



The

# Criterion

Serving the Church in Central and Southern Indiana Since 1960



New leader

Archdiocese hires director of Pro-Life and Family Life Ministries, page 3.

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## Coach's code connects with commitment of Spirit of Service award recipients

By John Shaughnessy

As Tom Crean talked about the essential connection between courage and conviction, the head coach could have been sharing a blueprint for the resurgence of his Indiana University men's basketball team during the past two years.



Tom Crean

"How do I max out my skills?" Crean said during his speech at the archdiocese's Spirit of Service

Awards dinner in Indianapolis on April 18.

"How do I get the most out of my talent? How do I get the most out of the tools that God has bestowed upon me? And how do I have the courage and conviction to understand that courage and conviction have to work together?"

"I have to have the courage to move forward. I have to have the conviction to understand I must do it," he continued. "When they work hand in hand, amazing things can happen. It's about being demanding, to allow yourself to be demanded of. I need to move full steam ahead in everything I'm doing."

Yet Crean wasn't sharing his plan for his players. He was referring to God's plan for his people.

"So many people are growing up in this day and age where they don't have that courage," Crean said. "They don't have anybody trying to put those convictions into them. Because somewhere along the way, they forgot that God put each and every one of us here. He's got a plan for each and every one of us."

Crean was the keynote speaker during the event at the Indiana Roof Ballroom that served as a fundraiser for Catholic Charities Indianapolis while honoring four individuals in the archdiocese for their service.

While applauding that commitment to

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Submitted photo/Kent Hughes



## 'In awe of God's goodness'

Transitional Deacon Doug Marcotte proclaims the Gospel during the archdiocese's annual chism Mass on March 26 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. He will be ordained to the priesthood on May 18. Seminarian Michael Keucher holds a candle at right.

## Deacon Doug Marcotte embraces opportunity to serve God as a priest in the archdiocese

(Editor's note: At 10 a.m. on May 18, three men are scheduled to be ordained priests at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis: Transitional deacons Doug Marcotte, Martin Rodriguez and John Francis Kamwendo. This week, The Criterion features a profile of Deacon Marcotte. Our next two issues will feature Deacon Rodriguez and Deacon Kamwendo.)

By John Shaughnessy

As a diehard fan of Indiana University basketball, transitional Deacon Doug Marcotte knows the importance of not backing down from taking a shot—in sports and in life.

As a huge fan of Notre Dame football and the movie *Rudy*, Deacon Marcotte also

understands the necessities of working hard to achieve a dream and having the support of people who care about you.

All those qualities have come together in Deacon Marcotte's journey to his ordination as a priest on May 18 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. It's a journey that started when he encountered an unexpected "double team" while he was a student at IU's Bloomington campus.

"It took several years for me to come around to the idea of giving seminary a shot," recalls Deacon Marcotte, 28, a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield. "My former pastor, [Benedictine] Father Severin Messick, once mentioned offhand in a homily how sad it was that there were probably many men and women who missed a religious

calling simply because they never asked God what his plan was for them.

"I prayed at Mass that day that if God wanted me to be a priest that was fine, but I thought it would be fair that other people would see that in me as well. I firmly believed that no one would think I had those gifts.

"That evening, my friend's mom, who was taking us back to IU, asked me if I had ever thought about being a priest. God certainly got my attention that night. And every time someone asked me if I had considered being a priest, I felt that God was giving me another nudge."

Those nudges have led Deacon Marcotte to a full embrace of God, life as a priest and service to the archdiocese.

"I love the archdiocese," he says.

See MARCOTTE, page 8

## College seminary honors Archbishop Emeritus Buechlein

By Sean Gallagher

Nine years ago, then-Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein established a new college seminary in Indianapolis at a time when seminaries had been closing across the country for decades.

It started in the fall of 2004 on the campus of Marian University with six seminarians. Today, Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary is housed in a former Carmelite monastery about a mile from Marian, and has more than 30 seminarians from nine dioceses across the United States.

On April 21, now Archbishop Emeritus Buechlein was honored at the seminary for the courage and foresight he showed in establishing it.

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin announced that his predecessor's name will be connected in a permanent way to the seminary's soon-to-be-completed dining hall.

"We're in the last stages of a construction [project] ... behind the main building here," Archbishop Tobin said. "I have the great honor to announce today that, when it's blessed, it's going to be blessed and named as the Archbishop Daniel Buechlein Hall."

See BUECHLEIN, page 9

Photo by Sean Gallagher



Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buechlein gives a thumbs up to the seminarians and guests who applaud him after an April 21 prayer service at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis. The retired archbishop was honored after the service for founding the seminary in 2004.

# SERVICE

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others, Crean also connected that quality to three goals he wants every player on his team to achieve before they leave Indiana University—to be problem solvers in any situation, to be selfless, and to be spiritual leaders of their homes.

“Spiritual leadership to me is being so God-centered that you don’t have to understand, you don’t have to know the person, you don’t have to have a relationship with the person, but because God puts us here, we’re there to help,” Crean said.

Each person is born with special talents, and our goal should be to help people realize those talents and move forward in their lives so they can help others do the same, Crean noted.

“It all goes back to the beginning,” he said. “We really don’t know what God’s plan is for us, but we don’t have to have the blueprint to know that God wants us to reach out and continue to help people that can’t help themselves.”

## The blueprint of Catholic Charities

Crean’s words reflect the efforts of Catholic Charities Indianapolis, according to its executive director, David Bethuram.

“Tonight, we are highlighting how our Catholic Charities programs serve disadvantaged children and youth,” Bethuram told the audience of 500 at the awards dinner. “Of the more than 44,000 people we helped last year, nearly 18,000 were under the age of 18.

“Our programs focus on building and unifying families, providing them with food, clothing and safe housing, achieving healthy social and emotional relationships, and securing education support and behavioral services that provide them the means to achieve self-reliance.”

Bethuram also noted how Catholic Charities Indianapolis has been there for people of all ages, helping them during times of hunger, job loss and homelessness.

“Most of the people we serve are not Catholic,” he said. “We consider it a joy and privilege to be here for our community in times of need.”

Providing that help was made possible by the “generosity” and “compassionate help” of Catholic Charities benefactors, staff and volunteers, Bethuram said.

## Archdiocese offering gift planning education sessions in May and June

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is hosting two identical, free continuing education sessions titled “Gift Planning to Assist Your Clients” for professional advisors including attorneys, accountants, financial advisors, life insurance representatives and anyone with an interest in the topics presented.

Attendance at either session will result in two hours of continuing education credit. Individuals should bring their professional license number(s) to the session so that participation can be submitted for credit.

