Catholics from the areas involved. Then the pope makes the final decision as to whom to appoint.

As a result of the new agreement, all of the Catholic bishops in the world's most populous country are now in communion with the Holy See, and Catholics will have more autonomy in the exercise of their beliefs. The Vatican's secretary of state Cardinal Pietro Parolin said at the time that the agreement helps to give the Church "a greater freedom" so that it can dedicate itself to "the mission of announcing the Gospel."

The Church's decision to enter the agreement was a prudential and pastoral one with which anyone is free to disagree. In fact, one of the strongest critics when the agreement was being considered was Cardinal Joseph Zen, the retired archbishop of Hong Kong.

QI have a question that is personal. I haven't been to church in a while, and I don't usually pray, although recently I have begun to. Will God accept me still, if I start going to church at this point in my life? I want to get close to him, and I hope that it's not too late. (California)

AIt is never too late. God's love for us is deep and everlasting. The Second Letter of St. Peter tells us that the Lord "is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pt 3:9).

Think of the criminal on the cross who turned to Christ only hours before his death and was promised that he would be with Jesus in paradise that very day. And think, too, of St. Augustine, who lived a dissolute life as a young man, fathering a child out of wedlock and who, for years, followed various philosophers only to become disillusioned with their teachings.

When he was in his 30s, Augustine was inspired to pick up a Bible and "chanced" upon these words from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh" (Rom 13:14). Soon after, he was baptized by St. Ambrose and became one of our greatest saints.

Later, reflecting on his experience, Augustine made this keen observation: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." Thank you for your question, and I will pray for you on your journey back to prayer and Catholic practice.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, New York 12203.) †

My Journey to God

A Poem for Easter

When purple Lenten days are through
and eggs are colored rainbow hue
and lily trumpets blow anew,
it's Easter, He is risen, Allelu!

When fiery pillar, Christ, our light
is Easter candle shining bright
from flinty fire that flamed at night,
it's Easter, He is risen, Allelu!

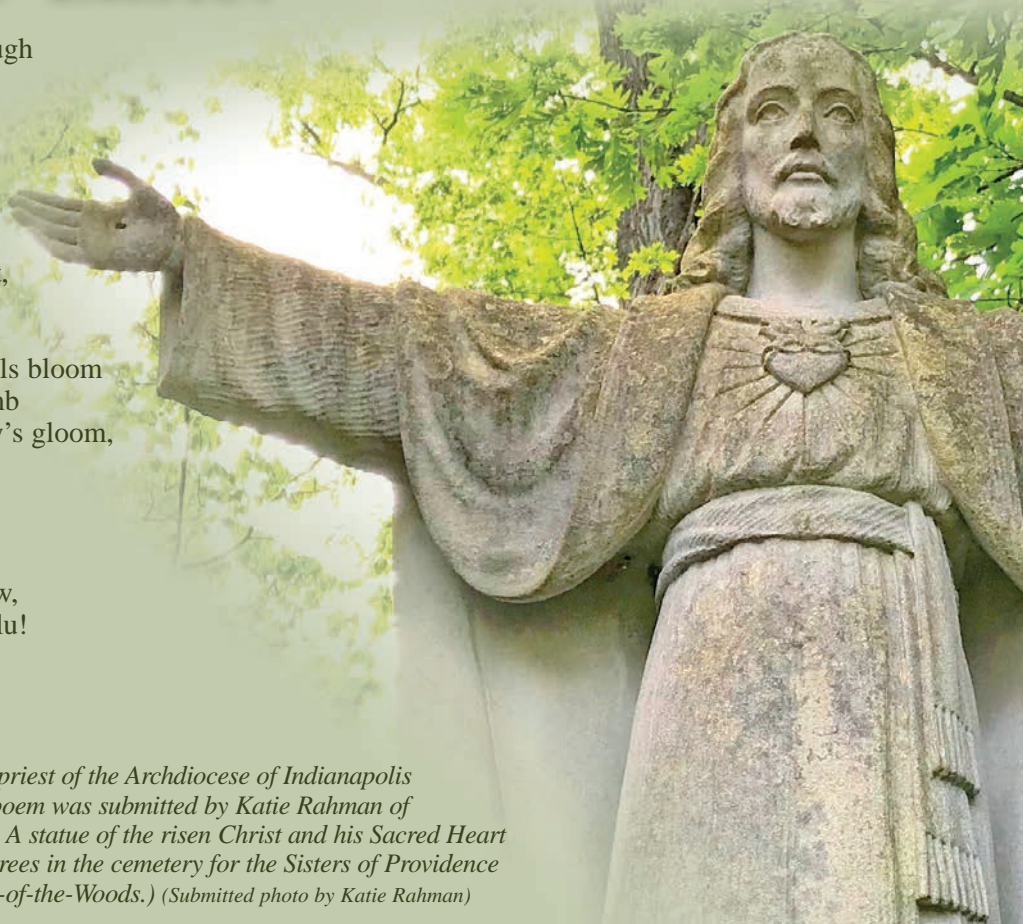
When dead earth wakes and jonquils bloom
and Jesus wakes from Joseph's tomb
and sunbeams cleanse Good Friday's gloom,
it's Easter, He is risen, Allelu!

