



The

Criterion

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Guest Column

Chance encounter leads to question on how we can pray, page 12.

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Some 1,200 men kneel in prayer during a Mass on Feb. 18 at East Central High School in St. Leon that was part of the eighth annual E6 Catholic Men's Conference sponsored by All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

E6 conference participants exhorted to become 'men of the Eucharist'

By Sean Gallagher

ST. LEON—"No cross. No glory. No Mass. No glory."

As Father Jonathan Meyer offered that simple and direct message during a homily on Feb. 18, some 1,200 men ranging in age from teenagers to those who could be their grandfathers sat before him in an auditorium at East Central High School in St. Leon.

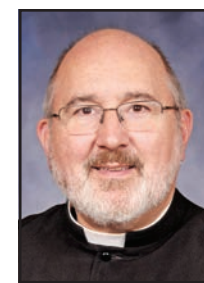
They had come there from Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio and other states for the eighth annual E6 Catholic Men's Conference, sponsored by All Saints Parish in Dearborn County.

Father Meyer shared this message during the first year of the three-year National Eucharistic Revival. Named by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops as a eucharistic preacher

See CONFERENCE, page 8

Father Daniel Mahan named director of USCCB's Institute on the Catechism

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—The recently formed Institute on the Catechism will carry out the U.S. bishops' vision of the importance of "connecting



Fr. Daniel Mahan

evangelization and catechesis," according to Father Daniel Mahan, an Indianapolis archdiocesan priest just named as the institute's director.

The institute is housed within the Secretariat for Evangelization and

Catechesis at the Washington headquarters of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

Father Michael J.K. Fuller, USCCB general secretary, appointed Father Mahan on Feb. 27 to the post, effective on July 1. The appointment is for three years.

This "evangelizing catechesis," a focus of the Church as a whole, aims to teach the beliefs of the Catholic faith in a "compelling and inviting" way to help young Catholics foster a "deeper relationship with the Lord and help them see their place within the body of Christ, the Church, and in turn, reach out to others to share the Good News," Father Mahan told OSV News.

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, Conn., chairman of the USCCB Subcommittee on the Catechism, which reviews catechetical texts and provides consultation to the bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, presented a proposal to create an Institute for the Catechism at the bishops' spring meeting in June 2021, which was held virtually because of the pandemic.

The Institute on the Catechism was created "to reimplement and reinvigorate the mandate of the subcommittee in responding to the changing catechetical landscape," said a USCCB news release announcing Father Mahan's appointment.

See MAHAN, page 9

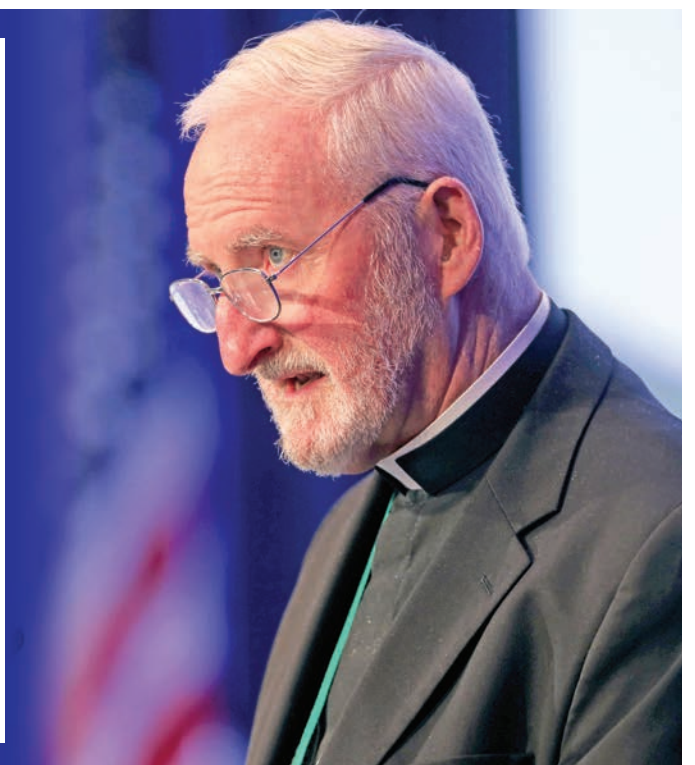
Fellow prelates recall late Bishop O'Connell for his Gospel simplicity

LOS ANGELES (OSV News)—During his seven years as auxiliary bishop in Los Angeles, Bishop David G. O'Connell made many friends—and a strong impression—among his brother bishops.

The native of County Cork, Ireland, was one of three priests named auxiliary bishops for Los Angeles by Pope Francis in July 2015. The pope was known to refer privately to the future bishops—then-Father O'Connell, then-Father Robert E. Barron, a Chicago-born media evangelist, and then-Msgr. Joseph V. Brennan, an LA priest, as "Archbishop Gomez's triplets."

See O'CONNELL, page 9

Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop David G. O'Connell is pictured during a Nov. 17, 2021, session of the of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore. The bishop was found murdered in his home on Feb. 18 (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)



Registration is open for 2024 National Eucharistic Congress

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—Registration for the National Eucharistic Congress on July 17-21, 2024, has opened. The congress will take place in Indianapolis with the Church in central and southern Indiana serving as the host archdiocese for the historic event.

The Year of the National Eucharistic Congress and Missionary Sending 2024-25 is the third and final year of the U.S. bishops' National Eucharistic Revival.

The congress is expected to draw more than 80,000 people, and organizers have compared the event to World Youth Day, with prayer and liturgies, catechesis for individuals and families, and a festival-like atmosphere.

Those who want to attend can sign up at the National Eucharistic Congress's website, www.eucharisticcongress.org.

Launched last year, the National Eucharistic Revival is a three-year campaign by the U.S. bishops to increase the Catholic understanding of and devotion to Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. Part of the impetus for the campaign was a Pew Research Center study in the fall of 2019 that showed just 30% to 40% of Catholics understand and believe in the real presence.

A more recent study conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University found that 50% of Catholics know the teaching on the real presence in the Eucharist and only 40% believe this teaching.

The revival opened on June 19, 2022, on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, traditionally known as *Corpus Christi*. Many dioceses, including the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, marked the day last year with eucharistic processions.

Speaking to the media in November about the revival, Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minn., said the beauty and diversity expressed in those processions "capture what is at the heart of this movement, which is a movement in which we seek to invite people to a transformative encounter with Christ in

the Eucharist so that they might be healed, unified and sent on mission."

The diocesan year has included the launch of Heart of the Revival weekly e-newsletter (available in English and Spanish), expanded content on the National Eucharistic Revival's website (eucharisticrevival.org) and the training of more than 50 priests from around the U.S. to be eucharistic preachers.

Father Jonathan Meyer and Dominican Father Patrick Hyde are among the priests from across the United States selected to minister in this initiative.

Father Meyer is pastor *in solidum* with Father Daniel Mahan of the parishes of All Saints in Dearborn County, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Aurora, St. Lawrence in Lawrenceburg and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross in Bright.

Father Patrick is pastor of St. Paul Catholic Center in Bloomington.

The Washington-based National Eucharistic Congress nonprofit was formed in 2022 to plan the national event. Bishop Cozzens serves as chairman of its board of directors.

In an April 2022 interview with Catholic News Service, Tim Glemkowski, executive director of the National Eucharistic Congress, noted that "the original vision" for the revival began to be discussed when then-Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron of Los Angeles was chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis shortly after the Pew study results on Catholics' understanding of the Real Presence.

Bishop Barron, now shepherd of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minn., was succeeded as evangelization chairman in November 2020 by Bishop Cozzens, who continued to move ahead with plans for the revival, and in 2021, the bishops voted to approve the initiative.

In November 2022, the bishops elected Archbishop Charles C. Thompson of Indianapolis to succeed Bishop Cozzens as chairman of the evangelization and catechesis committee in November 2023. †



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

March 2–13, 2023

March 2-4

The Way Forward Ecclesial Conference at Boston College, Boston, Mass.

March 7 – 10:30 a.m.

Priest Personnel Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

March 7 – 7 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for youths of St. Christopher Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

March 8 – 8:30 a.m.

Visit to Bishop Chatard High School, Indianapolis

March 8 – 11 a.m.

Mass and lunch for Employee Lenten Day of Reflection at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, Indianapolis

March 9 – 8:15 a.m.

Virtual Judicatories meeting

March 9 – 10 a.m.

Leadership Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

March 9 – 3:30 p.m.

Catholic Community Foundation Pre-Board meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center

March 9 – 7 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for youths of Holy Spirit Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

March 12 – 11 a.m.

Mass at Korean Community Chapel, Indianapolis

March 13 – 9 a.m.

Virtual USCCB Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations Committee meeting

Saying rosary as family seen as one way to fulfill Lenten pillar of prayer

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—Tom Lyman, director of Family Rosary, hopes that especially during Lent—which calls Catholics to commit more time to the Lord in prayer—families will pray the rosary together and take part in the ministry's "At the Foot of the Cross" Lenten campaign.

Family Rosary is part of Holy Cross Family Ministries, which continues the mission of Holy Cross Father Patrick Peyton, known for the adage "The family that prays together stays together." Because he urged families to say the rosary together, he was aptly dubbed "The Rosary Priest."

The Holy Cross organization also includes Family Theater Productions, Catholic Mom, the Museum of Family Prayer, Father Peyton Family Institutes and the Peyton Institute for Domestic Church Life.

"The rosary is really an ideal family prayer and a way to fortify the domestic Church," which is the family, Lyman told OSV News.

He suggested family members gather together at a routine time when they can reflect on the mysteries of the rosary, which is divided into five decades. Each decade represents a mystery or event in the life of Jesus. There are four sets of "mysteries"—joyful, luminous, sorrowful, and glorious—in which Christ's work of redemption, from his incarnation to the coronation of Mary as queen of heaven and Earth, are contemplated.

Through these mysteries, "we are walking through the important moments in the life of Jesus and Mary. By doing this we are attending the 'school of Mary'

as [St.] John Paul II said," Lyman added.

Details of the "At the Foot of the Cross" Lenten campaign can be found at familyrosary.org. The site has a link to prayers for families and other prayers and a link to sign up to receive a daily family prayer. Other links connect visitors to a "How to Pray the Rosary" guide and additional resources. Parents can sign up for a weekly e-blast and find free ebooks, videos, prayer cards, a Lenten calendar and other materials.

Family Rosary said in a news release all of its ministry centers around the world are participating in the campaign, with materials offered in English and Spanish; some countries are offering other languages as well.

Father Peyton felt prayer "was very important for the family to remain grounded in its relationship with God," Lyman said.

The priest knew from his experience "of his big family praying the rosary together" that this "formed each member of the family and formed their hearts to love God and love one another and reflecting on those mysteries day after day gave them a language and a way also to see God's action in their own lives," Lyman added.

Father Peyton, who is a candidate for sainthood, wanted people to see "the good things and the bad things" that happen "in a context of life lived for God," he told OSV News. "Once we lose our connection in our relationship with God as his children ... we suffer and while suffering is a part of life, God wants to give us a way through it and through to the Easter Sunday that awaits." †

Catholics may eat meat on Friday, March 17, St. Patrick's Day, but abstain on another day

Many parishes and cities across the Archdiocese of Indianapolis are planning on holding St. Patrick's Day celebrations on March 17, the feast of St. Patrick. March 17, a Lenten Friday, is a penitential day for Catholics when they do not eat meat, or soups or sauces made from meat.

Recognizing that this is a traditional day of celebration for many Catholics and that a person cannot celebrate and do penance at the same time, Archbishop

Charles C. Thompson has commuted the obligation for Catholics of the archdiocese to abstain from meat on March 17.

Commutation means that those persons in the archdiocese who wish to eat meat on the Friday of St. Patrick's Day are free to do so, provided that they abstain from meat on some other day during the week of March 19 in addition to Friday, March 24. †

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Environmental advocates encouraged by changing climate at Statehouse

By Victoria Arthur

While falling short of their goal, members of a growing grassroots movement in Indiana for addressing climate change say they are heartened by progress this year at the Statehouse in cultivating support for their cause.



For the second year in a row, advocates—including the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC)—backed legislation to create a climate solutions task force that would study issues related to sustainable and clean energy solutions. The task force, comprising legislators and environmental experts, ultimately would have been charged with delivering a report and recommendations to the General Assembly and the governor no later than November 2024.

While last year's proposed legislation never received a hearing, this year's version—Senate Bill 335—did get a hearing but no vote. Although the bipartisan bill will not move forward in this legislative session, advocates and lawmakers alike are expressing hope that the groundwork laid in the past couple of years will lead to success in the future.

"This is good foundation for future policy," said Alexander Mingus, associate



Alexander Mingus

director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "The conversation that we had during the committee meeting was hopeful, and the ICC believes that establishing a task force is a very

reasonable step—a prudent step—to studying some of the issues around environmental resiliency and climate change in Indiana." Mingus joined more than a dozen supporters of Senate Bill 335 to present testimony during the Feb. 20 meeting of the Senate environmental affairs committee. In his remarks, Mingus shared Catholic social teaching about the "relationship of stewardship" between humanity and the environment.

"This emphasis has endured through the lifetimes of the popes of recent history, continuing now with Pope Francis," Mingus said. "This teaching has been addressed not to just Catholic Christians of the world, but to all people of good will, Catholics and non-Catholics alike."

Most recently, the Church has viewed environmental issues through the lens of "Laudato Si': On Care for Our

Common Home," the groundbreaking 2015 encyclical on the environment by Pope Francis. In this pivotal teaching document, the pope called for dialogue and swift action worldwide to protect the environment, curb irresponsible development, and respect God's creation.

Mingus acknowledged the difficulties and "ideological battles" surrounding many environmental issues—especially the topic of climate change. But he and other supporters of Senate Bill 335 emphasized that the legislation would merely establish a framework for future policy discussions.

"The task force proposed by this bill does not rush into any one policy idea, but rather sets the stage for understanding which policies might be most effective for addressing a changing climate in Indiana," he said.

Preservation of state forests, funding for energy-efficient buildings, and support for workers affected by a changing energy industry would be among the issues addressed by the task force.

Senate Bill 335 was backed by a broad coalition of supporters ranging from business leaders to environmental groups to religious organizations. It was carried forward in the Senate by a cross-section of lawmakers representing both political parties and diverse backgrounds, including Sen. Eric Bassler (R-Washington), who said that his Catholic faith informs his thinking about these issues.

"One thing that God calls us to do and obviously the Church calls us to do is to care for and be a good steward of God's creation," said Bassler, a member of Our Lady of Hope Parish in Washington, Ind., who was among several co-authors of the legislation. "I think that establishing this task force is a way to do that."

While expressing dismay that the bill did not come up for a vote, Bassler pointed to the circuitous path that lawmaking efforts often take.

"When it comes to the legislative process, sometimes in year one when a bill is written and submitted, it doesn't even get a hearing," he said. "And maybe in year two or three it gets a hearing but not a vote. And maybe in year three or four it gets a hearing and a vote. We can't make anything happen on the Senate side this year, but maybe we can do this again and get a vote next year.