The first session will be held from 9:30 a.m. to noon on May 15 at Mountjoy Chilton Medley (formerly McCauley Nicolas) in the Basement Level Conference Room, 702 North Shore Drive in Jeffersonville.

The second session will be held from 9:30 a.m. to noon on June 6 in Assembly Hall at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St. in Indianapolis.

A light lunch will be served at both sessions. The presenter at both seminars will be Phil Purcell, who currently serves as vice-president for Planned Giving and Endowment Stewardship at the Ball State University Foundation in Muncie. Purcell recently assisted with the successful completion of a \$200 million campaign, of which \$65 million in planned gifts was raised.

For registration or additional information, please contact Annie Riddick at 800-382-9836, ext. 1482, or 317-236-1482 or e-mail [ariddick@archindy.org](mailto:ariddick@archindy.org). Feel free to bring clients as well as those who may have an interest in the seminar material. †

Those qualities—generosity and compassionate help—are also evident in the recipients of this year’s Spirit of Service Awards.

Consider the young life of Amanda Rulong, who was honored by the archdiocese with the first-ever Youth Spirit of Service Award.

## ‘Becoming just like Jesus’

At 17, Amanda serves as the outreach coordinator for the student council at Bishop Chatard High School in Indianapolis. A junior, she led a canned food drive that collected 30,000 cans to benefit six agencies that help the poor—Catholic Charities, St. Vincent de Paul Society, The Food Link, Holy Family Shelter, St. Augustine Home for the Aged and Christ’s Storehouse Food Pantry.

She also spent her spring break on a mission trip to El Salvador and volunteers at the St. Vincent de Paul Society warehouse.

“Every time I serve another person, I feel I’m becoming just like Jesus,” said Amanda, the daughter of Karen Rulong and Scott Rulong, and a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. “He died for us, so we can give our time to do something nice for somebody.”

That belief has also guided Gary Ahlrichs.

He has helped a 70-year-old woman learn to read. He rides his bike to visit friends in nursing homes. He also serves as a tutor and a mentor to an 11-year-old boy whom he met through the archdiocese’s Refugee Resettlement Program.

For the past 13 years, Ahlrichs has led the men’s group from Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis in an outreach mission to make a difference in the lives of students at Padua Academy in Indianapolis (formerly St. Anthony School), a charter school operated by the archdiocese.

The father of five and the grandfather of 11 also coached sports at his parish for more than 10 years. And he has coordinated the parish’s blood drive since 1979.

“It’s all a way of showing gratitude for all the wonderful things in our lives,” Ahlrichs said. “Life has been good to us. I like to share that.”

## ‘I just love working for the Lord’

Adonis Hardin shares that same view of life through all her volunteer efforts at Holy Angels Parish in Indianapolis.



Catholic Charities Indianapolis presented four individuals with Spirit of Service Awards during an April 18 dinner in Indianapolis. Award recipients, seated from left, are Adonis Hardin and Amanda Rulong. Standing, from left, are award recipient Paul Corsaro, Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, and award recipient Gary Ahlrichs.

She works the fish fry, sings in the choir, plans the Valentine’s Day dance and coordinates the income tax preparation program for low-income families.

She also counts the Sunday collection at Holy Angels and leads the parish’s efforts to make Christmas baskets for people in need.

Hardin credits her approach of fellowship and outreach to her mother, who for years directed the choir at the parish, cleaned the church and managed the kitchen at the school. She also credits her efforts to her love of Christ.

“I just love working for the Lord,” Hardin said. “My ultimate goal is to get to heaven and serve him. The older I get, the easier I find it to open my heart to the will of God. I just try to walk the walk. I want others to see Christ in me.”

Paul Corsaro lives that approach, too. The father of six and the grandfather of 17 has shaped the lives of countless youths in more than 30 years of coaching in the Catholic Youth Organization.

He has volunteered extensively for Goodwill Industries, St. Mary’s Child Center in Indianapolis, his alma mater Saint Joseph’s College in Rensselaer, Ind., the archdiocese’s Catholic Community Foundation and Catholic Cemeteries Association, and his home parish, St. Barnabas in Indianapolis.

In recent years, Corsaro has joined with

classmates and teammates from the former Sacred Heart High School in Indianapolis to establish Hearts & Hands of Indiana, a grassroots organization that offers hope and the opportunity for a new home to low-income families in the struggling areas of Holy Trinity and St. Anthony parishes in Indianapolis.

“I want to thank God for all the blessings he has given me,” Corsaro said. “I like doing it, plus it’s our responsibility to help others.”

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin greeted and saluted the winners. He also noted that their efforts and the approach of Catholic Charities reflect a major emphasis of Pope Francis in the early stage of his leadership of the Church.

“He talked about a healthy Church and a sick Church,” Archbishop Tobin said to the Spirit of Service audience. “He said a healthy Church is a Church that forgets itself and goes out in service of the other. A sick Church is narcissistic. It turns in on itself and worries more about itself than others.”

“Catholic Charities is one of the significant ways that keeps the Archdiocese of Indianapolis healthy. So I’m grateful for Catholic Charities, the fine leadership that we have in the archdiocese, and the many, many generous volunteers who ensure that our archdiocese will be healthy.” †

## Deadline to apply for spring grants for schools, parishes and ministries is April 30

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has facilitated three grant processes—the St. Xavier Home Mission Grant, Growth and Expansion Grant and James P. Scott Grant—to serve ministries throughout the archdiocese.

The combined process makes possible the distribution of approximately \$500,000 each year in grants to parishes, schools and ministries through two processes—one in the fall and one in the spring.

The April 30th deadline for the spring grant review is quickly approaching.

For more information on how to apply for a grant for your parish, school or ministry, log on to [www.archindy.org/finance/growth.html](http://www.archindy.org/finance/growth.html) or contact Stacy Harris, director of financial analysis in the archdiocese’s Office of Finance and Administrative Services, at 800-382-9836, ext. 1535, or at 317-236-1535 or e-mail [sharris@archindy.org](mailto:sharris@archindy.org).



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# Build 'civilization of love' in response to bombings, cardinal urges

BOSTON (CNS)—Even though “the culture of death looms large” today, the light of Christ the Good Shepherd “can expel the darkness and illuminate for us a path that leads to life, to a civilization of solidarity and love,” said Boston Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley.

“I hope that the events of this past week have taught us how high the stakes are,” the cardinal told the congregation at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross on April 21, referring to the Boston Marathon bombings on April 15 and the subsequent manhunt for the perpetrators.