When alleluias ringing through
bud-green trees to skies of blue
now tell the old "Good News" anew,
it's Easter, He is risen, Allelu, Allelu!

It's Easter, He is risen, Allelu!

(The late Msgr. Lawrence Moran was a priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis who passed away on May 4, 2019. His poem was submitted by Katie Rahman of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute. Photo: A statue of the risen Christ and his Sacred Heart embracing the world stands among the trees in the cemetery for the Sisters of Providence at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, in St. Mary-of-the-Woods.) (Submitted photo by Katie Rahman)

By Monsignor Lawrence Moran



Nurse sees God's healing touch 'in this time of the unknown'

By John Shaughnessy

Catie Walden doesn't consider herself a "hero"—a word often used to describe health care workers on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic. But she does embrace two other titles of honor: nurse and mom.



Catie Walden

As the mother of five children ranging in age from 12 to 3, Walden always strives to keep them safe, healthy and happy. She has the same goal for the children she cares for as a charge nurse in the pediatric emergency department at Ascension St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis.

Yet her motherly instincts have reached a heightened level of concern and care as the coronavirus crisis continues to have an impact on Indiana.

Fortunately, her unit has seen "just a handful" of children affected by the virus in mostly less life-threatening ways, with difficulty of breathing being a common factor. Still, the pediatric emergency unit is just separated from the adult emergency area by a set of double doors.

"We're dealing with a great bit of unknown," Walden says. "It's a hot bed. You're walking into an area that is alive with the virus. There's a great deal of anxiety that you'll bring it home to your kids, your spouse and the community."

At the same time, she also has a great deal of faith in the nurses she works with, colleagues who "shine in the midst of this." And she has a similar respect for the physicians who "have really stepped up" and who have strived to protect the staff.

"You see God's work played out in that way," says Walden, a member of St. Maria Goretti Parish in Westfield, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese. "It has moved me closer to God."

The crisis has also changed her usual routines in relation to God.

"I do miss going to Mass tremendously. It's painful to get five kids there, but when you find you don't have it, it's a missing piece."

So they watch a livestream Sunday Mass together at home as a family.

Adjustments have also come when she returns from her 12-hour shift at the hospital from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. She takes off her shoes before she gets in the car. Her clothes go in the washer

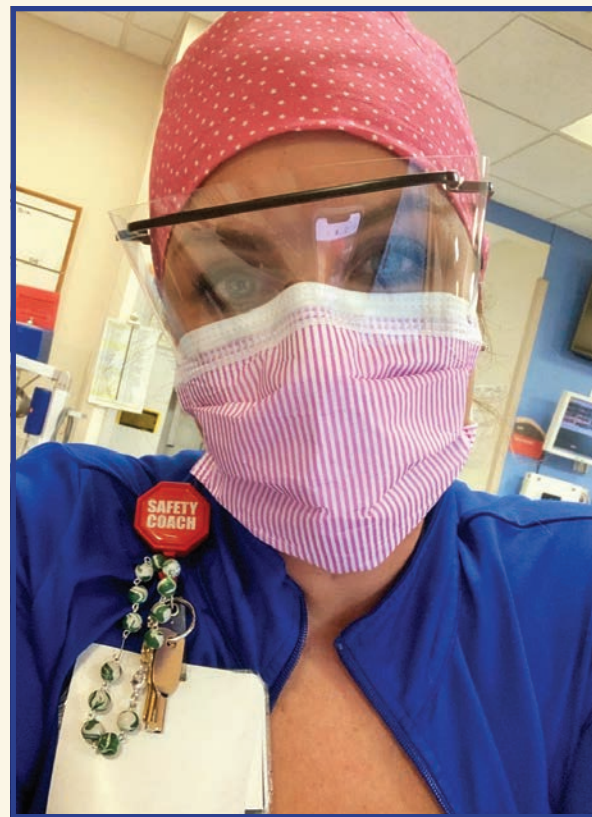
immediately after she arrives home. And there are "no hugs, no kisses" for her children until she has showered.