"My instinct is that if this were to get a vote in a committee and then on the Senate floor, I think it would pass," Bassler continued. "Sometimes when we talk about environmental or climate-type issues, it can be polarizing. So maybe it takes a while for people to get used to the idea. I'm cautiously optimistic that we can see something happen next session."

Sen. Shelli Yoder (D-Bloomington), the

primary author of Senate Bill 335, shared that hope. She and Bassler expressed gratitude to the ICC and other supporters of the legislation—and gave much of the credit behind the effort to an enterprising group of Indiana high school students.

Confront the Climate Crisis, established in West Lafayette in 2020, is a grassroots campaign that now comprises more than 150 high school students across the state who raise awareness about environmental issues and provide research and input to lawmakers. Beginning last year with Sen. Ron Alting (R-Lafayette), who brought forth similar legislation to establish a climate solutions task force, members of the group have been actively engaged at the Statehouse and presented testimony on Senate Bill 335.

"I appreciate so much the students coming at this with such passion and resilience and laser focus," said Yoder, who was a co-author on Alting's bill last year. "They so effectively and relentlessly got to work, and I got to work. We worked to get our bill a hearing this year, and really worked to get it a vote, but we weren't successful at that. But we got further along in the process than we did last year, and the students should be incredibly proud of what they were able to achieve."

Rahul Durai, who at 16 is executive director and co-founder of Confront the Climate Crisis, said that his organization will redouble its efforts in 2024.

"I'm encouraged by a lot of the conversations I had the day of the hearing because there are some senators who are beginning to talk about climate change and are beginning to show interest," said Durai, a junior at West Lafayette Junior/Senior High School. "We will be pushing for this or similar legislation again in 2024 and continuing to advocate for responsible climate legislation for Indiana."

Meanwhile, environmental advocates are hailing success on another measure. House Bill 1138, which would require childcare and pre-kindergarten facilities to test drinking water for lead contamination, unanimously passed the House Feb. 22 on its third reading.

Authored by Rep. Carolyn Jackson (D-Hammond), the bill now moves to the Senate for consideration at the midpoint of the legislative session, known as crossover.

The ICC and other allies will follow the progress of that bill while looking at ways to help ensure that the climate solutions task force becomes reality one day. Benedictine Sister Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick, one of the founding members of the Creation Care Commission of



Sr. Sheila Marie Fitzpatrick, O.S.B.

the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, was among those who provided written testimony for the hearing on Senate Bill 335.

"Awareness is growing," said Sister Sheila, a member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. "We definitely

made progress from last year to this year, and my hope is that it will continue to strengthen and grow."

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org. This website includes access to I-CAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church's position on key issues. Those who sign up for I-CAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †

Dialogue, not revenge, must prevail in the Holy Land, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Rather than foment hate and seek revenge, Palestinians and Israelis need to engage in dialogue in the pursuit of peace, Pope Francis said.

After praying the *Angelus* with an estimated 20,000 visitors in St. Peter's Square on Feb. 26, the pope prayed in a special way for those in the Holy Land to "find the way of brotherhood and peace with the aid of the international community."

Israeli and Palestinian authorities published a joint statement to that end on Feb. 26 after a meeting in Aqaba, Jordan, that brought together the security chiefs of both countries for the first time in several years, along with senior U.S., Egyptian and Jordanian officials.

In the statement, both sides reaffirmed the need for "de-escalation on the ground" to prevent further violence and Israel committed to suspend Israeli settlement in the West Bank for a period of four months—a major source of tension for Palestinians who want to establish an

independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"How to stop this spiral of violence?" the pope asked on Feb. 26. "I renew my call for dialogue to prevail over hate and revenge."

At least 62 Palestinians and 12 Israelis have been killed this year, according to reports by the Palestinian Authority and Israeli foreign ministries, outpacing violence in the Holy Land last year which was the bloodiest on record.

Pope Francis also expressed his concern over recent terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso, where Islamic extremists took responsibility for killing more than 70 soldiers and taking five hostages in an attack on a military convoy on Feb. 24.

On the first Sunday of Lent, the pope reflected on the day's Gospel reading from St. Matthew in which the devil tests Jesus in the wilderness. He explained that Jesus does not succumb to the devil's efforts to tempt him and instead responds with the word of God. †

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Editorial



Pope Francis, dressed in the purple vestments of the Lenten season, delivers the homily during an Ash Wednesday Mass on Feb. 22 at Rome's Basilica of Santa Sabina. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Use Lent to become people of truth, reconciliation and love

There was recently a beautiful example of Christian unity where disciples of the Lord from various Christian traditions came together to share their love for Christ.

Worshippers from across the country and beyond traveled to a chapel at Asbury University in Wilmore, Ky., to participate in a non-stop session of prayer, praise, worship and testimonials. The event started on Feb. 8 and ended on Feb. 23.

Catholics were among those who journeyed to the Christian liberal arts college located southwest of Lexington, Ky., to be a part of the spontaneous event.

"It's almost like a wellspring," Father Norman Fischer, pastor of St. Peter Claver Parish in Lexington, and chaplain at Lexington Catholic High School, told OSV News. "You just know right away that God is there."

"People are coming from all over—as far away as Hawaii, Mexico, New Zealand, Indonesia, everywhere," Christel Broady, associate professor of English as a Second Language at Asbury, told OSV News.

Broady, who is also Catholic, said the sight of students "suddenly kneeling together ... arm in arm" brought her to tears.

"To see all these young people in reverent worship, quiet and ... giving God the glory, made me so happy, as a Catholic, as a mother, as a teacher," Broady added.

Father Fischer said he visited Asbury after celebrating Sunday Mass on Feb. 12, and saw several current and former Lexington Catholic High School students there.

"Hands were raised, people were singing, and all were in one accord," said Father Fischer, adding he was reminded of Psalm 133:1, in which the psalmist declares "how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together as one."

The Asbury phenomenon is "pure" and "definitely of God, definitely of the Holy Spirit," the priest added.

Our faith instructs us the Lenten season is a time to focus on prayer, fasting and almsgiving—what Pope Francis on Ash Wednesday called the three great paths to take on this journey of truth and reconciliation. He also reminded us it is a time to "break the

chains of our individualism" and to rediscover "our companions along the journey of each day" through encounter and listening, and "to learn once more to love them as brothers and sisters."

We believe if we take the Holy Father's words to heart, we can use what transpired at Asbury University as a springboard in our lives of faith during this Lenten season and beyond. We have been reminded time and time again by the pope we are called to step outside of our comfort zones to encounter others on our journeys of missionary discipleship.

But what we do, the pope noted, must be done with a heart that is truly renewed and sincere.

"All too often, our gestures and rites have no impact on our lives; they remain superficial. Perhaps we perform them only to gain the admiration or esteem of others," the pope said.

However, the pope warned, "outward displays, human judgments and the world's approval count for nothing; the only thing that truly matters is the truth and love that God himself sees."

Pope Francis asked that the faithful use the 40 days of Lent to: "rediscover the joy, not of accumulating material goods, but of caring for those who are poor and afflicted"; to put God at the center of one's life and pray and dialogue with him from the heart; and to become free "from the dictatorship of full schedules, crowded agendas and superficial needs, and choose the things that truly matter."

Lent is an opportune time to draw closer to Christ. When we look at the cross, we must remember it is the ultimate expression of what love looks like. If we put Jesus at the center of our lives, there are grace-filled moments awaiting us. We need to believe in the power of prayer.

Since we are imperfect, there will be times we fall and will need to repent. We must remember—not only during Lent but during each liturgical season—that the sacrament of reconciliation is awaiting us to cleanse us of our sins.

Let us strive to become more selfless and pray for the gift of humility during this time. And as we travel on this journey, may we strive to be people of truth, reconciliation and love.

—Mike Krokos

Be Our Guest/Sr. Constance Veit, L.S.P.

Up and down the mountain this Lent

Jesus' transfiguration is one of the most dramatic scenes in the Gospels. It is a central image of Lent, reminding us that during this season we are invited to ascend a high mountain with Jesus to live a unique spiritual experience.

Pope Francis has chosen the

transfiguration as the theme for his Lenten message this year.



Highlighting the voice coming from the cloud, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Mt 17:5), he asks us to listen to Jesus.

"Lent is a time of grace to the extent that we listen to him as he speaks to us" in the word of God, which the Church offers us in the liturgy.

"May that word not fall on deaf ears," the pope writes, suggesting that even if we cannot attend daily Mass, we can still study the daily Bible readings.

In addition to the Scriptures, he writes, "the Lord speaks to us through our brothers and sisters, especially in the faces and the stories of those who are in need."

So our first task this Lent is to listen to Jesus speaking to us in the word of God and in other people.

Pope Francis offers us a second Lenten proposal.

Referring again to the transfiguration, he suggests that we resist the temptation to take refuge in a religiosity made up of dramatic, mountaintop experiences, but that we "go down to the plain" strengthened by these experiences to be "artisans of synodality" in ordinary life.

As I reflect on this theme, I am transported back to Lent of 2020, when we were suddenly thrust into a surreal situation with the onset of COVID-19.

The first weeks of the pandemic, which coincided with Lent, were intense on both the spiritual and practical levels.

Strangers in hazmat suits walked among us in our home for the elderly and we were forced to bury ourselves under layers of personal protective equipment.

As COVID struck more and more residents, a dark cloud hung over us—a mix of grief and fear of the unknown.

There were also moments of intense light, however.

As we went into lockdown, we were deprived of daily Mass, but we watched it online each day.

We managed to find grace and strength through meditation on the Lenten readings and spiritual Communions.

Even as we felt the shadow of death engulfing us, I had a strong sense that

Christ was present in the midst of it all—not in his transfigured or risen glory, but in the vulnerability of his passion and death.

I also had a heightened sense of mission, believing that Christ was counting on me to love and serve the elderly to the best of my ability, despite the many obstacles continually posed by COVID.

Regardless of the seemingly dire circumstances in which we found ourselves that Lent, we never doubted the presence of Christ in the person of the elderly, as our foundress, St. Jeanne Jugan had always said, "Never forget that the poor are our Lord."

Now that the pandemic has largely receded, we have descended the mountain, so to speak, back to a more normal life. Yet we are confronted with new issues indicating that life in our homes will never be quite the same.

Our greatest challenge is the critical shortage of qualified caregivers to assist us in our apostolate.

Like half of the nursing homes across the United States, our homes have been

forced to limit the number of new admissions because we have not been able to recruit and retain enough staff members to care for the full number of elderly residents we could accommodate.

How can it be, I often ask our Lord, that at the very moment when the needs of seniors are greater than ever due to the ravages of the pandemic, and the population of older persons is growing exponentially, there are fewer caregivers prepared to meet their needs?

Individually and as a society, we need to show greater esteem and gratitude to caregivers.

We need to advocate for more educational opportunities and incentives for young people to enter the field of geriatrics, for better working conditions, compensation and benefits, and for care and support for those experiencing exhaustion or burnout.

These suggestions may seem like a departure from our Lenten theme, but I believe that our Lord is speaking to us through the elderly—whom St. Jeanne Jugan called the mouthpiece of God—and we need to listen.

As we deepen the ideal of journeying together in a spirit of synodality, let us come down from the mountain convinced that the eldest members of the human family are everyone's concern.

(*Little Sisters of the Poor Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor in the United States and an occupational therapist.*) †

Now that the pandemic has largely receded, we have descended the mountain and we are confronted with new issues.

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in *The Criterion* as part of the newspaper's commitment to "the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God" (*Communio et Progressio*, 116).

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.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit

letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed.

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 criterion@archindy.org. †

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Follow St. Katharine Drexel and shine with the light of Christ

“Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light” (Mt 17:1-2).

Today, March 3, is the memorial of St. Katharine Drexel, who was born in Philadelphia in 1858. Katharine was a tireless missionary who established schools and who dedicated herself to the poor, especially minorities. She spent the final years of her life in retirement, dedicating herself exclusively to the ministry of prayer.

A favorite saying of St. Katharine Drexel is, “My God! How much light can be wasted when the darkness does not comprehend it!” She saw the light of Christ in everything and everyone, and she grieved that it seemed to be wasted on those—Christians and non-Christians—who live in spiritual darkness.

St. Katharine died in 1955, but what a century preceded her! This is the period that saw the flourishing of women’s religious communities founded by Katherine Drexel, Rose Philippine Duchesne, Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton, Anne-Therese Guérin and others.

These undaunted women and their sisters established hundreds of schools, orphanages and hospitals. They educated and inspired thousands of poor children in big East Coast cities, in the rural communities of the Midwest, West and South, and in South America. They were advocates for justice and the liberating power of education. And they were wholly devoted to prayer and the sacramental life of the Church, especially the holy Eucharist.

Katherine Drexel was born into wealth and high society. But she was also taught to care for the poor and to take seriously the gift of faith. As a result, she freely decided to renounce her wealth to use it exclusively for the benefit of the poor.

Even when she founded her religious order, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, she insisted that none of her personal wealth should be used to support the sisters. They were to support themselves so that all of her inheritance could be used to care for poor people, especially in the African American and Native American communities.

All saints shine with light of Christ—each in her or his own way. Among many other things, Katherine Drexel was

a stewardship saint. She recognized that her possessions were not something to be hoarded or wasted. They were a gift from God to be cultivated and shared for the good of others.

This “stewardship perspective” was not shared by everyone—any more than her views on service to poor minorities were embraced by everyone. She was opposed by the Ku Klux Klan in the South and by those who hated or feared Native Americans in the Midwest.

Katherine Drexel was responsible for establishing the first Catholic African American college, Xavier University in New Orleans. She opened schools for Blacks in 15 states and missions for Native Americans in 16 states. One of the schools she opened was burned to the ground by segregationists. When her sisters told her that they were mocked and scorned by those who opposed their work, she asked, “Did you pray for them?”

In spite of their differences, every saint has in common a rich prayer life and a deep devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. The same could be said of holy women closer to our own time like St. Teresa of Calcutta and Dorothy Day, who humbly asked that she not be called a saint, but who certainly

reflected the light of Christ in all she did. What unites these amazing women is their love for Jesus which expresses itself in their devotion to the poor and in their fervent prayer and worship.

Have you ever told yourself you were too busy to pray? Ask yourself how Katherine Drexel managed to find the time to pray while traveling, opening schools and ministering to the needs of minorities. Are we busier than she was? Is our time more precious than hers?

St. Katharine was a good steward of her time. She used it wisely, dedicating a proportionate share of all her gifts to prayerful meditation on God’s word and to the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Katherine decided early in life not to waste her time, her talent or her money. She gave it all back to God through loving service to those who needed it most. She was determined to be a steward of the light of Christ, sharing it generously with everyone, especially the poor.