“We must build a civilization of love, or there will be no civilization at all,” Cardinal O’Malley said in his homily for the Fourth Sunday of Easter, which is also known as Good Shepherd Sunday. He offered the Mass for the repose of the souls of those killed in the bombings and the aftermath.

Prayers were also offered for those physically injured, and “for the brave men and women who saved countless lives as first responders.”

The attack left three people dead and more than 170 people seriously injured. By April 18, the FBI had identified two brothers who came to the United States years ago as from the Russian republic of Chechnya—Tamerlan Tsarnaev, 26, and Dzhokar Tsarnaev, 19.

The two men terrorized the Boston area overnight on April 18. While they were on the run, they fatally shot Officer Sean Collier, who was with the campus police force at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Tamerlan died after a gun battle with police, and by the evening of April 19 they apprehended Dzhokar, whom they found hiding in a boat in a backyard. He was severely wounded and as of April 23 remained hospitalized in serious condition.

In his homily, Cardinal O’Malley talked of how Jesus, before he was crucified, said: “They will strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter” (Mt 26:31).

“That is what happened to his disciples after the Crucifixion, as they scattered in fear, doubt and panic,” the cardinal said.

“On Easter, the Good Shepherd returns to gather the scattered; Mary Magdalene in grief, Thomas in doubt, Peter in betrayal,” he continued. “We too are scattered and need the assurance of the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life for us, who comes to gather us in our brokenness and pain, scattered by failed marriages, lost employment, estranged children, illness, the death of a loved one, soured relationships,

disappointments and frustrations.”

Cardinal O’Malley added, “We are all scattered by the pain and horror of the senseless violence perpetrated on Patriot’s Day.”

He recalled that April 14, the Sunday before the marathon and the Massachusetts civic holiday on which it always takes place, the priest celebrating the 11:30 a.m. Mass at the cathedral “led a special blessing for the many runners who participated in the Mass.”

A week later, the congregation included some of those injured in the attack and “those who witnessed the terrible events that unfolded at the finish line of the marathon,” Cardinal O’Malley said.

“Everyone was profoundly affected by the wanton violence and destruction inflicted upon our community by two young men unknown to all of us,” he said.

“It is very difficult to understand what was going on in the young men’s minds, what demons were operative, what ideologies or politics or the perversion of their religion. It was amazing to witness, however, how much goodness and generosity were evidenced in our community as a result of the tragic events they perpetrated,” he added.

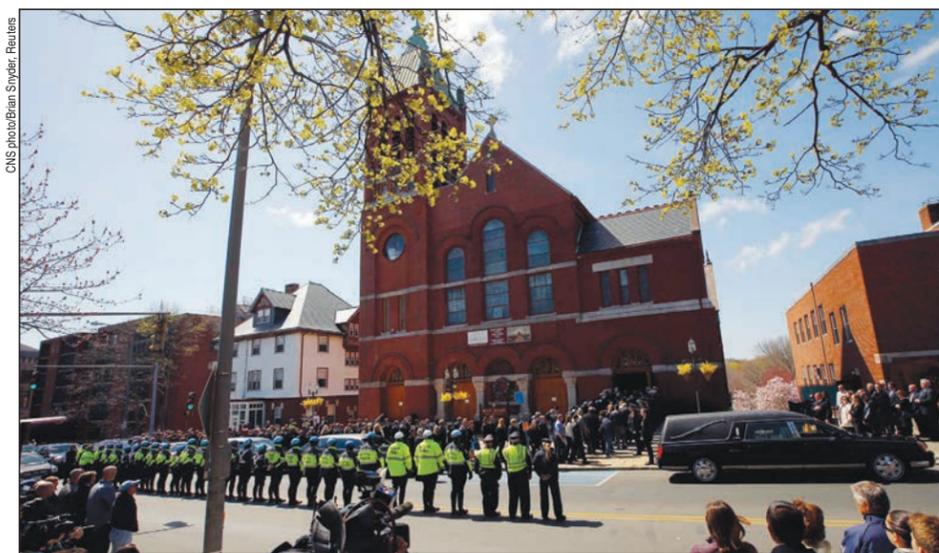
In recent days, “we have experienced a surge in civic awareness and sense of community,” Cardinal O’Malley said. “It has been inspiring to see the generous and at times heroic responses to the Patriot’s Day violence.

“Our challenge is to keep this spirit of community alive going forward. As people of faith, we must commit ourselves to the task of community building.”

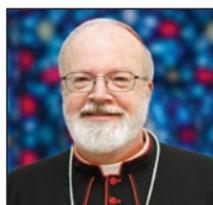
He urged his listeners to heed what Jesus teaches in the Gospel—“that we must care for each other, especially the most vulnerable; the hungry, the sick, the homeless, the foreigner; all have a special claim on our love.

“We must be a people of reconciliation, not revenge. The crimes of the two young men must not be the justification for prejudice against Muslims and against immigrants,” he emphasized. “The Gospel is the antidote to the ‘eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth’ mentality.”

After Mass, when asked about the fate of suspect Dzhokar Tsarnaev if found guilty of the bombings, Cardinal O’Malley told reporters the Catholic Church opposes the death penalty, “which I think is one further manifestation of the culture of death in our midst.”



Family and friends of Krystle Campbell file into St. Joseph Church in Medford, Mass., for her April 22 funeral Mass. Campbell was one of three people killed when two bombs exploded in the crowded streets near the finish line of the Boston Marathon on April 15, injuring more than 170 others.



*‘We must be a people of reconciliation, not revenge. The crimes of the two young men must not be the justification for prejudice against Muslims and against immigrants.’*

—Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley

In his homily, he reminded his listeners of the parable of the good Samaritan, a story, he said, “about helping one’s neighbor when that neighbor was from an enemy tribe, a foreign religion, a hostile group.

“We know so little about the two young men who perpetrated these heinous acts of violence. One said he had no friends in this country, the other said his chief interests were money and his career,” Cardinal O’Malley said. “People need to be part of a community to lead a fully human life.

“As believers, one of our tasks is to build community, to value people more than money or things, to recognize in each person a child of God, made in the image and likeness of our Creator.”

He added, “The individualism and alienation of our age has spawned a culture of death. Over a million abortions a year is one indication of how human life has been devalued. Violent entertainment, films and video games have coarsened us and made us more insensitive to the pain and suffering of others.

“The inability of the Congress to enact laws that control access to automatic weapons is emblematic of the pathology of our violent culture.”

He said, “The innocent victims who perished this week—Martin Richard, Krystle Campbell, Lu Lingzi and Officer Sean Collier—will live in eternity.