The crisis has also led to one overwhelmingly positive change that she has embraced.

"There has been some good that has come out of this—the person-to-person relationships," she says. "That's where I find God the most. I'm spending a lot of time with my family, and that's wonderful. I've had this heightened connection with my colleagues, and it's wonderful."

And while she can't visit with her mother for her mom's safety, their phone conversations have deepened.

"In this time of the unknown, God has provided these improved relationships with other people. That has strengthened my faith. That's what God has provided me." †



Catie Walden wears her protective equipment as she cares for children as a charge nurse in the pediatric emergency department at Ascension St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis. (Submitted photo)

DUNNAWAY

continued from page 1

families and be respectful of our patient's wishes."

That approach is still in the forefront, but the deadly contagiousness of the coronavirus has added a dramatic challenge as infected patients aren't allowed visitors, and there can't always be face-to-face conversations with patients' families. Technology helps, Dunnaway says, but the challenge continues and takes its toll, including on health care workers.

"I think we all go into medicine—health care—to help people. And it's very hard when people are put

in positions where they feel they can't do everything they normally do for patients and families. It's a unique situation we haven't faced before.

"Those dealing with some of our sickest patients are going to have to find ways to deal with it—not just during the pandemic, but going forward. Everyone is absolutely doing the best they can, but I worry about emotional exhaustion and compassion fatigue.

At the same time, she draws hope, encouragement and strength from two realities she has witnessed during this time. For her, it starts with Ascension's mission, a mission "rooted in the loving ministry of Jesus as healer."

"It sets the tone for everything we do for our patients," Dunnaway says. "From that, everything else naturally

flows. Whether we're in a pandemic situation or not, our framework is already there for these tough issues. It helps us as we go forward."

The second reality that bolsters her is the response of the health care workers to the crisis.

"One of the things I've definitely seen is a real sense of caring and love for each other that has been just much more evident. It's not just caring for patients. We're all caring for one another more. People are showing such incredible kindness and compassion for each other—stepping into roles they're not used to because they see a need for it.

"People show you what they're made of in these situations. They've been tremendous." †

KENNEDY

continued from page 1

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At least 27 American health care workers have died from the virus.

"I was scared because I saw how healthy people became so sick," says Kennedy, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis with her husband Sean and their children. "I was more concerned about spreading it to Sean, the kids, and my parents and Sean's mother who had babysat the kids."

Kennedy drew strength and support from a friend who had already recovered from the virus. There were also the prayers of friends, relatives and fellow parishioners as she stayed home for two weeks, trying to recover. The prayers were answered when she felt she had returned to her normal self by Easter Sunday.

The next day, on April 13, she returned to Community Hospital East to care for patients infected with the coronavirus. She announced her return in a Facebook

post, declaring, "I'm lucky. I recovered when so many people have not."

Her return to the front lines exemplifies why so many people consider health care workers as "heroes" during this pandemic. Yet Kennedy just views it as a reflection of what many people in health care have done consistently for years.

"I think most health care workers go into this field to help people," she says. "I feel like it's what I'm called to do. I enjoy being there for other people."

She believes God has been there for her, too—and not just during her recovery.

"I've been able to see God through other people in this situation—through the nurses, the other health care workers, and the generosity of the community supporting health care workers. You get to see a lot of good in people. It renews your faith in people and in God."

Even with their own health at risk, Kennedy has seen her co-workers rise to the occasion time after time.

"It's amazing to see how the nurses have come together to be there for their patients when their families can't be there for them" because of the potentially contagious and devastating nature of the virus.