As we continue our Lenten journey and prepare for the brilliant light of Christ’s resurrection, may we be inspired by St. Katharine’s example. Like her, may we share all God’s gifts and be generous stewards of the light of Christ! †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Sigamos a santa Catalina Drexel y brillemos con la luz de Cristo

“Seis días después, Jesús tomó consigo a Pedro, a Jacobo y a Juan su hermano, y los hizo subir aparte a un monte alto. Y fue transfigurado delante de ellos. Su cara resplandeció como el sol, y sus vestiduras se hicieron blancas como la luz” (Mt 17:1-2).

Hoy, 3 de marzo, celebramos el memorial de santa Catalina Drexel, nacida en Filadelfia en 1858. Catalina fue una misionera incansable que fundó escuelas y se dedicó a los pobres, especialmente a las minorías. Pasó los últimos años de su vida jubilada, dedicándose exclusivamente al ministerio de la oración.

Una de las frases preferidas de santa Catalina Drexel era: “¡Dios mío! ¡Cuánta luz se desperdicia cuando las tinieblas no la comprenden!” Veía la luz de Cristo en todo y en todos, y le daba tristeza que pareciera desperdiciarse en aquellos—cristianos o no—que viven en la oscuridad espiritual.

Santa Catalina murió en 1955, pero la precedió un siglo tremendo: el período que vio florecer las comunidades religiosas femeninas fundadas por ella misma, así como por Rose Philippine Duchesne, Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton, Anne-Therese Guérin y otras.

Estas mujeres impertérritas y sus hermanas crearon cientos de escuelas,

orfanatos y hospitales; educaron e inspiraron a miles de niños pobres en las grandes ciudades de la Costa Este, en las comunidades rurales de las regiones Medio Oeste, Oeste y Sur de Estados Unidos, así como también en Sudamérica. Fueron defensoras de la justicia y del poder liberador de la educación, y estaban totalmente entregadas a la oración y a la vida sacramental de la Iglesia, especialmente a la Sagrada Eucaristía.

Catalina Drexel era de ilustre cuna y pertenecía a la alta sociedad pero también le enseñaron a cuidar a los pobres y a tomarse en serio el don de la fe. Como resultado, decidió libremente renunciar a su riqueza para utilizarla exclusivamente en beneficio de los pobres.

Incluso cuando fundó su orden religiosa, las Hermanas del Santísimo Sacramento, insistió en que nada de su patrimonio personal se utilizara para mantener a las hermanas; debían mantenerse a sí mismas para que toda su herencia pudiera destinarse a atender a los pobres, especialmente en las comunidades afroamericana y nativa americana.

Todos los santos brillan con la luz de Cristo, cada uno a su manera. Entre otras muchas cosas, Catalina Drexel fue una santa dedicada a la corresponsabilidad. Reconoció que sus posesiones no eran algo para acaparar o malgastar, sino que eran un don de Dios

que había que cultivar y compartir para el bien de los demás.

Esta “perspectiva de corresponsabilidad” no era compartida por todo el mundo, como tampoco lo eran sus opiniones sobre el servicio a las minorías pobres. Se enfrentó al Ku Klux Klan en el Sur y a quienes odiaban o temían a los nativos americanos en la región Medio Oeste del país.

Catalina Drexel fue responsable de la creación de la primera universidad católica afroamericana, la Xavier University de Nueva Orleans; fundó escuelas para personas de raza negra en 15 estados y misiones para nativos americanos en 16 estados. Una de las escuelas que fundó fue incendiada por segregacionistas. Cuando sus hermanas le contaron que eran objeto de burla y desprecio por parte de quienes se oponían a su trabajo, les preguntó: “¿Han rezado por ellos?”

A pesar de sus diferencias, todos los santos tienen en común una rica vida de oración y una profunda devoción al Santísimo Sacramento. Lo mismo podría decirse de mujeres santas más cercanas a nuestro tiempo como Santa Teresa de Calcuta y Dorothy Day, que humildemente pidió que no se la llamara santa, pero que ciertamente reflejó la luz de Cristo en todo lo que hizo. Lo que une a estas increíbles mujeres es su amor por Jesús, que se

expresa en su devoción a los pobres y en su ferviente oración y adoración.

¿Alguna vez ha justificado que no puede rezar porque está muy ocupado? Pregúntese cómo se las arreglaba Catalina Drexel para encontrar tiempo para rezar mientras viajaba, abría escuelas y atendía las necesidades de las minorías. ¿Acaso estamos más ocupados que ella? ¿Acaso nuestro tiempo vale más que el de ella?

Santa Catalina fue una buena administradora de su tiempo. Lo utilizó sabiamente, dedicando una parte proporcional de todos sus dones a la meditación en contemplación de la palabra de Dios y a la adoración del Santísimo Sacramento.

Catalina decidió desde muy temprano en su vida no malgastar su tiempo, su talento ni su dinero. Se lo entregó todo a Dios a través del servicio amoroso a quienes más lo necesitaban. Estaba decidida a ser administradora de la luz de Cristo, compartiéndola generosamente con todos, especialmente con los pobres.

Que el ejemplo de santa Catalina nos brinde inspiración mientras continuamos nuestro camino cuaresmal y nos preparamos para la brillante luz de la resurrección de Cristo. Que, al igual que ella, compartamos todos los dones de Dios y seamos generosos administradores de la luz de Cristo. †

Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.

March 3-May 28

RISE UP! Daily Lent and Easter Reflections, one- to two-minute video reflections led by Father Jonathan Meyer, pastor of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, receive link via text or email, text "Riseup" to 84576, free. Information: 812-576-4302, clairkeck.asp@gmail.com.

March 6-8

St. Joseph University Parish, 113 St. 5th St., Terre Haute. **Parish Mission: Walking Humbly with Our God**, 6-7:30 p.m. each night, Conventual Franciscan Father Richard Kaley presenting, free. Information: 812-232-7011, parishoffice@stjoeup.org.

March 10

St. Jude School cafeteria, 353 McFarland Rd., Indianapolis. **Boy Scout Troop 51 Fish Fry Fundraiser**, 4-7 p.m., fish filets, grilled cheese, French fries, macaroni and cheese, green beans, potatoes, water, lemonade or tea, freewill donation. Information: 317-752-2829.

March 10, 17

St. Matthew the Apostle Parish Gym, 4100 E. 56th

St., Indianapolis. **Fish Fry**, 5-7:30 p.m., three Fridays in Lent (March 10, 17), fried pollock, fried shrimp or baked cod dinners with two sides \$10; a' la carte options and sides \$2-\$5; family meal \$45; beer, wine, beverages and desserts available for purchase. Information: 317-257-4297, bulletin@saintmatt.org.

March 10, 17, 24

St. Rita Parish, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **Fish Fry**, 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m., dinners (\$11.50-\$16) include choice from seven entrées, two sides, soda, bread and dessert, entrée only \$11.50-\$13.75, side orders a la cart \$1-\$4, delivery available for six orders or more. Information: 317-632-9349, stritchcatholicindpls@gmail.com.

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, 316 N. Sherwood Ave., Clarksville. **Men's Club Annual Fish Fry**, 5-7:30 p.m., Fridays during Lent, baked or fried fish, oysters or shrimp with two sides, dine in, carry out, adults \$11-\$12, children \$3-\$7. Information: 812-282-2290, communications@stanthony-clarksville.com.

March 10, 17, 24, 31

Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, 5901 Olive Branch Road, Greenwood. **Lenten Fish Fry**, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Fridays during Lent, sit-down or to go, \$12 adult meal: 2-piece fried fish or one piece baked fish or one grilled cheese sandwich, choice of three sides plus salad or coleslaw; \$10 children's meal: one piece baked or fried fish or grilled cheese, two sides plus salad or coleslaw; extra fish \$1 apiece. Information: 317-859-4673.

St. Francis Xavier Parish, 101 N. Ferguson St., Henryville. **Lenten Fish Fry**, 5-7 p.m., Fridays during Lent, fried fish, shrimp, fries, coleslaw, dessert table, dine in, carry out, dinner \$10, fish sandwich \$8, 8-piece shrimp \$8. Information: 812-294-4682, stfrancissecretary@northclarkcountycatholic.org.

St. John Paul II Parish, St. Joe Hill campus, 2605 St. Joe Rd. W., Sellersburg. **Lenten Fish Fry**, 5-7 p.m., Fridays during Lent, fried fish, shrimp or baked fish, fries, baked potato, baked beans, coleslaw, mac and

cheese, cheese pizza, dessert table, dine in, carry out, drive through, \$14 dinner, \$10 sandwich and side, \$8 sandwich. Information: 812-246-2512.

March 12

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Northside Knights of Columbus Charity Breakfast**, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., benefitting Seeds of Hope, \$10 individual, \$25 family. Information: 317-442-5542, pachciarz@sbcglobal.net.

March 13

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Taizé Prayer at the Woods**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available. Information: Taize. SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952.

March 15

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439, www.catholiccemeteries.cc.

March 16

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898, www.catholiccemeteries.cc.

March 17

Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange**, Jon Trice, Indiana Mills and Manufacturing vice president of global human resources, presenting "IMMI: A Dynamic, Growing Business with a Christian Impact," rosary 6:35 a.m., Mass 7 a.m., buffet breakfast and program following, \$18 members, \$24 non-members. Register by 4 p.m. on March 14. Information, registration: cutt.ly/CBE-Reg.

March 18

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Teen Volunteering Opportunity**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., ages 12-18, assist with retired Providence Sisters. Information, registration: 812-535-2952, juna@spsmw.org, spsmw.org, spsmw.org/events.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Madonna Hall, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **A Father's Heart: Celebrate St. Joseph**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., hosted by Knights of Columbus, men only, Dominican Father David Caron presenting, includes prayer, group discussion and Mass, RSVP required, free. Information, registration: events@indianakofc.org, cutt.ly/StJoeRetreat23.

March 19

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Bluegrass Jam**, 5:30 p.m., free. Information: franciscansusa.org/bluegrass-jam.

March 19-20

St. Roch Church, 3600 S. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis. **Bruté Weekend**, Sat. 5 p.m., Sun. 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Masses celebrated by Father Joseph Moriarty, Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary rector, talks on how the seminary forms future priests. Information: Ellen Sanders, 317-236-1501, esanders@archindy.org. †

Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retreats.

March 17-19

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Christian Hospitality: Welcoming One Another As Christ**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$300 single, \$425 double. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

March 18

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48,

Bloomington. **Lenten Day of Reflection: The Creed—Understanding What We Profess**, 10:15 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Deacon Ed Walker (Diocese of Evansville) facilitating, \$25 includes lunch. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com.

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Creativity is a Form of Prayer: Card Making**,

9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Franciscan Sister Kathleen Branham and Joan Horner facilitating, \$45 includes lunch and materials, Information, registration: 812-933-6437, www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

March 18-19

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Encountering the Women in the Bible—A Lenten Weekend Retreat with Father James Farrell**,

8:30 a.m. Sat.-3:30 p.m. Sun., Father Farrell facilitating, \$160 includes Sat. breakfast, lunch and dinner, Sun. breakfast and lunch, overnight accommodations, register by March 17. Registration: ftm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

March 19

Providence Spirituality and Conference Center Foley Room, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Mystics—A Journey of Discovery: St. Bridget of Sweden**, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Providence Sister Paula Damiano presenting, \$25 includes materials and refreshments provided. Information, registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org, spsmw.org/events.

March 20

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Living the Stations of the Cross—14 Timeless Treasures and One Mighty Resurrection: Morning of Reflection**, 9-11 a.m., Beth Leonard presenting, \$25, register by

March 19. Registration: ftm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

March 21, 28, April 4

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Coffee and Conversation**, 10-11:30 a.m., Patty Moore facilitating, series based on book *The Broken Way*, last three of six independent sessions, \$25 per session, journals provided. Information, registration: benedictinn.org/programs, 317-788-7581, benedictinn@benedictinn.org.

March 22

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Sacred Portraiture: Holy Face**, 9:30-11:30 a.m., last of four standalone sessions, Conventual Franciscan Father Vincent Petersen facilitating, participants must provide their own paints, brushes and paper, \$25, 12-person limit. Information, registration: cutt.ly/portrait-3-22.

March 23

Oldenburg Franciscan

Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **The Chosen, episode "I am He,"** 6:30-8 p.m., all Thursdays in March, episode viewing and discussion, Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House program director Cheryl McSweeney facilitating, free will offering. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

March 24

Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, Pump House Studio, 101 St. Anthony Dr., Mt. St. Francis. **Painting with Padre: Freida Kahlo**, 6-9 p.m., Conventual Franciscan Father Vincent Petersen facilitating, supplies and snacks provided, bring beverage to share, 12-person limit, \$40. Information, registration: cutt.ly/paintfrieda23.

March 24-26

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Welcoming In-laws**, second Valentine Retreat for married couples, Benedictine Father Noël Mueller presenting, \$425 double. Registration: saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

Final St. Patrick's Day celebration at Holy Cross School set for March 12

After 33 years, the final St. Patrick's Day celebration at Holy Cross Central School will take place in the school's gym, 125 Oriental Ave., in Indianapolis, from 3-7:30 p.m. on March 12.

The event includes raffles, pull tabs and tip boards. Irish Stew will play live music from 4-7:30 p.m., and the Indianapolis Rogue Pipes and Drums will perform at 5 p.m. Corned beef and cabbage, soda bread, beverages

and bakery items will be available for purchase.

The admission cost is \$5. The funds raised go toward serving the local community through evangelization, outreach, weekly meals provided for shut-ins, and Thanksgiving and Christmas meals for more than 450 families.

For more information, call Carol at 317-695-5421 or the St. Philip Neri Parish office at 317-631-8746. †

Mass, sculpture unveiling at Holy Trinity Heritage Park in New Albany will take place on March 17

A new sculpture titled "Fruit of Thy Womb" will be unveiled and blessed at Holy Trinity Heritage Park, 702 E. Market St., in New Albany, next to the offices of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities, at noon on March 17. An outdoor Mass will immediately follow at the same location.

The sculpture was created by Timothy Schmalz. It joins another of his works, "When I Was Hungry and Thirsty," installed at Holy Trinity

Heritage Park last fall. According to his website, Schmalz's work can be found in cathedrals and churches around the world, including in Rome and at the Vatican.

Retired Father Wilfred "Sonny" Day will bless the sculpture then celebrate Mass at the park.

All are invited to come to the unveiling, blessing and Mass.

For more information, call St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities of New Albany at 812-949-7305. †

Wedding Anniversaries

DAVID AND BETH (EASTON) MARTIN, members of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on March 3.

The couple was married at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Bloomington on March 3, 1973.

They have two children: Sheila Kelly and the late Father Justin Martin.

The couple also has one grandchild. †



Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to cutt.ly/anniversaries or call 317-236-1585.

The love of a woman and the love of God reveal the heart of the new leader of pastoral ministries

By John Shaughnessy

The essence of life and faith for Paul Sifuentes is the power of relationships, an essence that comes through when the new executive director of pastoral ministries for the archdiocese talks about two defining parts of his life: his relationship with the woman he hoped would become his wife, and his relationship with the God he strives to make the center of his world.