“Life is not ended, merely changed—that is the message of Easter. As [the Rev.] Martin Luther King expressed, ‘Death is a comma, not a period at the end of a sentence,’” Cardinal O’Malley said.

A private funeral Mass for Krystle Campbell, 29, was celebrated on the morning of April 22 at St. Joseph Church in Medford. At the request of the family, no media were allowed inside the church for the Mass.

An overflow crowd filled St. Ann Parish in Dorchester for the morning family Mass on April 21 to remember 8-year-old Martin Richard and pray for his family and for the other victims of the bombings and their families. †

## Italian media report progress in Blessed John Paul’s sainthood cause

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—A Vatican-convoked commission of doctors concluded a healing attributed to the intercession of Blessed John Paul II had no natural explanation, according to Italian news reports.

Eventual papal approval of the alleged miracle would clear the way for the canonization of the pope, who died on April 2, 2005, and was beatified on May 1, 2011.

Once a panel of physicians convoked by the Congregation for Saints’ Causes determines a healing is authentic and lasting, and that there is no natural, medical explanation for it, the files are passed on to a panel of theologians.

The theologians study the events—especially the prayers—surrounding the alleged miracle and give their opinion on whether the healing can be attributed to the intercession of a particular sainthood candidate.

If the theologians give a positive opinion, the cardinals who are members of the congregation vote on whether to recommend the pope recognize the healing as a miracle and set a canonization date.

The newspaper *Il Messaggero* quoted Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, as saying, “There is a widespread desire for the canonization” of Blessed John Paul, “but no date has been set. First these two formal acts [by the theologians and by the cardinals] are necessary, and then the decree of the pope about the miracle.”

In sainthood causes, the votes by the board of physicians usually are kept confidential. News about progress in causes generally is known only once a pope approves decrees related to them.

Msgr. Slawomir Oder, the postulator of Blessed John Paul’s cause, was not giving interviews in late April.

Several Italian newspapers quoted an unidentified source as saying the alleged miracle presented to the Vatican involved a woman who was healed just a few hours after the late pope was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI.

When the details are made public “many people will be surprised,” the source said.

The web-based *Vatican Insider* spoke to Polish Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz of Krakow, Blessed John Paul’s longtime secretary, about the canonization.

“It would be marvelous if it took place during the Year of Faith,” which ends in November, the cardinal was quoted as saying.

He said he hoped the ceremony could be held in October, “35 years after his election” to the papacy in 1978. †

## Archdiocese hires new director of Pro-Life and Family Life Ministries

Criterion staff report

The archdiocese has announced that Rebecca Niernerg has been appointed to the newly created position of Director of Pro-Life and Family Life Ministries. She will begin her new job on July 1.



Rebecca Niernerg

Niernerg possesses a thorough understanding of Church teaching, a wealth of experience in ministry, a deep personal commitment to the sacredness of all human life, and a passion for protecting the most vulnerable among us, said Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin.

The archdiocese recently combined the director of pro-life ministries and director of family ministries into one position. Niernerg is looking forward to the challenge of shaping and growing the new role.

Since 2010, she has served the Diocese of Austin as pastoral care coordinator in the Office of Pro-Life Activities and Chaste Living. Her responsibilities included directing and coordinating Gabriel Projects,

Project Rachel, the Pro-Life Helpline and Sidewalk Ministry.

She also served as the assistant coordinator of the Respect Life Office in the Archdiocese of New York, where she helped to organize the annual March for Life pilgrimage to Washington, D.C., and designed Respect Life resources for parishes.

Niernerg has a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a minor in community health from Eastern Illinois University. She is completing a master’s degree in theology with a concentration in moral theology from Holy Apostles Seminary and College in Cromwell, Ct. Her studies will also lead to certification from the Philadelphia-based National Catholic Bioethics Center.

“I’m very excited to be serving the people of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis,” said Niernerg. “I look forward to meeting new people and bringing ideas from Austin to Indianapolis.”

Niernerg is originally from Illinois and says she is excited about returning to the Midwest, where she will once again be close to family. †



Rev. Msgr. Raymond T. Bosler, Founding Editor, 1915 - 1994

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Greg A. Otolski, *Associate Publisher*

Mike Krokos, *Editor*  
John F. Fink, *Editor Emeritus*

## Editorial



Dominican postulant Anna Harper, a native of Baton Rouge, La., plays Pokeno with patient Harriet Boyle at Rosary Hill Home in Hawthorne, N.Y. on April 19, 2011. Aging populations and a drop in the fertility rate of countries around the world will pose numerous challenges to society in the years to come.

## Challenges await as population ages

Considerable attention has been paid recently to our aging population. In the United States, it comes up whenever there are discussions on what to do about Social Security and Medicare. When these programs were started, most people didn't live long after they retired, but now they often live for decades longer.

Meanwhile, there are fewer young people contributing to those programs, and there will be even fewer in years to come.

The problem isn't just in the United States—it's worldwide. Japan, for example, where the over-65 population is more than 30 percent, is experiencing population loss.

Not one European country is now at the fertility replacement level of 2.1 children, and the United Nations Population Division has projected a drop in Europe from 728 million people to 590 million by 2050, a population drop of 131 million people.

Then, of course, there's China. Because of its one-child policy, it could lose 20 to 30 percent of its population every generation beginning around mid-century. Also because of the one-child policy, many girl babies have been aborted so the ratio of male to female births in China is now 117 to 100. That means that many Chinese men won't be able to find women to marry unless they import them. China will age as much in one generation as Europe has in the last 100 years.

Even Latin America is experiencing a drop in population, which often happens when people no longer need large families to help do the farming or when it becomes more costly to raise children. Brazil went from a fertility rate of 6.2 in 1960 to 1.8 today and Mexico fell from 7.0 to 2.0.

People are often surprised to learn that fertility rates are quickly declining in the Middle East. Between now and 2050, the median age in Iran will rise by roughly 20 years, from 20 to 40. Similar trends are unfolding in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq and Algeria.

Africa—where the Catholic Church is growing so quickly—is the continent least marked by declining fertility. The fertility rate for sub-Saharan Africa is 5.6, and eight of the 10 nations with the highest fertility

rates are in Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa will grow by 132 percent between now and 2050, adding more than the entire present population of the United States, twice, in the next 40 years.

The United States is not going to age as much as other countries, although its fertility rate has dropped to 2.06. It had been above the 2.1 replacement mark because of immigrants who tended to have more children. The rate for Hispanics is currently 2.3, but it, too, is falling.

Hispanics also have a median age of 27 while that for whites is 40, so the Hispanic population isn't aging as quickly.