The heartbreaking reality that family members of

coronavirus patients can't visit their loved ones led to another extra effort by the hospital staff. When it became clear that one patient was dying, Kennedy and her sister Emily met with the hospital's palliative care director and IT leadership to develop a plan so the family could "see" the patient.

"We spent hours working out a way to get video into the room so that the patient's family could see the patient one last time before the patient passed away," Kennedy notes. "It was a great example of different disciplines coming together to help out a patient and their family."

Such video connections have continued for patients and their families.

Kennedy also recalls one special moment when people associated with the hospital came together for a prayer service for a patient infected by the virus, a person of the Hindu faith. People united for the prayer service through a Zoom video connection.

"We prayed a rosary, and they shared some of their Hindu prayers. It was really neat to see how people have come together in faith."

It's been part of her own journey during this crisis.

"My faith has definitely helped me," she says. "I've drawn closer to God." †

Online Lay Ministry Formation

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has partnered with the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Distance University (CDU) to offer not-for-credit online theology classes:

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P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
carlahill@archindy.org



Katie and Sean Kennedy of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis pose for a family photo with their children Aiden, Alannah, center, and Kayleigh. (Submitted photo)

'Little mission' of firefighter and Holy Spirit parishioner leads to making and giving away of 2,800 face masks

By Sean Gallagher

Back in early April, Jim Donlan had a problem. Masks were starting to be used more widely in public settings in the social distancing effort to stop the spread of the coronavirus, a practice that was soon endorsed by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The problem was that Donlan had a hard time finding masks for his family. So, like many other people, he started making them himself.

But he didn't just stop at helping his family. Donlan and volunteers who have come to the garage of his home on the east side of Indianapolis have made and given away some 2,800 masks in about three weeks of work.

"This is one of the most enjoyable things I've done," said Donlan, a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis. "There's nothing better that you can give to somebody right now than a mask. Right now, people are scared of this virus and they're looking for a way to protect themselves and others. It's a selfless act to be wearing one right now."

Donlan knows well what it means to be selfless. He worked for 33 years as a firefighter for the Indianapolis Fire Department before retiring at the end of February. He's also been an assistant wrestling coach for the past three years at Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School in Indianapolis.

It wasn't long after retiring that the spread of the coronavirus began to dominate people's attention and significantly change their daily lives. While Donlan enjoyed being retired, he knew he could do more.

In addition to making masks, he's now started working as a frontline medical worker during the pandemic as an emergency room technician at Community Hospital East in Indianapolis.

Donlan accepted the job shortly before the pandemic began making significant changes in daily life in the U.S. The threat of the virus, though, has not given him second thoughts about his new line of work.

"It didn't change my mind about it at all," Donlan said. "I thought that, more than ever, this was a time that I could serve a little bit."

He reflected that his experience of three decades as a firefighter helped form him to accept danger in serving others.

"I was blessed by my job in the fire department," Donlan said. "In return, I tried to give the fire department the best I had. I wanted to do everything I could in my power to maybe be the last line of hope."

He looks on his efforts to make and give away masks modestly, calling it his "little mission."

"It's nothing special," he said. "It's just one more thing for many people."

The masks that Donlan and those who volunteer with him make are composed of heavy-duty shop paper towels, coffee filters, pipe cleaners, staples and rubber bands. They cost about 10 cents to make and can be assembled in seconds.

The paper towels he uses, he said, have been tested and shown to be three times more effective than ordinary cotton cloth in filtering particles. Donlan also noted that the masks he makes are reusable and can be gently washed in water and air dried.

"The whole time that we're in operation in here, everybody's in gloves and masks," Donlan said. "We're constantly sanitizing



Jim Donlan, a member of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, assembles a mask on April 9 in the garage of his home on the east side of Indianapolis. In less than three weeks, Donlan and volunteers who have come to his home have made and given away some 2,800 masks that can be used to help stop the spread of the coronavirus. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

the exterior of our gloves. I'll sanitize the workstations three or four times throughout the day. We do our best to make the mask not be part of the problem."

Anyone who comes to volunteer also has their temperature checked.

Just as Donlan takes a modest view of his efforts in making the masks, he also finds satisfaction in his work in small ways.

"If this would even be so lucky as to prevent one infection, it would all have been worth it," he said. "Not one life. Just one infection."

His modest selflessness in trying to help others during the pandemic was formed by his faith and his family. He's the third generation of his family that has served as a firefighter.