Start with the story of how he first became friends with Alexa Puscas.

It's a story that reveals part of the heart that Sifuentes brings to leading the archdiocese's pastoral ministries, an umbrella group that includes Youth Ministry, Intercultural Ministry, Young Adult and College Campus Ministry, the Office of Human Life and Dignity, and the Office of Marriage and Family Life.

When they first met, Sifuentes and Puscas were both in their junior year at the University of Notre Dame, studying abroad in London. During their semester there, they joined a group of about 30 students that began praying the rosary every night. As the weeks passed, the number of students dwindled until it was just the two of them praying the rosary each day.

They became close friends, but it wasn't more than that because, at different times, they were dating other people.

They even grew apart for a while until they connected again after college—a connection that eventually developed into a romantic relationship by the fall of 2007 when they both served as lay ministers in Indianapolis, she as the director of religious education at St. Pius X Parish, he as the director of youth ministry at St. Simon the Apostle Parish.

"I knew I wanted to marry this girl for a long time, but I wanted to discern that. So, I was trying to find a prayer to discern marriage with her. I Googled, 'discernment prayer, rosary,' and the first thing that pops up is a 54-day rosary novena. I was like, 'OK, that's an option, but let's look for something shorter,'" Sifuentes recalls with a laugh.

As his search continued, he even thought about the two of them designing their own marriage discernment prayer, something that would include the rosary "because that's what brought us together, and it's a big part of our relationship."

"I came up with nothing else. I told her, 'I found this 54-day rosary novena.' And I was about to say, 'But ...' But before I could say it, she said, 'That's perfect.'"

The 54 days of praying the rosary together to discern if they should marry—"Lord, is this what you want us to do?" Sifuentes explains—eventually led to an unforgettable moment inside St. Simon the Apostle Church. It happened as they prayed the Luminous Mysteries of the rosary together during their shared time of eucharistic adoration.

After they finished the first decade of the rosary and right before they started to pray the second decade of the Luminous Mysteries—recalling the wedding feast at Cana—Sifuentes proposed to Puscas. And she said yes.

They have been married for 14 years, they are the parents of six children—ranging in age from 12 years to 3 months—and they still pray the rosary together.

Embracing the gift, breaking down in tears

Fast forward to an early February day in Colorado this year when Sifuentes' relationship with God came into a clearer focus for him—another story which shows the heart he brings to leading the archdiocese's pastoral ministries.



Paul Sifuentes, the new executive director of pastoral ministries for the archdiocese, and his wife Alexa pose for a photo with their six children: Luke, Victoria, Peter, Natalie, Regina and Maria. (Submitted photo)

The impact came as he attended a presentation by Bishop Joseph A. Espallat, an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of New York, during a conference of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry.

One of the central themes of the bishop's presentation was how lay ministers need to set aside time to pray for the people they minister "to and with"—and to pray for God's guidance for themselves, too. He also encouraged the audience members to always remember "we are the sons and daughters of God" first.

That thought seared into Sifuentes' heart and mind, leading to an emotional moment that left him in tears later when Bishop Espallat made an invitation to people during eucharistic adoration.

"He said, 'If you feel orphaned, and you really want to claim your sonship or your daughtership with God, I want you to move closer,'" Sifuentes recalls. "I came closer."

"I'm very blessed with great parents and my in-laws have been amazing parents to me as well. But that will always pale in comparison to the love of the Father. It's a great gift from God when you experience that love."

As tears streamed from his eyes during that moment in Colorado, Sifuentes thought about why he had come forward, and why the wave of emotion overcame him.

"I think it was more of me forgetting who my Father was," he recalls. "Being like a faithful servant rather than a beloved son was a little bit of where I was. It's just life. Life gets busy. As a husband and father, you're working from, 'What do I need to do? What do I need to take care of? Who do I need to take care of? How am I partnering with my wife?' And now I'm in this position that I'm really excited about, but what do I need to do?"

He found that the answers to all those questions came by focusing on his relationship with God first.

"I'm a son of the Father who is trying to be a faithful disciple of Christ who is also God," he says. "Seeing myself as a beloved of the Lord is critical to my spiritual life. When I get off of that is normally when I need to reorient myself. And that is what we need to do with lay ministries in our pastoral ministry. We need well-formed lay ministers, but when they don't recognize themselves as a beloved son or a beloved daughter of God, that's when I think we can be in trouble."

'It's all about relationships'

Sifuentes believes that when lay ministers embrace that they are loved by God, they'll be better prepared to walk with the people they are trying to bring closer to God.

"In pastoral ministries, our role is one of accompaniment. At different times and at different times of life, we find ways to accompany individuals whether that's through their marriage prep, in their marriage, as they experience the difficulties of marriage, or when they've experienced the cruelties of life, if you will. All of these are how we are walking alongside these individuals."

It all leads to the essence of life and faith for Sifuentes, the offer that Christ makes to all who seek to follow him.

"In essence, the Lord is offering us his presence. He wants to be with us. He thirsts for us, as Mother Teresa would always point out.

"In pastoral ministries, we want to help parishes and parish staffs see that as well, making sure that they're aware of the critical goal that is. Our ministry is about people and not about programs. It's all about relationships. And all those relationships will be fruitful when the relationship with the Lord is in order." †

Family life offers a continuing lesson in accompaniment for new leader

By John Shaughnessy

On the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, popcorn and several varieties of candy served as luring cards when Paul and Alexa Sifuentes gathered their children to talk about



Paul Sifuentes

what everyone was planning to do for Lent.

Among the sacrifices that family members vowed to try to do is one that is particularly hard for Paul Sifuentes, the new executive director of pastoral ministries for the archdiocese.

As one way of fasting, the father of six has agreed that when he gets home from work, he will turn over his smart phone to their oldest child, 12-year-old Luke, who then puts it away for the rest of the day.

While limiting the use of "screens"—phones, tablets, computers and television—in his personal time is "definitely the hardest" challenge for him, Sifuentes says it opens up more time to focus on his children, to have better conversations with his wife, and have more time for God.

While other family members are doing different kinds of fasting, they are all sharing a common approach to almsgiving.

"Each of our family members is going to write a letter each week to someone who we feel needs a letter," he says. "Alexa and I have one grandparent who's living, and we have some other people we know who could use a letter. We'll help the kids write a letter or draw a picture and send it."

As for prayer, "we do night prayer together often. We do a lot of chanting in our night prayer. The kids really like to chant."

Sifuentes views fasting, almsgiving

and praying as a family during Lent as an act of accompaniment.

He believes that focus on accompanying each other mirrors the approach he sees in the staffs of the pastoral ministries who serve the Catholics in central and southern Indiana—in Youth Ministry, Intercultural Ministry, Young Adult and College Campus Ministry, the Office of Human Life and Dignity, and the Office of Marriage and Family Life.

"One of the reasons I'm very excited about being executive director here is that we have a wonderful team of great ministers," he says. "I see my role as helping them do their ministry. I am by no means the expert in what their individual ministries are, but I think I can help clear away obstacles, help overcome challenges and help build relationships that further and multiply their ministries."

He also feels blessed that his wife

Alexa has a long history in ministry for the Church.

"There are many things I ask her opinion on," he says. "In terms of being a minister, there are many things she's better at than I am. I've learned from her, and I rely on her."

He's also learned about accompaniment from being a dad.

"Would I say I do it perfectly? No. But I think every day I learn a tiny tad more about how to accompany somebody, how to walk alongside them, how to gently ask questions and listen, and how to ask for forgiveness when I step on a foot while I'm accompanying them.

"Pope Francis talks about the family being a training place for missionary disciples. And how critical it is to live in community, to do ministry, to be a people of God. The family is that."

He smiles and says, "I got plenty of family to teach me that." †

CONFERENCE

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for the revival, Father Meyer expanded upon his message, saying, “What is the Mass? It is the death of Jesus. But it’s also the resurrection. And there is no glory without the cross.”

Pastor *in solidum* with Father Daniel Mahan of the four parishes in Dearborn County, Father Meyer exhorted his listeners to be “men of the Eucharist.”

“What does it mean to be men of the Eucharist, to unite ourselves to Christ on the cross?” Father Meyer asked. “It means to know him so well that all we can do is say, ‘This is my body given up for you. This is my blood poured out for you.’”

“That’s masculinity. This eucharistic revival needs to change us.”

The conference—its speakers, opportunities for prayer, the sacrament of penance, adoration, Benediction and fellowship—moved participants to embrace that change.

“It starts one man at a time,” said David Rheinhardt, a father and grandfather from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, at the conference. “It’s the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has to be within you if you’re going to be a man of God. It’s not us that’s going to win the world, it’s the Spirit of God living in us that’s going over the world.”

Rheinhardt, who has attended several E6 conferences, said taking part in the daylong gathering with so many other Catholic men “is like reading the lives of

the saints. This conference inspires me to live more for Christ.”

Attending the conference for the first time was Levi Ericks, a seventh-grader at Seton Catholic High School in Richmond.

“It’s enlightened me to the ways of God and how he teaches us,” Levi said of the conference. “It’s cool to see how many are dedicated to their faith and have a passion for God.”

Jordan Puckett, 29, has attended most of the E6 conferences.

“It encourages men to be strong in our culture today,” said Puckett, a member of Old St. Mary Parish in Cincinnati. “I always feel so much more inspired to be a better man and Catholic after I leave here. I leave here feeling a lot more hope—hope for our culture and hope for myself that I can be better.”

The “E6” in the conference title refers to the sixth chapter of St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians in which the Apostle calls believers to take up “the armor of God” in the spiritual fight against the devil (Eph 6:11).

Conference speakers—Matt Birk, Mark Houck and Bear Woznick—encouraged the participants to embrace their faith and live it out more consciously in their lives with their families, in the Church and the world. (See accompanying article about Mark Houck.)

Bear Woznick, a popular Catholic author and speaker, shared his experiences as a world champion surfer facing 35-foot waves in Hawaii.

“When the surf comes up in Hawaii, we see people on the beach with shirts



John Duel, left, Scott Shelton and Steve O'Bryan, all members of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Burlington, Ky., laugh during presentation given by Matt Birk during the eighth annual E6 Catholic Men's Conference held on Feb. 18 at East Central High School in St. Leon. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

from Abercrombie and Fitch that say ‘lifeguard’ on them,” he said. “We know they’re posers. When the surf comes up, the posers don’t paddle out.”

Woznick challenged his listeners not to be “posers” in living out their faith in today’s secular culture.

“We’re in big surf,” he said. “We can’t afford to be posers anymore. You need to spend time in prayer every morning, praying the rosary while you’re driving, ... going to Mass.

“Praying isn’t the last resort. The first thing is to spend time with God.”

Matt Birk, a retired All-Pro Super Bowl champion center in the National Football League, emphasized doing what he did to reach the heights of professional football—working on the fundamentals every day.

“You’ve got to keep doing the fundamentals over and over again,” he said. “You can’t just *be* Catholic. You got to *do* Catholic. That’s where your ability to perform comes from.”

Although he was a Super Bowl winner, Birk insisted that playing center in the NFL doesn’t require a lot of talent. Neither, he said, does going to Mass, praying the rosary, praying in front of abortion centers or volunteering to help those in need.

“It doesn’t take any talent to do these

things,” Birk said. “We’ve got to go where the action is. This is what we were made for—this time right now.

Noting that society is no longer founded on Christian principles, Birk exhorted those at the conference to change that, one man at a time.

“We need to go out and evangelize,” he said. “We need to proclaim the Gospel. There are so many people, so many young people, who have never heard the Gospel. If we’re not going to tell them, who is? ... It’s on us, guys.”

At the end of the conference, Birk and Woznick spoke about how they were impressed that so many young men were in attendance. According to conference organizers, about 200 of the participants were 25 or younger.

“I’ve never seen so many young men at a men’s conference,” Woznick said. I’m stoked to see that. It’s very powerful.”

“Twenty or 30 years from now, they’re not going to remember the Skyline chili [at the lunch] or the speakers that were here,” Birk said. “But they’re going to remember that their dad took them to this and that’s awesome.”

(For a gallery of photos from the E6 Catholic Men’s Conference, visit www.CriterionOnline.com.) †



Matt Birk, left, Bear Woznick and Mark Houck take part in a question-and-answer session during the E6 Catholic Men's Conference held on Feb. 18 at East Central High School in St. Leon.

Pro-life activist acquitted in federal court finds spiritual meaning in arrest, trial

By Sean Gallagher

ST. LEON—Mark Houck, a pro-life activist and leader of The King’s Men, a nationwide Catholic men’s ministry, stood before 1,200 Catholic men on Feb. 18 at a conference at East Central High School in St. Leon in southeastern Indiana.



Mark Houck

Less than three weeks earlier, he could have been put behind bars if a federal jury had found him guilty of violating the federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, or FACE Act, for allegedly assaulting an abortion clinic volunteer in October 2021.

The jury returned its verdict on Jan. 30, acquitting Houck of the charges.

“There’s great joy in being free to be able to talk to the guys,” said Houck in an interview during the E6 Catholic Men’s Conference, which was sponsored by All Saints Parish in Dearborn County.

“I was inwardly free the whole time, even if they would have put me behind bars. But now I’m outwardly free, which is great. I can talk about the trial and inspire the men,” he said. “The Lord has given me a platform to talk about Jesus,

grace and mercy. I’m loving it.”

The trial followed Houck’s Sept. 23, 2022, arrest at his suburban Philadelphia home in front of his wife and their seven children by “over 20 federal agents and Pennsylvania state troopers,” Houck said at the conference, describing the arrest as “an act of terror.”

Houck recalled being taken from his home, wearing “flip flops, a pair of shorts and a T-shirt” to a federal building in Philadelphia where his wrists and ankles were shackled and he was chained to a table.

The one thing he had that gave him comfort was his rosary.

“I prayed without ceasing,” Houck said at the conference. “And I had peace, brothers, like you would never have imagined. I was at the foot of Calvary. I was next to Jesus. I felt so much joy in that moment. I felt so much grace being poured out on me and my family.

“It was so freeing for me to be able to just say to Jesus, ‘Your will be done.’ It was the first time in my life that I believe that my will was perfectly united with God’s will.”

Houck reflected on his experiences in light of the life of Christ and encouraged his listeners to do the same for themselves.

“That’s how your life makes sense,” he said. “You understand your life, men, through the One who lived it before

you, who’s gone through every human suffering that can ever be gone through. There’s nothing that you can experience in this life that he cannot relate to.”

Houck reflected on the pain of the accusations made of him during his trial.

“They were calling me all sorts of things that, that I would never even think about myself,” he recalled. “My dignity was totally stepped on and crushed in front of my children and friends. I was presented as ... someone who hated people, someone who didn’t want to help people. And I’m just putting it mildly.”

As the jury deliberated, Houck experienced again the peace that he knew on the day of his arrest.

“I knew that, no matter what happened, I was in the shelter and protection of God,” he said. “He would protect my family and take care of my children, no matter what happened. I had great peace.”