Why this is happening is hardly a secret. People are having fewer children, and they're living longer because of the advances in medicine. They're having fewer children because, for various reasons, they're choosing to have less children and have effective means to make their desire a reality. Abortion also plays a key role in the drop in the fertility rate.

Economics obviously plays a big role in couples' decisions to limit the number of their children. Rearing children can be expensive. Our society's mobility has couples often living thousands of miles from family members, so intergenerational support systems aren't what they once were.

The entire world will be affected by these demographic changes, and that includes the Church. Parishes are already seeing a higher percentage of elderly parishioners, and they should prepare to be more involved in caring for the elderly. We might see nurses working either full- or part-time in many American parishes.

Catholic Charities agencies already provide assistance to the elderly, and that will surely increase in the future. Catholic hospitals and hospices realize that a more elderly generation is coming and are preparing for it.

The aging population isn't all bad. Older people will supply a pool of volunteers that parishes will be able to count on, perhaps especially to visit those who are homebound or in hospitals, or to drive them to church.

And we might even see growth in the number of late vocations to the priesthood.

—John F. Fink

## Be Our Guest/Marcy Reuken

# Love in marriage is a choice made moment by moment every day

Posted on our bathroom mirror at home is a sign that reads "How can I show you that I love you today?"

It's hard to fully grasp that I have known my husband for more than 14 years. To some couples, this may seem like a moment in time and to a newlywed it may seem like an eternity.

I want to remember everything. I want to be able to see the moments of struggle that we manage to navigate through. I want to be lifted high in the sky by moments when we experience raw joy and passion for each other. I don't want to forget the little things we do for each other. I want to bottle up moments with our children. I don't want to forget anything.

As much as I want to remember every moment and hold on to everything, I choose to live here and now. I choose to be the best I can be in this moment right now. Our marriage covenant is now. It is in each moment that we live. It is not a particular length of time, nor is it a contract. Our covenant sustains us. It shelters us. It is life-giving. It cannot be removed from us. It joins us together as one, and we are called to share our light with the world.

Our story may have different chapters, but we are no more unique or special than the next married couple. God calls us to love each other as Christ loves the Church.

Wow! What a calling! It is no easy task. When you think about it, it is a daily choice. I experience spontaneous feelings for my husband, but love is not one of them. Love is a choice. Many people already know that. You either choose to love or you choose not to love. Love is an action. I choose to love my amazing husband each and every day because he is a gift from God. God placed him here for me, and I am blessed!

Three years ago, I would not have imagined that we would be facing the possible loss of our oldest son. Since then, we have provided help and hope to families with brain injuries. I also did not imagine that we would be experiencing our fifth pregnancy loss. I can now reach out to mothers who have suffered loss. I did not know I would be battling emotional distress. I am an example of determination for others.

Three years ago, I only imagined a wonderful and beautiful future. And I still do. You see, no matter what happens in my story, God can work through me to share his light.

Three years ago, my husband and I experienced the most amazing weekend of our lives. It was not an exotic vacation or trip. It was the gift we gave each other of a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. We gave all of ourselves to each other for one full weekend in April in Indianapolis. The weekend opened up our eyes to an amazing future in our marriage. Of course, God knew it all along. We are his clay!

God brought us to serve in marriage ministry. He has chosen us. We have seen friends and family members choose to dissolve their marriages. It truly makes my heart ache.

I know that I cannot change someone's mind, but I can offer encouragement and be an example. I choose to love because it is life giving. I know that I can do something for this world by choosing to love my husband each and every day. One couple at a time, God's love is spread through the world and through the generations.

(Marcy Renken is a member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.) †

## Letters to the Editor

### Have the courage to stand up for the truth where marriage is concerned

Homosexual marriage seems to be the hot topic these days. I think it makes sense to take a casual stroll back through the last 50-60 years to see how we've arrived at this point. The reality is that the seeds were sown back then.

Through contraceptives, the sexual revolution and no-fault divorce, this three-headed monster put this process in motion before I was even born (1974).

How sad it is when a family consisting of a mom and dad who are open to having children are in the vast minority. Oh how I wish our society saw the beauty of marriage between a husband and wife, and the sheer joy of having children and spending time with them!

Unfortunately, all of us have "blood on our hands." All of us need to repent of these sins in one form or another.

So how do we get our culture back? Have we reached the point of no return? With God, there is always hope.

My hope is that everyone out there who supports natural marriage between a man and woman pray a little more each day, love their spouse—or the Church if you live a consecrated life—a little more, spend more quality time with their children, and pick up their cross daily while focusing on living a sacramental life.

It's really not that complicated: Full surrender to God, humility, simplicity, etc. will give everyone the joy and hope we need to bring our great nation back and help us rise from the ashes of our present culture.

The reality is that this culture won't last much longer. God is a loving God, but he won't continue to be slapped in the face through our sinfulness forever. Sooner or later, he will put his foot down and say

"Enough!"

I once heard it said that having courage is when you're afraid to do what is right, but you do it anyway. Fear grips all of us. We need to have courage to do what is right and live according to God's design these days.

Dear friends, have courage. Don't be afraid to be politically incorrect. And rejoice and be glad when you do have this courage, for your reward will be great in heaven!

Matthew Evans  
Indianapolis

### Where Father Tad is concerned, 'truth is truth,' letter writer says

Father Tad Pacholczyk writes the column, "Making Sense Out of Bioethics" which appears monthly in *The Criterion*.

Covering a variety of issues pertinent to our times, he clearly and intelligently explains them in the context of our Catholic faith. Columns explaining the ethics of stem-cell research, contraceptives, *in vitro* fertilization, end-of-life decisions and, most recently, of adoption by same-sex couples, bring us truth and direction amid the murky and distorted views of popular thought.

As is evident in some of the letters to the editor, some people take great exception to Father Tad's writings and, more importantly, to the teachings of our Catholic Church.

Truth is truth, and Father Tad is the National Catholic Bioethics spokesperson chosen to bring us God's unchanging truth.

We are most blessed by his vocation of serving God in this way, and blessed to have *The Criterion* publish his columns.

Mary Casabella  
Corydon

# Damaged Texas town swarmed with assistance, prayers, reporters

WEST, Texas (CNS)—The small town of West has been flooded with donations, disaster response teams, volunteers, news media and, perhaps most importantly, prayers since an explosion at a fertilizer plant on the evening of April 17.

The explosion killed 14 people and destroyed many of the homes within five blocks of the fertilizer plant. Though not all of the names of those who died have been released, the *Waco Herald-Tribune* newspaper's accounting lists most of them as emergency responders, including volunteer fire department members.