"God's been so good to me," Donlan said. "So, any time that I can give back, I love the opportunity."

While he spoke about his efforts from a work station in his garage, a fellow Holy Spirit parishioner, Mike O'Connor, came to pick up some masks that he was planning on giving to volunteers at food distribution points in Indianapolis for students now going without meals from schools.

"It's the American way of sitting down and figuring out what each and every one of us can do and bring to the task," O'Connor said of Donlan's efforts. "I'm not surprised, having known Jim as long as I have. I've seen him jump in, whether it's with the wrestling team at Scecina or other things. He steps up to the plate."

Although living in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic has been a challenge for everyone, Donlan noted, he's confident that it will have a good effect on society in the long term.

"You're going to look back and remember this time and how positive it was," Donlan said. "It was scary, but positive. A lot of people are coming together."

(To view a video of how Jim Donlan makes masks to be used to help stop the spread of the coronavirus, go to the Facebook page of Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School at bit.ly/2JXoUh8 [case sensitive]. To learn more about Donlan's efforts, to get masks from him or to volunteer, call him at 317-457-5608. He can also be contacted by e-mail at jamesdonlan83@gmail.com.) †

Visiting students

Father Michael Keucher, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and sacramental minister of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County, recently visited the 72 households that have children enrolled in St. Joseph School. He and Billy Cross, St. Joseph's pastoral associate, drove to the homes in St. Joseph's school bus. Practicing social distancing, they greeted the students from the road to show them how they miss them and how much they love them.

Above, James Werst, a student of St. Joseph School in Shelbyville, waves to Father Michael Keucher and Billy Cross as the pair drove around Shelby County to visit the 72 households that have children enrolled at the school.

Below, Father Michael Keucher, left, and Billy Cross stop outside a home of a student of St. Joseph School. They are accompanied by Father Keucher's dog, Sister Glory.

(Submitted photos)

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'It felt powerful'

Adopted sisters become sisters in Christ through sacraments of initiation

By Natalie Hoefler

As churches remained closed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, Easter was bittersweet for Catholics across the country.

Perhaps none felt the loss more than the catechumens and candidates who eagerly anticipated being received into the full communion of the Church on Easter weekend.

But different circumstances can lead to people being welcomed into the Church throughout the year.

Say, for instance, four sisters want to be formed in the faith and receive the sacraments together. Four adopted teenage sisters. Of their own desire with no pushing from their parents.

Such was the case on Nov. 24, 2019, when the Higdon girls—Gracie, 17, Emma, 16, Sophia, 14 and Shelby, 13—received their baptism, first Communion and confirmation during a special Mass at Holy Trinity Church in Edinburgh.

They are the granddaughters of Larry and Amy Higdon, members of the parish who adopted the girls in 2011.

"I was overwhelmed," says Larry of watching his daughters receive the sacraments of initiation. "It's a memory I'll cherish all my life."

'I wanted to be closer to God'

The Higdon family was not going to Mass at the time they adopted their granddaughters.

But for some reason, says Larry, the girls wanted to be part of a faith community. So the sisters attended services and joined a youth group at a small church in Fairfield where the family lives.

Before long, the girls' desire to go to church inspired Larry.

"I told Amy, 'We all need to go to church together,'" he recalls. "I wanted to go to Holy Trinity where I was raised."

The girls liked the parish and the parishioners. Gracie describes the congregation as "small, and the people are very nice."

It was around the time the family started going to Holy Trinity that Larry became ill and was no longer able to work or be active as he had been before.

"My dad was getting sick and school was horrible," Sophia, then age 10, recalls. "But I kept turning to God every time something bad would happen.

He never let me go. There were nights I cried myself to sleep, but he would always be there with me."

The sisters were soon attending religious education class at Holy Trinity on Sundays and getting involved with the parish's youth group and other activities.

But despite their involvement and the warm welcome they received, the girls still had a nagging feeling of not entirely belonging.

"I wanted to be closer to God and the people in my church, but felt like I couldn't because I wasn't Catholic," says Shelby.

Emma agrees.

"I just felt I would feel better about joining activities and youth group and helping at the church if I were Catholic," she says.

Then one day last year, Larry and Amy asked the girls a question: Did they want to be baptized and become Catholic?