In two presentations at the conference, Houck also reflected on the passage from chapter six of St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians in which the Apostle exhorted his readers to “take up the armor of God” in their spiritual fight against the devil (Eph 6:11).

“Everyone in here is a beloved son of God,” Houck said. “If you live in that identity every day of your life, not only will you have that fullness of the armor

of God, but you will grow in holiness, love and mercy. You will be a conduit of God’s grace in this world and a force to be reckoned with.

“The devil will quake every time you wake up because you are a threat to his kingdom.”

In his interview during the conference, Houck reflected that his arrest and trial were the result of living the life of a Catholic husband and father to which so many of the conference participants also are called.

“I’m not so sure that what happened isn’t going to happen to them,” he said. “It’s possible. They need to be vigilant for it. I hope it doesn’t happen to them.”

In any case, Houck didn’t want his listeners to be afraid to live their faith publicly, including praying outside of abortion centers, because of what happened to him.

“You can’t run from the unknown or the fear of what happened to me and somehow think you’re going to avoid it,” he said. “If you’re going to be a Catholic today, the devil knows it. He wants to come after each and every one of us.

“But the armor of God helps us move forward with hope, confidence and peace, knowing that, no matter what happens, grace is going to be abounding.” †

O'CONNELL

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In his often emotional remarks about Bishop O'Connell in the days since his Feb. 18 murder, LA Archbishop José H. Gomez has described him as “a man who loved Jesus Christ, and gave his whole life to following Jesus, to being his friend and to helping others to find Jesus.”

And in interviews with *Angelus*, the archdiocesan news outlet, bishops from around the country and even across the pond in England expressed admiration for Bishop O'Connell's energetic faith, his ability to work with all types of people, and his kindness.

“If you had to write a play about his life, it would be *A Man for All Seasons*,” said Bishop Brennan, who left LA in 2019 to lead the Diocese of Fresno, Calif. “He was ‘all things to people,’ as St. Paul described his mission.”

Bishops O'Connell and Brennan were ordained priests for the Los Angeles Archdiocese a year apart in 1979 and 1980.

“I remember thinking, here's this great Irish guy, hope he does well,” said Bishop Brennan, who also is of Irish descent. “Little did I know he was already working circles around us native guys, just in terms of totally immersing himself in the community.”

Bishop Brennan said that Bishop O'Connell had a special way of “making everyone feel that he was a kindred spirit to them,” from community organizers to law enforcement officials.

“And he was,” Bishop Brennan added. “But Dave was never a chameleon. He was never pretending to be any of these things. He did it because he was genuinely interested in everyone, wanting to love everyone.”

Bishop Barron, who now heads the Diocese of Winona-Rochester in Minnesota, said he was “absolutely devastated” by the news of Bishop O'Connell's death.

“He was a man of enormous kindness, dedication, good humor, and Gospel simplicity,” Bishop Barron told *Angelus*. “I always came away from meetings with him feeling more alive, more confirmed in my faith. I will miss him tremendously.”

Bishop O'Connell served in the archdiocese for all of Cardinal Roger M. Mahony's 25 years as archbishop of Los Angeles.

Cardinal Mahony recalled that “his entire life and ministry were devoted to his people, those who were poor, powerless and on the margins of society,” praising Bishop O'Connell's ability to bring people together and to work to overcome differences and build trust and understanding.

He also said that Bishop O'Connell had “made it clear that he never wanted to be moved away from Central and South Central LA” when it came to his parish assignments.

Bishop Brennan agreed that Bishop O'Connell would often express privately that “he didn't want to be anywhere else. He loved that ministry, he loved those people.”

Among current American bishops, there are two other Bishop O'Connells, including Bishop David M. O'Connell

of Trenton, N.J.

The third, Auxiliary Bishop Mark W. O'Connell of Boston, first met LA's Bishop O'Connell at “Baby Bishop School,” the unofficial name of a multi-day course for new bishops held at the Vatican.

“He was a truly humble and holy man, he told *Angelus*.

The 58-year-old said the pair called each other “cousins,” since they shared not only a last name but also family roots in County Cork.

His LA counterpart later recruited him to serve on the U.S. bishops' Subcommittee on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, where he made an impression as “a very strong advocate for the poor and for the dignity of every human person.”

Auxiliary Bishop Tim E. Freyer of the neighboring Diocese of Orange, Calif., was another one of O'Connell's recruits to the subcommittee.

“We had a number of challenging issues to discuss, and I marveled at how he kept the conversation rooted in prayer, focused on how to best help the poor, and would bring us to consensus,” Bishop Freyer recalled.

Bishop Freyer said that he would bump into Bishop O'Connell on walks during silent retreats for bishops, and Bishop O'Connell would be either praying the rosary or the Liturgy of the Hours.

“I found that he was a man of deep faith, was very thoughtful and joyful,” he said.

Phoenix Auxiliary Bishop Eduardo A. Nevares remembers Bishop O'Connell's episcopal ordination at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels on Sept. 17, 2015, as a “very Spirit-filled event.”

In meetings of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops through the years, Bishop O'Connell struck him as a “gentle” colleague with “great insights.”

Bishops Nevares and O'Connell shared dinner at the U.S. bishops' fall meeting in Baltimore last November.

“I knew him to be a very special person, a real brother,” said Bishop Nevares. “I consider myself lucky and privileged to have known such a wonderful Christian.”

Auxiliary Bishop John Sherrington of Westminster, England, taught as a young priest at Bishop O'Connell's alma mater, the former All Hallows College in Dublin, during the 1990s.

Future priests destined for southern California were still being formed there, and then-Father Sherrington wanted some firsthand experience of ministry in the City of Angels.



A makeshift memorial is seen outside the home of Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop David G. O'Connell in Hacienda Heights on Feb. 20, hours after investigators announced an arrest in his murder. (OSV News photo/Pablo Kay, courtesy *Angelus News*)

In the summer of 1991, he arrived to help at St. Frances X. Cabrini Parish in south central LA while the pastor, then-Father David O'Connell, took some vacation time.

“I realized very quickly the love that the people had for him, and his passion for justice,” said Bishop Sherrington.

Bishop O'Connell had already made a reputation for his efforts to reconcile rival gangs in his parish neighborhood, and Bishop O'Connell also was pushing for the cleanup of a toxic dump near the parish at the time, Bishop Sherrington recalled.

The arrangement worked out so well that Bishop O'Connell invited the English priest back to St. Frances the next two summers. Almost two decades later, Bishop Sherrington was named a bishop in his native England in 2011, four years before his old friend.

“When [Bishop O'Connell] was appointed a bishop by Pope Francis, I thought: This is the sort of priest who for Pope Francis is a priest of the peripheries. A priest who goes the extra mile, who's on the edge of situations, living out the Gospel and living out the message of Christ,” Bishop Sherrington said.

LA Catholics are preparing for Bishop O'Connell's funeral Mass on March 3 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

Bishop Brennan from Fresno offered some thoughts on the late bishop's legacy.

“We need to channel our inner Dave O'Connell, defender of life everywhere,” Bishop Brennan said. “We need to be tenacious when it comes to reaching out to folks, as Pope Francis keeps telling us. Dave actually did it: going out to the people who are unwelcome, marginalized, on the peripheries.” †

MAHAN

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Through the institute, catechetical publishers and developers of catechetical content will work directly with the USCCB subcommittee in new ways to pass on the faith using digital tools while aiming to reach a more diverse Church. The institute will help them address today's challenges in catechesis, such as young people's disaffiliation with organized religion, the growing secularism in society and the influences of social media.

The institute also will provide resources to dioceses and yearly, in-person training conferences and retreats for diocesan catechetical leaders.

Father Mahan has reviewed catechetical texts since the late 1990s and has worked as a core team member for the institute since its November 2022 launch. A graduate of the former Saint Meinrad College in St. Meinrad, Father Mahan earned a licentiate in sacred theology from the Pontifical Atheneum of St. Anselm in Rome.

Ordained a priest in 1988, Father Mahan has led parishes throughout central and southern Indiana. He serves with Father Jonathan Meyer as pastor *in solidum* of the parishes of All Saints in Dearborn County, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Aurora, St. Lawrence in Lawrenceburg and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross in Bright.

Bishop Caggiano said Father Mahan brings to the position “a deep understanding” of the *Catechism of*

the Catholic Church along with the invaluable, longtime expertise of teaching it to the faithful in a meaningful way.”

“At a time when there is wide-spread disaffiliation with the faith, and yet a deep desire and hunger being expressed by many to fill the void in their lives, we must take new, bold approaches to help the bishops to equip their catechists with ways to invite people to an encounter with the Lord,” the bishop said in a Feb. 27 statement about the priest's appointment.

Bishop Caggiano thanked Indianapolis Archbishop Charles C. Thompson “for allowing Father Mahan to serve the greater Church with the unique talents he brings to the institute.”

Noting that Father Mahan is “well suited in his new role in serving the Church,” Archbishop Thompson said that the appointment “is a great honor for both Father Mahan and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.”

“While it is difficult to ‘give up’ a very seasoned priest for any given amount of time,” Archbishop Thompson said, “this is a way that the archdiocese can contribute to the mission of the larger Church.

“The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is blessed with some very talented and, most importantly, holy priests. While we certainly wish Father Mahan all the best, and look forward to his return after a term of service, our focus is also on his successor for the parishes in Dearborn County.

“I invite everyone throughout the archdiocese to join me in praying for Father Mahan and the parishioners of Dearborn County and the universal Church.”

“Evangelizing catechesis” draws inspiration from Pope Francis' 2021 document “*Antiquum Ministerium*” (“Ancient Ministry”) that described catechesis as a distinct ministry in the Church. It also builds on the most recent edition of the Vatican's *Directory for Catechesis*, issued in 2020, that gives guidelines for catechists and pastors, particularly in the role of evangelization.

The institute launched its inaugural meeting on Nov. 10-12, 2022, in Baltimore ahead of the U.S. bishops' Nov. 14-17 general assembly.

Father Mahan told OSV News the gathering drew more than 130 Church leaders, including bishops, other diocesan officials, staff of the USCCB subcommittee, priests and others currently helping review catechetical texts as well as representatives from various publishers of catechetical materials.

He called it a “beautiful opportunity” for all involved in catechesis “to be together. We are in this together. The institute is meant to keep us together and help us work together for the same goal—to form young people in the faith, help them live the faith for a lifetime.”

“We know we have a lot of young Catholics who are leaving the Church, some at a very early age. Some kids will make that decision in middle school ... opting out even if they are still going to Mass and religious ed. They're already out the door,” he said.

The bishops want to make sure “we're doing the best we can in catechesis,” and help those called in that direction “to

produce high quality, doctrinally sound, compelling materials for our young people that grab them by the heart.”

He paid tribute to the late Indianapolis Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein for playing a significant role in the renewal of catechesis in the U.S. while he was chairman of the U.S. bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on the Use of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

In spite of the great efforts by catechists and publishers of catechetical materials to date, “we are still losing young people,” Father Mahan said, due in part to the many “powerful influences in our culture that are sort of like tentacles that can wrap around and not let go.”

The “isms” are rampant—individualism, materialisms, narcissism that leads to nihilism,” Father Mahan told OSV News. “When we look at how saturated many young people are in media—whether watching TV, music, movies, engrossed in social media—there are a lot of influences that mitigate against a solid formation in the faith.”

“I'm not sure we can do a whole lot to change what's out there. That may be someone else's calling,” he said. “But the Church can make sure what we are offering is top-notch, innovative. ... We know we are one screen away from anyone else in the world and that can present some great opportunities for us in using media in ways that glorify God.”

(For more information on the Institute on the *Catechism*, please visit evangelizingcatechesis.com.) †

Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

Parishes throughout the archdiocese have scheduled communal penance services for Lent. The following is a list of services that have been reported to *The Criterion*.

Batesville Deanery

March 3, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at All Saints, St. Martin Campus, Dearborn County
 March 17, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Joseph, Shelbyville
 March 17, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora
 March 21, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg
 March 21, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
 March 22, 6:30 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County
 March 28, 6-8 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood
 March 28, 7 p.m. at St. Catherine of Siena, St. John Campus, in Decatur County
 March 29, 6:15 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County
 March 29, 6-8 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhouses
 March 30, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Batesville Deanery are as follows:

Wednesdays 5-6 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan
 Fridays 6-7 p.m. at St. Nicholas, Ripley County
 Saturdays 4-5 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan
 Before and after weekend Masses at St. Maurice, Napoleon
 Half-hour before daily Masses at St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bright

Bloomington Deanery

March 9, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville
 March 22, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer
 March 28, 7 p.m. for St. Mary, Mitchell, and St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, at St. Vincent de Paul
 March 29, 6 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
 April 5, 6 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, St. John the Apostle and St. Paul Catholic Center, all in Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center

Connersville Deanery

March 8, 6 p.m. at St. Bridget of Ireland, Liberty
 March 19, 11 a.m. at St. Anne, New Castle
 March 26, 1 p.m. at St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City

March 31, 5:30 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Anne Seton, Holy Family Campus, Richmond

Indianapolis East Deanery

March 4, 9-11 a.m. at St. Philip Neri
 March 15, 7 p.m. at St. Rita
 March 16, 7 p.m. at Holy Spirit

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the East Deanery are as follows:

Sundays 9 a.m. (except Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday) at Our Lady of Lourdes

Indianapolis North Deanery

March 20, 6:30 p.m. at St. Luke the Evangelist
 March 21, 6:30 p.m. at St. Pius X

Indianapolis South Deanery

March 9, 6:30 p.m. for Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, and Good Shepherd at Holy Name of Jesus
 March 18, 8:30 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
 March 22, 7 p.m. for St. Jude and St. Mark the Evangelist at St. Mark the Evangelist
 March 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Thomas More, Mooresville (Indianapolis West Deanery), at St. Ann

Indianapolis West Deanery

March 22, 7 p.m. at St. Malachy, Brownsburg
 March 23, 7 p.m. for St. Michael the Archangel and St. Monica at St. Michael the Archangel
 March 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m. for St. Ann (Indianapolis South Deanery) and St. Thomas More, Mooresville, at St. Ann
 March 29, 7 p.m. at Holy Angels

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the West Deanery are as follows:

Wednesdays 6-7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville
 Fridays 3:30-4:30 p.m. at St. Christopher and 5:30-6:30 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
 Saturdays 4-6 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel

New Albany Deanery

March 9, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
 March 14, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford
 March 15, 7 p.m. at St. Mary of the Knobs, Floyd County
 March 22, 7 p.m. in English and Spanish at St. Mary, New Albany
 March 22, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany
 March 23, 6:30 p.m. at St. John Paul II, Sellersburg
 March 27, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight
 March 28, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navilleton
 March 29, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
 March 29, 7 p.m. in English and Spanish at St. Michael, Charlestown
 March 30, 6:30 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier, Henryville

Seymour Deanery

March 8, 7 p.m. for St. Bartholomew, Columbus, and Holy Trinity, Edinburgh, at St. Bartholomew
 March 14, 6 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace
 March 15, 6:30 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour

Tell City Deanery

March 5, 3 p.m. at St. Boniface, Fulda
 March 12, 2 p.m. at St. Paul, Tell City

Terre Haute Deanery

March 10, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. for St. Patrick and St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute, at St. Margaret Mary
 March 13, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph University, Terre Haute
 March 22, 6:30 p.m. for St. Joseph, Rockville, and Sacred Heart, Clinton, at Sacred Heart
 March 23, 7 p.m. at St. Benedict, Terre Haute
 April 1, 10-11 a.m. at Annunciation, Brazil
 April 2, noon-3 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Terre Haute Deanery are as follows:

Thursdays 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Joseph University, Terre Haute
 Saturdays 3:30-4:30 p.m. at St. Joseph University, Terre Haute †

Annual St. Mary of the Knobs Corvette Raffle

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Everyone must take part in politics for the common good, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Everyone must engage in politics, which is simply what it means to take part constructively in the life of a nation or society, Pope Francis said in a new book of interviews.