Father Ed Karasek said the phone has not stopped ringing at Church of the Assumption Parish in West, where he has been pastor for nearly 25 years. The parish, which also has a Catholic school, St. Mary's, is about a mile from the fertilizer plant and did not suffer much damage from the explosion.

Father Karasek said he had talked to people from all over the world in the days since the tragedy.

"I have answered so many questions, but everyone is praying for us," he said.

On April 19, Austin Bishop Joe S. Vasquez visited Assumption Church for an interfaith service of remembrance for those who died. During the service, local clergy offered their reflections and their support for the victims of the tragedy. West sits on the northern edge of the Austin Diocese.

"This community has experienced a tragic event that has altered many lives," said Bishop Vasquez. "We mourn the loss of your loved ones and friends and we continue to pray for the injured.

"What we have witnessed in these days are acts of self-sacrifice and compassion. In moments such as these, we see the best of what makes us human, for these acts of sacrifice and compassion are reflections of our God who is real and present in each of us."

After the service concluded, the church leaders gave blessings and warm embraces to family members and first responders.

"It was so touching for me to be with the people of West during this sad time," Bishop Vasquez told the *Catholic Spirit*, newspaper of the Austin Diocese, after the service.

People throughout the region had personal ties to the disaster.

Peggy Pustejovsky, a member of

Assumption Parish, was at her home about three miles outside of West when the explosion occurred.

"I heard a big boom and the lights flickered, and when I looked toward town there was a huge mushroom cloud," Pustejovsky said. She immediately headed to town to help. The first place she stopped was the nursing home where her mother-in-law lives. Just before the explosion, emergency personnel who saw danger in the fire at the plant were trying to evacuate the home's residents.

"There were so many people, young and old, who were helping," she said. "We were lifting people in wheelchairs up and over debris. We knocked out what was left of the windows to lift people out on mattresses and get them out of the rubble."

As she was helping, Pustejovsky, who is director of radiology at Providence Hospital in Waco, about 20 miles away, received a call from the Catholic hospital asking all available personnel to come to work. She said she knew she could not leave what she was doing, but heard stories the next day of how all of the hospital staff was lined up to help when the busses started rolling in with injured patients.

Providence treated more than 60 of the less seriously injured from West.

"It was a miraculous coming together of staff, and within minutes of the first calls coming in, we were ready to go as a team," said Brett Esrock, the president of the hospital. It received many of those injured when the nursing home crumbled from the impact of the explosion.

Bishop Vasquez returned to West on April 21 to celebrate Mass at a filled Assumption Church.

The Austin Diocese received a fax from Pope Francis the morning after the explosion, as well as messages from Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York and other Church leaders in Texas and Louisiana. In recognition of the town's Czech roots, Cardinal Dominik Duka of Prague, Czech Republic, also sent a letter to the parish.

The letter from the Vatican said Pope Francis was saddened by the news of the destruction and conveyed "his heartfelt condolences to the civil authorities and the afflicted families. He prays for the eternal rest of the victims and implores God's blessings of



People take part in a candlelight vigil on April 18 at the Church of the Assumption in West, Texas, to remember those who lost their lives or were injured in a massive explosion at the area's fertilizer plant on April 17. The explosion near Waco, Texas, killed 12 people and injured more than 160 others.

consolation and peace upon those who mourn and all who generously aid in the continuing work of relief."

Ericka Sammon, the principal of St. Mary's Catholic School in West, said the outpouring of volunteer help and resources for the town has been amazing. She said she knows of 10 families from the school who lost their homes.

"We have had people from Dallas and from Austin who just got in their cars and drove to help," she said. "They knocked on our door and asked, 'What can we do?'"

Sammon said the town has been blessed with large amounts of donations of household goods and clothing, but that money is what would help the families that have lost homes the most.

"We want to help them with tuition and lunch fees and help them get back to normal," she said.

West has a population of about 2,800, and Assumption Parish has about

1,275 families. The 120-year-old parish has a rich Czech heritage, thanks to the Moravian and German immigrants who settled in the town in the 1870s.

The Austin Diocese asked all parishes to take up a special collection for the people of West on the weekend of April 20-21. The diocese, through the work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and Catholic Charities of Central Texas, will assist the town with long-term case management needs, including the distribution of furniture and household goods when homes are rebuilt, and counseling services.

Financial donations may be given to Catholic Charities of Central Texas at [www.ccctx.org/disaster](http://www.ccctx.org/disaster) or the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at [www.ssvdp.org](http://www.ssvdp.org). The Knights of Columbus in New Haven, Conn., announced on April 18 it was accepting donations online at [www.kofc.org/texas](http://www.kofc.org/texas) to help those in need and to supplement local efforts. †

## Various bills favored by ICC will be signed into law later this year

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

As the Indiana General Assembly nears its mandated April 29 adjournment deadline, efforts by the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) to expand school choice, enhance child safety, improve regulation of abortion and assist members of the immigrant community were among several legislative successes this year.

Indiana families with school children will gain additional access to a school voucher. House Bill 1003, authored by State Rep. Bob Behning, R-Indianapolis, includes access to a voucher for siblings of current voucher students and provides access to a voucher for children with special needs.

Students who are income-eligible can receive a voucher as early as kindergarten if the public school in which they would ordinarily be enrolled had received an "F" on its state report card. The bill increases the voucher cap for elementary school students.

"The sibling component is important because it will allow access for families who are income-eligible to have all their children in the same school building using a voucher rather than just one," said Glenn Tebbe, ICC executive director. "While the kindergarten eligibility provides another entry point for income-eligible students, it doesn't provide the school choice model that we are aiming for. We believe all parents deserve the ability to send their children to the school of their choice. A failing school should not be a requirement. There is more work to be done, and we will continue to work toward providing parents and families a wider scope of access to vouchers."

Another victory for families and children this year included the passage of a law to enhance child care safety regulations. The bill, Senate Bill 305, authored by State Sen. Travis Holdman, R-Markle, would require child care providers who receive child care vouchers for

low-income families to meet basic safety standards and provide age-appropriate learning opportunities.

Holdman learned that some child care providers in the state were registered as ministry child care providers to become exempt from safety regulations, "but were doing so in name only."

After visiting some of these providers, Holdman realized that the current law needed to address the problem. He said the religious exemption was put in place to allow churches to provide care without having to meet the same stringent requirements as other licensed centers, primarily because most ministries are providing high quality care, and have their own safety standards in place.

Another legislative success for the ICC would require regulations for chemical abortions. Chemical abortions, which commonly occur through use of the prescription drug known as RU 486, now will be held to the same regulatory standards as surgical abortion.