"That was a mind-blower to me," says Sophia. "I said, 'I can be baptized? I thought I was too old!'"

The three younger girls "couldn't wait" to start taking Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (RCIC) classes and receive their sacraments, says Larry.

But Gracie "was reluctant," he recalls. She wanted to receive the sacraments, but because of her shyness "she didn't want to get baptized in front of other people."

So a special Mass was arranged for the girls and four siblings of another family who participated in RCIC with them. The two families would form a small, intimate group to witness the youths as they received the sacraments of initiation. Gracie agreed to the arrangement.

'It felt powerful'

The Mass was scheduled for 2 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 24—and word of the liturgy spread.

"Everyone [in the parish] knows the girls' story and got attached to the girls and wanted to be there," says Larry.

"We told Gracie it was just going to be us and a few others, and the whole Church showed up," adds Amy. "Gracie looked at me and I said, 'It's OK, it's OK.'"

"But I kept my eyes on her the whole time. I could hear in my head, 'Aaad



Father Christopher Wadelton, sacramental minister of Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburgh, prepares Gracie, left, Shelby, Emma and Sophia Higdon for the sacrament of baptism on Nov. 24, 2019, in Holy Trinity Church. (Submitted photo)

we have a runner!' But everything went well, and the girls were all happy in the end."

Gracie wasn't alone in feeling nervous at the sight of the full church.

"I looked out at all the people and was scared," admits Sophia. "But I realized that's my Church family and they don't criticize or judge, and they all love me. ... It felt powerful."

Each of the girls cited receiving the sacrament of confirmation as the most memorable part of the Mass. They had enjoyed researching meaningful patron saints during RCIC.

Emma chose St. Nicholas "because his feast day is on my birthday," and Shelby, who likes helping blind students at her school, selected St. Lucy, patron saint of the blind and visually impaired.

But Sophia struggled to find a saint who "interested" her.

"We had cards with saints," she recalls of her RCIC classes. "I read through over a dozen. I couldn't find one I was interested in."

"Then I came to St. Monica. She lived a rough life. But everything she went through, she never gave up on God and turned to him and kept her faith, and that's how she got through life. She was always happy because she always had God with her. She inspired me."

'God in my heart'

Looking back, Sophia says the day she was welcomed into the full communion of the Church "was awesome." As the family drove to a restaurant for a celebratory meal after the Mass, "I was sobbing so much that Dad had to pull [the car] over and tell me it was OK because God was with me. I knew that—I was just overwhelmed with so many feelings."

Gone now are the feelings the girls had of not fully belonging.

"I feel like I'm part of the [parish] more," says Emma. "I feel more comfortable talking with other Catholics.

I like joining in activities and feeling like I belong."

Gracie says it's "nice" being Catholic because "I have God in my heart," while Shelby feels more comfortable "talking with people in my church and asking them questions about [the faith]."

And the girls give back to their faith community as well, says Larry.

"Anytime the parish needs help, the girls will do it—shovel snow, clean, you name it," he says. "They're very involved for their ages."

Even the closing of churches to help stop the spread of the coronavirus so soon after receiving their sacraments has not lessened the girls' faith. They watch Mass with their parents on Sunday mornings. On Sunday evenings, they pray the rosary as a family while on FaceTime with a relative.

Still, says Sophia, "I've cried because I love my church and getting to see everybody there. I love to help people. It's just not the same, not going to church anymore."

Despite the church's temporary closure, she has still found a way to help her fellow parishioners. Deacon Russell Woodard, Holy Trinity's parish life coordinator, dropped off at the Higdon house the parish's palms that would have been used during the Palm Sunday Mass.

"I'm making crosses out of them to hand out to everyone when we can go back to church," says Sophia. "I've already made 400 so far."

Even though she can't worship at Mass in person for the time being, "It's nice being Catholic," says Sophia. "I feel more loved than I did before. I feel like I have God and Jesus in my life more now than before."

For Larry, having his daughters choose to become Catholic "meant the world to me. It was one of the happiest days of my life to watch all four of them get baptized. It's a memory I'll cherish all my life." †



Shelby, left, Amy, Emma, Larry, Sophia and Gracie Higdon pose for a family photo on Nov. 24, 2019, after the sisters were received into the full communion of the Church at Holy Trinity Church in Edinburgh. (Submitted photo)