Even the Gospel has “a political dimension” in that it seeks to convert “the social, including religious, mindset of the people,” he said, according to a series of excerpts published by Vatican News and other outlets on Feb. 26.

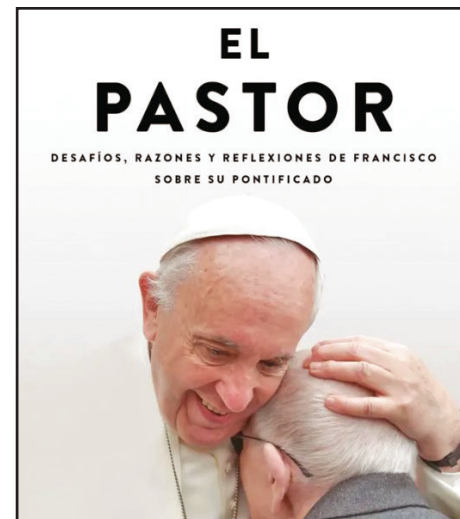
Marking the 10th anniversary of the pope’s election, journalists Sergio Rubin and Francesca Ambrogetti planned to release a book-length compilation of a decade of interviews with the pope in Spanish on March 1.

Titled *El Pastor (The Shepherd)*, the book covers the “challenges, reasons and reflections” of Pope Francis over the course of his pontificate. Rubin and Ambrogetti had previously compiled two years of interviews with then-Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio of Buenos Aires for their 2010 book *The Jesuit*, which became a bestseller after the cardinal was elected pontiff, and retitled *Pope Francis. Conversations with Jorge Bergoglio: His Life in His Own Words*.

In *The Shepherd*, the authors pick up where they left off to cover his papacy and the path he has followed.

He said his plan has always been “to carry out what the cardinals expressed in the general congregations on the eve of the conclave,” which was to “revitalize the proclamation of the Gospel, reduce centralization in the Vatican,” eradicate the abuse of minors and fight economic corruption.

When asked what he would say to those who accuse him of “doing politics,” the pope said, “Yes, I am doing politics. Because everybody has to do politics. Christian people have to do politics. When we read what Jesus said, we see that he was doing politics.”



The pope then explained what he meant by “politics,” saying it is “a way of life for the ‘polis,’ for the city.”

Speaking about the increasing polarization in the world, the pope said, “we are not water and oil, we are brothers and sisters.”

Humanity must rise above this “category of water and oil and move toward fraternity,” which is precisely what people have a hard time seeing when there is a conflict, that their vocation is fraternity, he said.

“When we ignore this, divisions begin and it’s like that everywhere,” he said.

When it comes to economic activity, Pope Francis said he does not “condemn” capitalism or the market economy, but that there needs to be what St. John Paul II advocated for, that is, a new “social economy of the market,” which would balance competition and social progress.

Today, the world of finance prevails, he said, and “where we can all agree is that the concentration of wealth and inequalities have increased and many people die of hunger.” If he focuses so much on the poor and those in need, “that’s because that is what Jesus did and what the Gospel says.” †

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Church's ministry to the sick and dying is often a hidden treasure

By Michael R. Heinlein

(OSV News)—When someone is sick, elderly or dying, Catholics tend to automatically think of the sacrament of the anointing of the sick.

But we don't tend to think about the sacrament consistently. Some only think it is for those who are actively dying, while others think it ought to be received without serious reason. Sacramental anointing seems to be one of the more underappreciated, misunderstood, under-utilized and least talked about of the Church's seven sacraments.

Some of it is a matter of poor catechesis. Some of it is a combination of a growing shortage of priests and diminished availability, and a matter of the culture and our own self-reliance rather than our reliance on God, particularly in times of vulnerability.

Whatever the reasons that anointing of the sick doesn't seem to get its proper due, we can be sure it is an important opportunity to receive Christ's grace and make his life our own.

The sacrament, in fact, conforms us more clearly to Christ, especially to him in his passion and death. Through his presence and grace in the sacrament, we are reminded we are not alone and that our struggles, pains and sufferings are not isolated. We can lean on the crutch of the cross amid our illnesses, infirmities and approaching death to make sense of it all and find strength, purpose and hope.

The anointing of the sick is explicitly mentioned in Scripture, in the New Testament's Letter of St. James (Jas 5:14-15), which also identifies it as a ministry specific to priests. Through them, Christ is able to encounter, accompany and strengthen those who receive the sacrament.

Jesus can bring physical healing to the person, of course, as he brought the same to so many during his public ministry. But as those cures were meant to herald the coming of the kingdom of God, our prayers for healing now originate mostly from a desire for spiritual healing in the face of illness and death.

Christ conquered sin and death. Through his grace, we share in this victory. We experience Christ's peace in this sacrament, which assists us to face the difficulties ahead. It also gives us his courage and determination to embrace the will of God for our sanctification and for that of the whole world.

We do not need to be at the point of death to receive the sacrament, a fact sometimes confused in the minds of many. The sacrament is for all those seriously ill, so some discernment is needed to determine applicability.

Celebration of anointing of the sick

The sacrament of the anointing of the sick is only



Bishop William F. Medley of Owensboro, Ky., administers the sacrament of anointing of the sick to Chris Johnson during Mass at the pastoral center of the Diocese of Owensboro on May 10, 2022. Often misunderstood by Catholics, the anointing of the sick offers the faithful many graces that can strengthen the life of faith of the sick and dying. (CNS photo/Riley Greif, *The Western Kentucky Catholic*)

administered by a priest or bishop. It may or may not include the sacrament of penance as well, depending on the circumstances. At a minimum, reconciliation is made available for the recipient, if possible.

The Liturgy of Anointing itself, during the celebration of the sacrament, involves principally the laying on of hands and the anointing with oil. The laying on of hands recalls Christ's healing of the sick through the same gesture, and offers a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence.

The oil of the sick, often itself having been blessed by a bishop at a chrism Mass in advance of the previous

Easter, is applied to the forehead and hands of the person being anointed. The use of oil in Scripture is remedial, comforting and restorative.

There are times during the year that parishes might offer communal celebrations of the sacrament, either within the context of the Mass or as a separate celebration. The sacrament is available for those whose health is seriously impaired, discerned without scrupulosity, and should not be administered indiscriminately and without prudential judgment.

Those to be anointed include the elderly and those preparing for surgery. It can be repeated if the illness returns, if the same illness worsens or has become chronic or when requested and determined by the minister's pastoral judgment to be warranted.

Timing for anointing

The sacrament of anointing of the sick does not consist exclusively of what is commonly referred to as the "last rites" of the Church. It is a sacrament to be celebrated early in illness and may be repeated as a condition worsens or death is thought to be approaching. What constitutes "last rites" would consist of "viaticum" and the commendation of the dying ritual prayers.

Part of overcoming this common misunderstanding of the sacrament's timing is to encourage the celebration of the sacrament outside of preparation for death itself.

The faithful should not wait until death seems imminent to request sacramental anointing. With fewer priests, and more faithful under their charge in many places, it has become increasingly difficult for priests to be available at a moment's notice. But waiting also keeps God's grace from the person needing it. It is important to see to it that a person in need of the sacrament can receive it as soon as reasonably possible.

In next week's issue, more aspects of the Church's ministry to the sick and dying and how Catholics can make it more a part of their and their loved one's lives of faith will be explored.

(Michael R. Heinlein is the author of the recently released *Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I.* and editor of *Our Sunday Visitor's Simply Catholic*. Follow him on Twitter @HeinleinMichael.) †

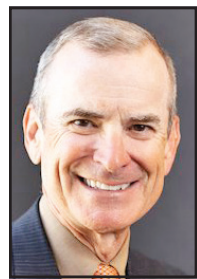


A woman sits at the bedside of her mother at de Greeff Hospice House in St. Louis in this 2016 file photo. (OSV News photo/CNS file, Lisa Johnston, *St. Louis Review*)

Redeeming the Time/Kenneth Craycraft

Force and suffering: Suggestions for Lenten reading

“Put your sword back into its sheath,” Jesus rebuked a disciple in the Garden of Gethsemane. “Do you think that I



cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me ... with ... legions of angels?” (Mt 26:52-53). The kingdom that Christ came to establish would not be initiated by force. Rather, in a central paradox of Christianity,

the kingdom would be inaugurated by suffering and even death.

Christ eschewed the power of violent force, not simply because of its effect on the victim, but rather because of the corrosive effect of violence on the soul of the one who perpetuates it. This might be the framework for a program of Lenten reading and reflection, especially in a political culture so riven by violence and threats of violence.

Simone Weil’s classic 1939 essay “The ‘Iliad’ or the Poem of Force” shows us how the human spirit is deformed by the force that it presumes to wield over others. First published in an English translation by Mary McCarthy in 1945, Weil’s essay explains how the ancient Greek poet Homer’s epic poem *The Iliad* demonstrates that the exercise of violent force exacts emotional and psychological violence on the perpetrator as much as the victim.

No one really controls violent force, she explains. Rather, one is controlled by

the force one presumes to brandish. As such, the violent will always be defeated by the violence they flaunt.

Weil’s analysis of *The Iliad* is confirmation of the way of the desert, in which suffering—not violence—is the path of both the redeemer and the redeemed. “Only he who has measured the dominion of force, and knows how not to respect it,” writes Weil, “is capable of love and justice.” Put away your sword, indeed.

Evelyn Waugh’s novel *Helena* is in part an exercise in contrasting the soul-crushing result of wielding violence with the spirit-enriching effects of selfless service. Using considerable literary license, Waugh tells the story of St. Helen, mother of the fourth-century Roman emperor Constantine, and discoverer of the true cross of Christ. Waugh accounts for St. Helen’s triumphant expedition for the cross as the culmination of a life of quiet, painful suffering. Abandoned by her husband, Constantius Chlorus, and forced to witness her son Constantine’s descent into murderous madness, St. Helen’s triumph came only at the end of a life of sorrow and anguish. Waugh’s narrative of St. Helen’s patient suffering and quiet triumph is a sustaining guide through Lent.

The way of suffering in the face of violence is also illustrated in Shusaku Endo’s unforgettable novel *Silence*, a fictionalized account of the persecution of Portuguese Jesuit missionaries and their Christian converts in 17th-century Japan. The success of Endo’s novel is not

found in triumph and happy resolution, but rather in spiritual struggle and moral ambiguity. *Silence* is a reminder that we may be called to suffer for our witness to the Gospel, but that few of us ever have been. The life of Christian discipleship, while ordered toward a blessed resolution, is not devoid of sorrow. The road to joy may be the path of suffering. Endo’s *Silence* is a brilliant account of that paradox, and perfect Lenten reading.

Finally, perhaps no account of suffering is more acute than Oscar Wilde’s *De Profundis*, his classic letter from prison. While we focus on suffering during Lent, Wilde reminds us that suffering does not respect the season or the calendar.

“Suffering is one very long moment,” he writes. “We cannot divide it by seasons. We can only record its moods, and chronicle their return. With us time itself does not progress. It revolves.”

But “nothing in the world is meaningless,” Wilde continues, “and suffering least of all.” Rather, suffering reveals “something hidden away in my nature, like a treasure in a field.”

In Wilde’s case that hidden treasure was humility. But *De Profundis* shows us that suffering can reveal our own particular faults and sins—and maybe even purge them in the desert of Lent.

(Kenneth Craycraft is associate professor of moral theology at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary and School of Theology in Cincinnati. “Redeeming the Time” appears monthly at OSV News.) †

Feeling W/Effie Caldarola

You are enough for God just the way you are

Some people don’t believe in miracles. Other people see little miracles every day. I try to be that second kind of person, but sometimes God has to bang a drum to get my attention.



During the holidays, I broke my wrist and had to wait 10 days for surgery. So, in addition to weeks of post-surgery healing, I waited days languishing in an

unwieldy splint applied haphazardly at the emergency room.

If you’ve ever tied your dominant arm behind your back (and why would you?), you know the helpless feeling.

I asked the Lord to help me make something positive of this, but I’m impatient.

Then, online, I noted a young Jesuit mentioning “Brother Curry’s” influence on his life. That name sounded familiar, so I researched him. What an inspiration.

Richard Curry was born in Philadelphia in 1943 without a right forearm. Pictures show an adorable baby, but his good Catholic parents were devastated. His dad spent the day in a bar.

But Rick Curry became a Jesuit brother and turned what others might see as a “handicap” into an extraordinary gift for helping others. Drum banging softly, I realized I was being asked to see my right arm situation for the relatively minor bump it was.

But much more than that, then-Father Curry, who died in 2015, reminded me that in the eyes of God we are all beautiful just the way we are. We’re “enough.”

It’s a real miracle, sometimes, to truly grasp that.

His story reminds me of a quote frequently attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola: “Most people have no idea what God would make of them if they would only place themselves at his disposal.”

Father Curry changed the world for countless people by showing them their giftedness. He founded the National Theater Workshop for the Handicapped, where thousands of people with disabilities have participated in performances and workshops. He earned a doctorate in theater, and founded the Wounded Warriors Writers Workshop and the Academy for Veterans to promote healing and storytelling.

According to *The New York Times*, he helped found a bakery for veterans, and wrote two cookbooks, including *The Secret of Jesuit Breading*.

And, although he was once laughed out of an audition for a mouthwash commercial because he was missing an arm, he later appeared in an episode of the television series “Monk.” This good-natured, good-hearted Jesuit had the last laugh.

In 2009, he became a priest. Why not earlier? During ordination, the right thumb and forefinger are anointed. Father Curry needed a dispensation, and the story goes he sought one only after an amputee came to him for counseling and absolution.

Father Curry explained that he couldn’t grant absolution because he hadn’t been called to the priesthood.

“Why not?” the man demanded. “Who calls you?”

Father Curry explained that God and the Christian community calls.

“Well, I’m calling you,” the man proclaimed.

Maybe this was God banging a drum for Father Curry.