The proposal, Senate Bill 371, also authored by Holdman, requires facilities that dispense abortion-inducing drugs to meet the same medical standards as those that provide surgical abortions.

The proposal requires a doctor who prescribes the abortion-inducing drugs to examine the woman in person, and schedule follow-up care. It prohibits telemed practices where a doctor could use Skype to discuss options with the pregnant mother rather than an in-person exam.

The bill also proposes changes to Indiana's informed consent law for abortion to include those seeking chemical abortion. It requires a woman seeking any type of abortion to see an ultrasound and hear fetal heart tones unless she certifies in writing that she declines.

It requires the Indiana Department of Health to provide color illustrations, rather than black and white images, showing fetal development stages for abortion centers to provide to abortion clients.

The bill specifically states that an abortion-inducing drug may not be administered to a woman after nine weeks and attaches criminal charges, a Class C felony, to any doctor who dispenses the drug after nine weeks.

"Bringing this type of abortion in line with Indiana's current informed consent law could make a big impact on the women considering abortion," said Tebbe. "It is our



Glenn Tebbe

hope that more will choose life. Having an ultrasound or seeing pictures of a developing baby, which is available as part of the informed consent, may make the difference."

A bill to grant undocumented college students access to in-state college tuition crossed the finish line and will become law on July 1 before classes resume in the fall of 2013. Senate Bill 207, authored by State Sen. Jean Leising, R-Oldenburg, allows undocumented college students, who were enrolled in college when the law took effect in 2011, to receive in-state college tuition. "While it is a small victory for those who are undocumented, it will certainly help those who were negatively impacted by the law and can move forward to complete college," said Tebbe.

This year, the ICC tracked more than 150 bills having a potential impact on the dignity of the human person, and the common good for families and children.

For a full listing of ICC priority bills and details on additional legislative successes, log on to [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org) and click on "Legislative Update."

(Brigid Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion. For more information about the Indiana Catholic Conference, log on to [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org).) †

## Events Calendar

### April 26

St. Luke the Evangelist Church, 7575 Holliday Drive., E., Indianapolis. **Charismatic Mass**, praise and worship, 7 p.m., Mass, 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-846-0705.

### April 27

St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Rosary procession**, following 12:10 p.m. Mass, pray and process through the streets of downtown Indianapolis. Information: [faithful.citizen2016@gmail.com](mailto:faithful.citizen2016@gmail.com)

Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **Our Lady of Grace Academy, Class of 1963, 50-year reunion**, 3 p.m., \$15 per person. Information: 317-787-3287, ext. 3022 or [Antoinette\\_46107@yahoo.com](mailto:Antoinette_46107@yahoo.com).

Oldenburg Academy, 1 Twister Circle, Oldenburg. **"Holly's Road to Education," 5K walk/run**, registration 9 a.m., walk/run, 10 a.m., \$20 per person pre-registration, \$25 per person day of event. Information and registration: 513-382-1922 or [HBWalk2011@yahoo.com](mailto:HBWalk2011@yahoo.com).

### April 27-28

Sheraton O'Hare Airport Hotel, Chicago. **Expo 2013, Focolare Movement of the US and Canada, "Building a Renewed Humanity."** Information: 317-630-9060 or [Julie@mundellassociates.com](mailto:Julie@mundellassociates.com).

### April 28

St. Athanasius Byzantine Church, 1117 S. Blaine Ave., Indianapolis. **Knights of**

**Columbus James J. O'Brian Council 13850, brunch following Chrysostom Divine Liturgy**, 10 a.m., brunch, 11:15 a.m.-12:45 p.m., Eastern European food will be served. Information: 317-632-4157 or [saindy.com/2013/04/22/sunday-brunch-april-28-2013](http://saindy.com/2013/04/22/sunday-brunch-april-28-2013).

### April 30

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, Father Courtney Reception Room, 7575 Holliday Drive, E., Indianapolis. **"The Church Through the Ages: the Church in Modern Times: Vatican I and II with the History of the Church in the United States,"** Rick Tinkle, presenter, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 317-259-4373, ext. 256 or [dcarollo@stluke.org](mailto:dcarollo@stluke.org).

St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 4218 E. Michigan Road, Shelbyville. **"Theology of the Body and the New Evangelization" conference**, Joeline and Brian Chipps, presenters, 1:30-4:30 p.m., \$25 per person, optional lunch and meet the speakers, 12:45 p.m., \$10 per person, registration required by April 22. Information: 812-637-3347 or [bdeanery@aol.com](mailto:bdeanery@aol.com).

### May 1

Ritz Charles, 12156 N. Meridian St., Carmel. **St. Augustine Guild and Little Sister of the Poor, "Hats Off to Spring" luncheon and style show**, 11 a.m., \$40 per person. Information: 317-965-8279 or [pad041343@att.net](mailto:pad041343@att.net).

Archbishop O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**,

Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced, new members welcome, 6:30 p.m. Information: 317-370-1189.

### May 7

St. Monica Parish, Parish Ministry Center, 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. **Catholic Adult Fellowship**, "The Letters of St. Peter," presentation and discussion, no charge, for all Roman Catholics age 21 and over. Information: 317-410-4870 or [www.CatholicAdultFellowship.org](http://www.CatholicAdultFellowship.org).

### May 9

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, 14598 Oakridge Road, Carmel, Ind. (Diocese of Lafayette). **Catholic Professional Business Club**, Mass, 6:30 a.m., Tom Sponsel, managing partner Sponsel CPA Group, presenter, breakfast, reservations due May 8. Information: [cpbc-ld.org](http://cpbc-ld.org).

### May 11

St. Roch Parish, Family Life Center, 3603 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Single Seniors** meeting, 1 p.m., age 50 and over. Information: 317-784-4207.

St. Bartholomew Church, 1306 27th St., Columbus. **Concert series, "Masters of the Ivory Keys,"** 7 p.m. Information: 812-379-9353 ext. 237, or [bminut\\_stb@yahoo.com](mailto:bminut_stb@yahoo.com).

## St. John the Evangelist Parish to hold festival to raise funds for fire damage, recognize public safety officials

St. John the Evangelist Parish, 126 W. Georgia St. in Indianapolis, will hold a "Tested by Fire" Fest from 2-10 p.m. on May 4 in the parish parking lot and along the west block of Georgia Street adjacent to the Indiana Convention Center. With a tent covering the entire parking lot, the event can be enjoyed—rain or shine.

According to Father Rick Nagel, pastor of the parish, the purpose for the festival is two-fold.