When Rick Curry was in first grade, a famous relic—the preserved right arm of Jesuit co-founder, St. Francis Xavier—

See CALDAROLA, page 15

Guest Column/Debra Tomaselli

Chance encounter leads to question on how we can pray

As I was leaving the hospital, I encountered a white-haired woman in a hallway. Our eyes met and she broke into a big smile.



“Do you remember me?” I cocked my head. Then, as she blurted her name, recognition flooded me.

“Maria!” We hugged. Yes, yes, Maria. I hadn’t seen Maria in years. She’d been the woman with the short, perfectly styled, brown hair. The woman who always wore classy outfits. The

woman who attended our parish, taking her place by the altar to distribute Communion at daily Mass.

Yes, yes, Maria.

The woman who complained non-stop. The woman with the annoying husband. The woman with the grown, alcoholic son who moved in with the woman with a litany of daily struggles.

I remember.

“Pray for me,” she’d say.

It seemed more of a demand than a heartfelt request.

Maria was much older than me, and I never really saw her beyond those morning Mass encounters years ago.

But here she was—in the hospital hallway.

Her presence awakened my memory. “I don’t see you at church anymore,” I said.

“No, unfortunately not,” she said. “It’s too early for me

now.” I nodded. They’d changed Mass times in recent years.

I hadn’t seen her in years, but, as we spoke, it was as if a day hadn’t passed.

She had white hair now, not brown. Still perfectly styled. Maybe an added wrinkle or two, but the same big alert brown eyes.

Same height. Same weight. Same build.

Maria was always slim, and she still was.

Silence hung in the air while we looked at each other, delighted by the unexpected encounter.

Then Maria spoke.

“I’m 90!” she announced.

I roared in disbelief. “90? That can’t be!”

She smiled, nodding. She too was amazed.

“Yes, yes,” she said. “And watch ...” She swooped one arm downward and the other behind her, looking like a windmill as her fingertips swept the shiny hospital floor.

“Whoa,” I said. “I can’t even do that. I wouldn’t be able to walk away from this conversation if I tried that.”

We both laughed.

She, too, appreciated her flexibility.

She chatted about her husband’s hospital stay, his declining health and his immobility.

Until recently, her story would have fallen on deaf ears. But now my husband and I have faced enough health struggles for me to understand their pain.

“How do you do it?” I asked. Maybe I was hoping for advice. Maybe for strength.

See TOMASELLI, page 15

Richard Etienne/Guest Column

When you speak, try to keep a healthy, holy perspective

Does darkness ever enter your mind? Does profanity ever slip from your lips before your filter can stop its utterance?



I believe that when an increase in cursing emerges in people’s speech, they should mentally stop and take notice.

It is not just because cursing can be bad. It has been my experience that at these times there

is often an issue, situation or emotion of which he or she may not be fully cognizant, and the individual cannot deal with it at the time.

Is there an unidentified sadness that needs to be acknowledged? Is there some

experience that has recently brought some previously unrecognized anger closer to the surface?

A person would be wise to first identify this and then take the time to deal with the issue that has generated the unresolved feelings.

In my personal experience, I have found the urge to use profanity is usually a symptom of an undiagnosed matter and that I would benefit greatly from attempting to identify its underlying cause.

Once identified, I can then determine what options are available for processing it more appropriately rather than beating myself up for using inappropriate language.

In the Gospel of Matthew, we read, “... from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks” (Mt 12:34). There is much

wisdom in this verse of Scripture.

A person can offer much pretense to others, but his or her words will eventually reveal the true issues with which they wrestle.

Once again we come full circle: awareness and mindfulness are at the heart of a healthy, holy perspective.

We would be wise to pay attention to clues that indicate how the various pieces of our life are integrating. In the end, it isn’t about the things that we acquire over our lifetime that will ultimately matter. Instead, ask yourself: “What is stored in your heart?”

(Richard Etienne has a degree in theology from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad and resides in Newburgh, Ind.) †

Second Sunday of Lent/Msg. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 5, 2023

- Genesis 12:1-4a
- 2 Timothy 1:8a-10
- Matthew 17:1-9

The Book of Genesis is the source of the first reading for Mass this weekend. As its name implies, Genesis reveals the divine origin of life and the divine plan in the forming of the Hebrew people.



First and foremost, Genesis is a splendidly vivid revelation of God's majesty and power, but also of the dignity of humanity and purpose of life.

It is a great pity that this marvelous book has been so tortured and misconstrued by well-meaning, but uninformed readers over the years. The message of Genesis is not about the details of how creation occurred.

This weekend's reading is about Abraham. Considered by scholars to have been an actual person and not a myth, Abraham is regarded as the father of the Jewish people.

The reading makes several points. God is active in human affairs, communicates with humans and they with God.

Abraham has a very strong faith. God rewards this faith by pledging that Abraham's descendants, until the end of time, will be his special people. It is not a dignity conferred without obligation. Descendants of Abraham must be loyal to God and, by their lives of faith, reveal him to the world.

For its second reading, this weekend's liturgy presents a passage from St. Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy.

Timothy was a disciple of Paul. The Church venerates Timothy as a great saint, important in the formation of the Church. According to the New Testament, Timothy was the son of a pagan father and a devout Jewish mother. He was Paul's secretary at one point and once was imprisoned with Paul, although eventually released. Tradition holds that Timothy was the first bishop of Ephesus, then a major city, its present ruins on the Mediterranean coast of modern Turkey.

Paul encourages Timothy to be strong in his Christian belief despite difficulties and obstacles.

St. Matthew's Gospel furnishes

the last reading. It is the story of the transfiguration, ablaze with symbols of God with which any Jew instantly would have been familiar, as these images appear throughout the Hebrew Scriptures.

In these Scriptures, brilliant light, mountaintops and pure white all symbolized God. Finally, on either side of Jesus were Moses and Elijah, the great heroes of the Hebrew religious tradition.

This scene utterly contrasts with that of Calvary. Instead of shimmering clothes, Jesus is crucified after being stripped of his garments. Instead of glowing clouds and brilliant light, darkness surrounds the cross.

Reflection

Lent is little more than one week along, and already the Church is encouraging us and reinforcing our faith, just as Jesus strengthened the faith of the Apostles who stood trembling and in dismay before the divine sight manifested on the mountain.

The message is clear. Jesus is God, active and present among us.

To be saved, we must believe and in our belief we must commit our lives to Christ. This is hard.

Abraham is critically a part of this weekend's lesson as an example. He was firmly loyal to his faith in God regardless.

Nowhere in these readings is any account of the crucifixion, no reference to Calvary. Nevertheless, the event of the Lord's death on the cross is essential to understanding fully this weekend's message.

Calvary represents the world. It was seemingly for a moment the triumph of earthly power and human sin over good. Jesus died, but then came the wonder of Easter.

Every human being can be tricked into assuming that earthly things or earthly satisfaction will bring them reward. Instead of reward, sinning brings death. All around it is gloom.

So, the Church counsels us. Have faith, see beyond the gloom, rejoice in the light of Jesus. Remember the transfiguration, and remember Abraham, our model of absolute faith. Remember what truly matters in life. †

Daily Readings

Monday, March 6

Daniel 9:4b-10
Psalm 79:8-9, 11, 13
Luke 6:36-38

Tuesday, March 7

St. Perpetua, martyr
St. Felicity, martyr
Isaiah 1:10, 16-20
Psalm 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23
Matthew 23:1-12

Wednesday, March 8

St. John of God, religious
Jeremiah 18:18-20
Psalm 31:5-6, 14-16
Matthew 20:17-28

Thursday, March 9

St. Frances of Rome, religious
Jeremiah 17:5-10
Psalm 1:1-4, 6
Luke 16:19-31

Friday, March 10

Genesis 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a
Psalm 105:16-21
Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

Saturday, March 11

Micah 7:14-15, 18-20
Psalm 103:1-4, 9-12
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Sunday, March 12

Third Sunday of Lent
Exodus 17:3-7
Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9
Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
John 4:5-42
or John 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Only priests and bishops can confer sacramental absolution of sins

Q If someone is dying, can anyone hear their confession and offer absolution? (Pennsylvania)



A No. Only a priest or bishop has the power to forgive sins sacramentally in Jesus' name. Even in an emergency, laypeople are not able to confer absolution; nor can deacons, even though they are ordained.

Interestingly (and only if there is a real danger of imminent death), a priest who, for a variety of reasons, may have lost his priestly faculties can still validly confer sacramental absolution upon a dying penitent.

A "faculty" in this sense is the permission from the legitimate authority, (generally the local diocesan bishop), for a priest to celebrate certain sacraments. For some sacraments, including the sacrament of penance, this faculty is needed not only so that the sacrament may be licit, but also for its validity (see Canon 966 of the *Code of Canon Law*).

To be sure, most parish priests you encounter will indeed have the faculty to hear confessions. A priest might lack this faculty in a few unusual scenarios, such as being deemed incapable of the good judgment needed to counsel penitents appropriately (e.g., perhaps due to severe physical or mental illness), or if he is under some sort of canonical punishment like excommunication.

In some situations, even a priest in good standing may not have the faculty to absolve certain egregiously grave sins (such as desecration of the Blessed

Sacrament or making an attempt on the life of the pope).

However, in danger of death, the Church's law itself is the authority giving the faculty to grant sacramental absolution. As we read in Canon 976: "Even though a priest lacks the faculty to hear confessions, he absolves validly and licitly any penitents whatsoever in danger of death from any censures and sins, even if an approved priest is present."

That being said, hopefully you never find yourself in danger of death and without a priest! If this happens, the best thing to do is make a sincere act of contrition and have trust in God's mercy. But this also underscores the importance of going to confession regularly, so that we're always as prepared as we can be should the unexpected happen.

Q Our whole Mass is the "*Novus Ordo*" in English, but the pastor insists on using Kyrie eleison and also has us chanting the "Lamb of God" prayer in Latin. Does this invalidate the Mass? (Maryland)

A : It's perfectly valid to use Latin chant in the "*Novus Ordo*" Mass (or Greek, for that matter, for the "*Kyrie*").

Often Catholics will refer to the pre-Vatican II Missal as the "TLM" or "Traditional Latin Mass," but this is somewhat of a misnomer. All our liturgical prayers are originally written in Latin, and translations are always made from this Latin "master copy." So technically, the "*Novus Ordo*" is also a Latin Mass.

As Latin "Roman" Catholics, whose faith comes to us by way of the ministry of the Apostle St. Peter as the first bishop of Rome, Latin is our traditional liturgical language. Even while it's important that we be able to follow along with the liturgy and understand what we are praying, it's also good to keep in touch with our heritage.

As the Second Vatican Council document "*Sacrosanctum Concilium*" says: "... steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them" (#54).

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.) †

My Journey to God

Little Child Within

By Lauren Smith

you are not alone.
God is with you.
Jesus is with you.
Mary is with you.
you are truly not alone.
In this suffering,
This of My Suffering,
it is Me, O Jesus,
Whose suffering it is.
they did it to you,
because they did it to Me.
they truly did it to Me.

(Lauren Smith is a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis. Photo: This sculpture depicts Christ falling for the second time in the Stations of the Cross at the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Nashville, Tenn., on April 9, 2019.) (CNS photo/Rick Musacchio, Tennessee Register)



Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

BACK, Virginia F., 81, All Saints Parish, Dearborn County, Feb. 13. Mother of Kristie Gabbard, Kay Johnson, Karen Lozier and Kevin Back. Sister of Marcie Schutte. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of two.

CASTNER, Betty, 92, St. John the Baptist, Osgood, Jan. 12. Mother of Mary Beth, Craig, Greg, Tim and Todd Castner. Sister of Donna Siebert. Grandmother of seven. Great-grandmother of nine.

CONSTANTINE, Michael L., 83, St. Mary of the Knobs, Floyd County, Feb. 18. Husband of Vivian Constantine. Father of Jill Aemmer, Karen Davis-Powers, Cheryl Martin, Elizabeth Miller and Hollee Smith. Brother of Susan O'Grady. Grandfather of 13.

ETIENNE, Francis, 66, St. Augustine, Leopold, Jan. 25. Husband of Rita Etienne. Father of Natilie Wais and Matthew Etienne. Brother of Donna Bruggeman, Margie Edwards, Ruth Ory, Monia Richard, Doyle, Fred, Justin and Phil Etienne. Grandfather of four.

GADDIE, Barbara Y., 80, St. Joan of Arc, Indianapolis, Feb. 12. Mother of Andrea Gaddie Bartlett, Heather Gaddie Contee and Brian Gaddie.

GRONEFIELD, Catherine (Decker), 90, All Saints Parish, Dearborn County, Feb. 15. Mother of Linda Bedel, Brenda Collier, Debbie Miller, Deacon Bob, Jim, John and Ron Decker. Sister of Janice Wagner. Grandmother of 24. Great-grandmother of 51. Great-grandmother of one.

HEIDENREICH, Dolores, 93, St. Roch, Indianapolis,

Feb. 12. Wife of William Heidenreich. Mother of Amy Bova, Teresa Boyd, Mary Bradley, Mary Davis, Kathy Erb, Julie Ford, Becky Gorman, Donna Lannan, Joanna Nevitt, Suzie O'Hara, Anna Marie, Paul and William Heidenreich and John, Tim and Tom Lannan. Grandmother of 53. Great-grandmother of 77.

MILLER, Walter, 93, St. Peter, Harrison County, Feb. 12. Husband of Juanita Miller. Father of Denise Hubert, Diane Metz, Donna Withers and Doug Miller. Brother of Catherine Miller. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of 10.

PARAISO, Virginia, 94, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Feb. 15. Mother of Marie Antoinette, Marie Fidela, Michelle and Sandra. Sister of Josefina, Leticia, Roman and Sergio.

Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of four.

SCHROEDER, William D., 67, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Feb. 13. Father of Rosalyn, Sterline Schroeder and Todd McCutcheon. Brother of Sheila Bennett and John Schroeder.

SERBAN, William, 79, St. Matthew the Apostle, Indianapolis, Feb. 7. Father of Beth Thrasher, Trisha White and Jason Serban. Stepfather of Chuck Newkirk. Grandfather of nine. Step-grandfather of three. Step-great-grandfather of one.

SPAETH, Bernard J., 90, St. Mary, Rushville, Jan. 25. Father of Constance Amos, Eileen Clemons, Jennifer Hoeing, Ann Robben, Patricia Schultz, Regenia Sutter, Bernard, Charles, David, James, Michael,

Richard and William Spaeth. Brother of Mary Barr, Louis and Robert Spaeth. Grandfather of 50. Great-grandfather of 52.

SULLIVAN, Maureen, 70, St. Matthew the Apostle, Indianapolis, Feb. 11. Wife

of William Mattingly III. Mother of Charles, Daniel, Peter and William Mattingly IV. Daughter of Agnes Sullivan. Grandmother of 13.

WITTE, Sherry, 74, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton,

Richmond, Feb. 11. Mother of Karen King, Angela Voiles and Matthew Witte. Sister of Jeannette Wilson and Jerry Roddy. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of two. †

Ash Wednesday at the cathedral



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson places ashes on the forehead of Katie Hubbard, who serves as an advocate in the archdiocesan metropolitan tribunal, during an Ash Wednesday Mass on Feb. 22 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Brother Howard Studivant served in Indianapolis parishes and schools

Brother Howard Studivant, who was affiliated with the former Benedictine St. Maur Priory in Indianapolis, died on Feb. 19. He was 87.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Feb. 24 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Burial followed at Calvary Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Brother Howard was born on Sept. 16, 1935, in Faunsdale, Ala. He came to Indianapolis in his life with the St. Maur Priory community. St. Maur was founded in South Union, Ky., in 1947 as a racially integrated monastic

community. It moved to Indianapolis in 1967 and closed in 2001.

In Indianapolis, Brother Howard served as sacristan at the cathedral and at St. Rita Parish and as a bus driver for Holy Angels School and the former St. Rita School. He was a member of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish, the Knights of Peter Claver and the Knights of Columbus.

Brother Howard is survived by his sisters, Pauline Washington of Birmingham, Ala., and Rhondria Young of Montgomery, Ala. †

USCCB offers March 10-18 novena for those on the path to adoption

Criterion staff report

Among St. Joseph's many patronages are families, fathers and expectant mothers. In light of these patronages, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) created an online novena to St. Joseph for those on the path to adoption, available in English and Spanish. The novena begins on March 10 and ends on March 18, the day before the saint's principal feast day.

Each day of the online novena includes an intention for the day, a Scripture reading, a prayer, a petition to St. Joseph and concluding prayers.

At cutt.ly/AdoptionNovena, participants can access the novena each day, register to receive it daily via text or e-mail, or download a printable copy of the novena.

The site also includes a link to parish resources, such as graphics and bulletin announcements about the novena.

For those who would like to pray the novena but do not have access to the Internet, the daily intentions are as follows, concluding with an Our Father, Hail Mary and

St. Joseph Adoption Novena

March 10-18



Glory Be each day:

- Day 1: For mothers who place their children for adoption. (Ex 1:22-2:6, 2:10)
- Day 2: For fathers who place their children for adoption. (Jn 3:16)
- Day 3: For family members of children placed for adoption. (Jn 15:12-17)
- Day 4: For children awaiting adoption. (Mt 19:13-14)
- Day 5: For married couples pursuing adoption. (Rom 8:14-17)
- Day 6: For adopted children. (Jn 14:16-21)
- Day 7: For adoptive mothers. (Jn 19:25-27)
- Day 8: For adoptive fathers. (Mt 1:18-21, 24)
- Day 9: For family members welcoming children through adoption. (Eph 3:14-15, 17-19) †

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:

- Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
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- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
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For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry



REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are two ways to make a report:

1 Ethics Point
Confidential, Online Reporting
www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com or 888-393-6810

2 Victim Assistance Coordinator, Archdiocese of Indianapolis
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410

317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
victimassistance@archindy.org

Around the world in 10 years: Pope's 40 trips reflect his priorities

(March 13, 2023, is the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' election to the papacy. The Criterion will be publishing articles in the coming weeks marking this milestone.)

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Many of the 40 international trips Pope Francis has made during the past 10 years have been to countries where Christians are a minority



Pope Francis

or where he can draw close to people on the fringes of the world's attention.

The pope always "chooses the peripheries," said Andrea Torielli, editorial director of the Vatican Dicastery for Communication, who has accompanied Pope

Francis on nearly all his international trips.

Pope Francis goes "to the most problematic places where he thinks his presence can give way to positive developments, or where he can 'turn on a light' so that the world can see the reality of these places," Torielli told Catholic News Service (CNS).

Pope Francis has visited some of the poorest countries in the world, such as Mozambique and Madagascar in 2019 and Congo and South Sudan early this year.

In countries experiencing war, he has pleaded for peace as he did during a visit to the Central African Republic in 2015, and in nations recovering from conflict, he has promoted reconciliation as he did in Iraq in 2021.

He has returned to his native Latin America six times—but has never gone back to his native Argentina—and has traveled to

every continent except for Oceania, which he was scheduled to visit in September 2020 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pope Francis has averaged four international trips each year of his 10-year pontificate even though he was unable to travel in 2020 due to the pandemic. He has visited 60 countries.

Yet just as notable as the countries Pope Francis has visited are those he has not: Spain, Germany and England, all visited by Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

Even Pope Francis' brief visits to France and Switzerland lasted mere hours so that he could address assemblies of the European Union and the World Council of Churches, respectively.

In December 2022, he told the Spanish newspaper ABC that he had not organized an extended visit to any large European nation because he preferred visiting "smaller countries."

Several of Pope Francis' trips have reflected his commitment to interreligious dialogue. He became the first pope to visit several Muslim-majority countries: the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Bahrain, to advance dialogue with Muslim communities and condemn all forms of religious extremism with Muslim leaders.

In Abu Dhabi in 2019, he signed the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together with Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb, grand imam of Egypt's Al-Azhar Mosque and University and widely considered to be the leading figure in Sunni Islam thought. And in 2022, the pope and the sheikh participated in the 7th Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Kazakhstan alongside 80 other religious leaders and hundreds of delegates.

Don't we usually pray God will eliminate our problems?

With that, the elevator doors opened, and we bid farewell.

While I may never see Maria again, I cherish our encounter and her simple disclosure.

And I just might change my prayer this morning. ... *Dear Lord, please help me with whatever problems come along today. Amen.*

(Debra Tomaselli writes from Altamonte Springs, Fla. She can be reached at dtomaselli@cfl.rr.com.) †

life going forward? Think of opportunities we have to say to someone else, like Rick Curry did all his life, "I like you just the way you are."

Often, we need to say that to ourselves, rather than measuring ourselves by the world's standards.

You're enough. Just the way you are.

(Effie Caltarola is a wife, mom and grandmother who received her master's in pastoral ministry from Seattle University.) †

The pope has also used travel to extend a hand to other Christian communities.

His trip in 2014 to Jordan, Israel and Palestine ended with a meeting with Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians.

In 2016, Pope Francis signed a joint declaration with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow in Havana, Cuba, marking the first meeting between heads of the Catholic Church and the Moscow Orthodox Church.

Later that year, he went to Sweden to participate in a ceremony commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation with other Christian leaders.

The pope even described his most recent trip to South Sudan on Feb. 3-5 as an "ecumenical pilgrimage," which he made alongside the leaders of the worldwide Anglican Communion and the moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Even in countries where it is typical for popes to visit, Pope Francis' choice of activities can be surprising and show his desire to stay close to marginalized people.

During his apostolic visit to the United States in 2015, the pope received

a regal welcome, he met with President Barack Obama at the White House and became the first pope to address a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress. Yet immediately following the historic moment, he ate lunch with homeless people at a local parish. In Philadelphia, he visited a maximum-security prison before celebrating Mass on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Other trips have seen the pope visit refugee camps, elderly person homes and hospitals.

"He always tries to visit places where people are suffering," Torielli told CNS, "places where he can feel people's lived experiences."

As for where the pope will travel next, he will visit Hungary on April 28-30 where he will meet with government officials, refugees, academic scholars and young people in Budapest.

Pope Francis has also indicated a possible trip to Mongolia is on the horizon. Torielli noted that a papal trip to India which was previously in the works could be revived.

He added that Pope Francis' dream is to travel to one place where a predecessor, St. John Paul II, had also wanted to go but never managed: China. †

Pope marks anniversary of Russia's 'absurd, cruel' war on Ukraine

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Pope Francis asked, "Can the Lord forgive so many crimes and so much violence? He is the God of peace."

At the end of his weekly general audience on Feb. 22 and with a group of Ukrainian parliamentarians seated in the front row, the pope noted that Feb. 24 would mark "one year since the invasion of Ukraine, a year since this absurd and cruel war—a sad anniversary."

"The record of deaths, injuries, refugees and displaced people, destruction and economic and social damage speaks for itself," he said.

At every general audience and public recitation of the *Angelus* prayer for the past year, Pope Francis has asked people to join him in praying

for peace and in offering concrete assistance to the millions of Ukrainians who have sought safety abroad and for the millions of others displaced within Ukraine or struggling to survive because of the fighting.

On Feb. 22, two days before the anniversary of Russia's invasion, the pope's appeal was even more intense.

Promising that Catholics continue to be close to the "martyred Ukrainian people who continue to suffer," the pope asked, "Has everything possible been done to stop the war?"

"I appeal to all those who have authority over nations to commit themselves concretely to ending the conflict, to reaching a cease-fire and to starting peace negotiations," the pope said. "That which is built on ruins will never be a true victory." †

TOMASELLI

continued from page 12

She grimaced. She shrugged.

I returned the gestures.

"But really," I asked again. "How ... how do you do it?"

Maria leaned in.

"Every morning when I get up," she said, "I ask God to help me with the problems I'll have that day."

My head snapped to attention.

What? What kind of prayer is that?

CALDAROLA

continued from page 12

visited Philly. Jesuit Father James Martin recounts that his future confrere was taken to see it by his mom. His classmates thought the boy might experience a miracle.

But his sister said she was glad no miracle occurred, because "I like you the way you are."

How did those words affect Curry's

Employment



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Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine's historic dedication honors martyr's mission to share Jesus' love

OKLAHOMA CITY (OSV News)—Two days and eight hours after Theresa Hohenberger and Marilyn Freund climbed into a sedan in Atlantic, Iowa, they were standing among thousands of faithful waiting to join the dedication Mass of the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine in Oklahoma City.

Beginning at 5 a.m. on Feb. 17, the first pilgrims arrived to claim a spot in a line that grew throughout the morning as people arrived from across Oklahoma, the U.S., and Guatemala where Blessed Stanley Rother served in a mission before being martyred during a violent civil war in 1981. The martyr's heart is still enshrined there.

While the shrine church filled with guests, those who waited outside for a seat appreciated the warm sunshine in 30-degree temperatures. Many expressed excitement and joy at being present for an historic event for the Church in the U.S.

"He's the first American-born martyr—a blessed. It's a beautiful occasion," Hohenberger told *Sooner Catholic*, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

"We're blessed to see this," Freund added. "How often do you get to see a priest who will be a saint?"

Nearby stood Brian Stalford and other members of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Del City who contributed to the campaign to build the shrine, and the Hernandez family who watched construction of the shrine as they drove by on Interstate 35.

"I missed his beatification, and I was so upset, so this time I told my boss I'm taking off—I didn't ask! I'm just excited. It makes my heart so happy. I am already tearing up and I forgot my Kleenex!" Olivia Hernandez from Midwest City told *Sooner Catholic*.

At 10:30 a.m., the doors opened, and the line of people filled the sanctuary, which accommodated nearly everyone. More than 2,000 faithful and guests filled the church and an outdoor space that broadcasted the Mass on large screens.

Before the liturgy began, representatives responsible for building the shrine symbolically handed over the shrine church to Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, and Father Don Wolf, rector of the shrine and pastor of Sacred Heart Parish.

Once the main doors were opened, the procession began and included more than 300 participants: 37 bishops, 147 priests, 93 deacons, and 12 seminarians.

The bishops, priests and deacons filled the transepts of the church. Archbishop Emeritus Eusebius Beltran, who launched the Rother cause, and Archbishop



Oklahoma City Archbishop Paul S. Coakley blesses the congregation during the Mass and dedication of the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine in Oklahoma City on Feb. 17. Blessed Stanley is the first U.S.-born martyr formally recognized by the Church. (OSV News photo/Steve Sisney, courtesy Archdiocese of Oklahoma City)

Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, were seated in the front row. Members of the Rother family, including Blessed Stanley's birth sister, Adorers of the Blood of Christ Sister Marita Rother, sat at the front of the main pews of the sanctuary along with invited leaders and dignitaries, including Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt.

Following the blessing of the altar and sanctuary with holy water, the presentation of the lectionary, and the Mass readings in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, Archbishop Coakley spoke

in his homily about the true reason for the shrine.

"Today, we gather to dedicate a church. A church that has been built to give honor and glory to God. Yes, we honor Blessed Stanley Rother here, but none of this ultimately is about Blessed Stanley. It's not about the beautiful art and architecture that speaks so eloquently of God's goodness and mercy and beauty," he said. "We gather here to honor the God who created all of this and the God who is glorified in his saints. We honor Blessed Stanley because we are giving glory to God."

Archbishop Coakley said Blessed Stanley, "was an ordinary guy, an ordinary man from Okarche, Okla., but God chooses the ordinary.

"He was a good shepherd," the archbishop continued. "Long before Pope Francis coined the beautiful expression, Father Rother—or as he was known in Guatemala *Padre Francisco* or *Padre Aplas*—had already 'taken on the smell of his sheep,' learning the languages of his people. This man who had been asked to leave seminary because he couldn't master ecclesiastical Latin, mastered Spanish and a rather obscure and rare Mayan dialect called Tz'utujil. I wish we could submit that as a miracle!"

Archbishop Coakley used his homily to reach out to families and young men in Oklahoma and beyond who may feel called to a heroic, impactful and radical life as a priest, with Blessed Stanley's fidelity to his calling and the Holy Spirit as inspiration.

He reminded those in attendance that Blessed Stanley needs a verified miracle to be canonized.

"It is our responsibility; it's our privilege to work to make Blessed Stanley Rother better known ... to increase devotion to him. And it shouldn't be hard. The more we know about his life, [the

more] we find in Stanley Rother a very attractive figure—and so relatable—a real every man," he said.

"I hope we will bring him all of our needs, those of our families, our parishioners, and ask his heavenly intercession in the presence of God, before the throne of Christ. Ask with confidence, ask with boldness," the archbishop said. "If you need a special favor, a healing, a miracle, remember so does Blessed Stanley."

As with all dedications of churches, the shrine's altar and walls were anointed with sacred chrism oil, the altar and the church were wafted with incense, linens were placed, and candles were lit. Communion was distributed throughout the sanctuary and to those gathered outside before Archbishop Coakley inaugurated the tabernacle with a new ciborium.

At the end of Mass, most of the faithful remained to pray and to visit the chapel where Blessed Stanley is entombed. The chapel was dedicated on Feb. 13 with priests from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and the Diocese of Tulsa, Okla.

Sister Raphael Marie of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ Sisters from the Diocese of Amarillo told *Sooner Catholic* she was "moved to tears" by witnessing the dedication of the shrine and hearing "Blessed Stanley Rother's story and his love for the people.

"He's a saint of the people, a saint for modern day," she said. "It's so important to bring people into a personal relationship with Jesus and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit and that's what Blessed Stanley Rother did: he brought people the love of Jesus."

(The Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine is open to the public every day. For more information on hours and Mass times, visit rothershrine.org.) †



Oklahoma City Archbishop Paul S. Coakley poses after celebrating the Mass and dedication of the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine in Oklahoma City Feb. 17, 2023. Blessed Stanley is the first U.S.-born martyr formally recognized by the Church. (OSV News photo/Steve Sisney, courtesy Archdiocese of Oklahoma City)