The parish hopes to raise \$25,000 to paint the interior of the church, install new floor covering and raise funds for other costs not covered by the insurance settlement resulting from a fire started in the church by an arsonist on Feb. 27.

"But we also want to recognize those public safety officials who were so quick to respond," said Father Nagel.

"The firefighters were there in less than five minutes. I was barely downstairs before they showed up. The fire had already hit the choir loft. If it had been much longer, the fire would have gone through the choir loft and to the roof. So we are extremely thankful for their service and efficiency—not just the ones that helped us, but for all public safety officials."

Father Nagel sees the hand of God in the decision to hold the event on May 4.

"We were already having the Race for Vocations with the Mini-

Marathon, so it made sense to add this element to the event. We looked up the patron saint for that day, and we saw God's presence," explained Father Nagel. "The patron saint for May 4 just happens to be St. Florian—the patron saint of firefighters."

All firefighters attending the festival will receive a free drink ticket at the beer and wine garden.

Admission to the festival is free. Activities will be offered for people of all ages, including a bounce house, caricaturist and other children's activities, a corn hole competition with prize money, plus a beer and wine garden.

Mass will be celebrated at 5:30 p.m. After Mass, the Catholic band L'Angelus will take the stage outdoors.

A silent auction will be held, offering such items as time at a condo in Maui, sporting event tickets, hotel getaways, family photo sessions and more.

There will also be a reverse auction, offering the opportunity to donate toward paint, flooring and other items, including "adopting" to paint one of the 150 cherubs surrounding the perimeter of the church's ceiling.

All are invited to enjoy the fun, show appreciation for public safety officials, and to help raise money for the remediation of smoke and fire damage caused to the 145-year-old church structure.

For more information, contact the parish office at 317-635-2021. †

## National Catholic Council on Addictions offers free workshop on addiction and recovery

The National Catholic Council on Addictions (NCCA) will offer a free workshop titled "Addiction and Recovery" at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian in Indianapolis, on April 29.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. The workshop runs from 8:45 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Lunch is included.

Topics include "Spirituality and Recovery from Addictions" by Terry Sullivan; "Establishing a Parish Substance Abuse Ministry" by Deacon Bill Jones and Erik Bagenius; "The Family and Addictions" by Father Paul White; "Resources for Addicted Persons and Their Loved

Ones" by Susan Day of Fairbanks Treatment Center in Indianapolis; and "Medical Aspects of Addiction" by Dr. Melanie Margiotta of the Kolbe Center in Indianapolis.

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin will celebrate Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral across the street from the Catholic Center at 4 p.m. immediately following the workshop.

To pre-register for the workshop or for more information, call the NCCA administrative offices toll-free at 800-626-6910, ext. 1200, or e-mail [NCCA.director@GuestHouse.org](mailto:NCCA.director@GuestHouse.org) or go to [www.NCCAToday.org](http://www.NCCAToday.org) to register online. †

## 'Hope and Healing from Suicide' evening offered at St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis

St. Pius X Parish, 7200 Sarto Drive, in Indianapolis, is hosting an evening of "Hope and Healing from Suicide" from 7-9 p.m. on May 13.

The event offers an opportunity to learn about suicide from the Catholic perspective. Presentations will be given by Christine Turo-Shields, licensed clinical social worker and co-owner of Kenosis Counseling Center; Judy Proctor, mother of a suicide victim; and Father James Farrell,

pastor of St. Pius X and director of Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House. Topics include exploring mental health issues, the emotional trauma of suicide, and the Church's perspective.

There is no fee and registration is not required. Light refreshments will be served.

For information, contact Bev Hansberry at 317-257-1085 or [bhansberry@spxparish.org](mailto:bhansberry@spxparish.org). †



## Student Council

Students from Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis attended the Indiana Association of Student Councils High School and Middle Level Divisions Representative Assembly on March 12 in Indianapolis. Kneeling: Abbey Vastag and Jay Carr. Middle Row: Natalie Donlan, Mary O'Connor, Aaron Okerson, Grace Miles, Marlie Pleak and Erin Nagel. Back Row: Michael Rosswurm, Zalen Niccolini, Chris Golab (Vice President), Mallory Whitsett (President), Precious Powell, Taylor Brown (Historian), Molly Griffin (Treasurer) and Erin Gleason (Secretary). Not Pictured: Students Aliea Niccolini and Sophia Areco, and advisors Amy Moran, Emily Pusti and Ryan Moran.

### VIP



**John B. and Patricia (Kelley) Urrutia**, members of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on May 2.

The couple was married on May 2, 1953, at St. Philip Neri Church in Indianapolis.

They are the parents of five children, Theresa Hurtle, Susan Miles, Nancy Stalnaker, Michael and Thomas Urrutia. They have 14 grandchildren, and 23 great-grandchildren. They will celebrate with a family dinner on May 4. †

# Catholic Charities leaders plead for needs of poor with Congress

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The picture on Ted Bergh's cell phone showed a long line of people winding around Springfield Central Catholic School in western Ohio.

They were there on April 13 to get food, he said; 733 families, 2,378 people in all.

Bergh, CEO of Catholic Charities of Southwest Ohio based in Cincinnati, was astonished by the numbers. The agency worked with the Second Harvest Food Pantry and Catholic parishes in Springfield, northeast of Dayton,

to distribute the food in an area continuing to experience high unemployment.

The photo was the cornerstone to a series of meetings Bergh had on April 17 with congressional staffers during Catholic Charities USA's annual Hill Day. Bergh came to Washington to convince members of southwest Ohio's congressional delegation to preserve funding for important food and nutrition programs.

"Hunger is alive and well in the middle of Ohio," Bergh told Catholic News Service prior to his first appointment in the office of Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio.

At the meeting, Bergh talked about the crowd in Springfield as well as the need for immigration reform and sensible gun control. The senator's assistant, Tyler Brace, listened to Bergh's stories about agency clients and accepted handouts detailing the work of Catholic Charities across Ohio, much of it through federal grants. Brace remained noncommittal on Portman's stances.

An hour later, Bergh was at the office of House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio. He showed the same picture, told the same stories and reiterated the same concerns to legislative assistant Derrick Walter. This time Bergh invited Boehner to see the work of the food pantry, which is located in the speaker's district, and meet the people receiving assistance.

Later, Bergh met with Rep. Brad Wenstrup and Rep. Steve Chabot, both Republicans representing large parts of the Cincinnati Archdiocese. He said the meetings went well and that both representatives praised the work of Catholic Charities.

Bergh was one of 30 local Catholic Charities officials from 20 states to participate in Hill Day activities. The event allows local leaders to explain the value of their work by telling the stories of clients and to call upon members of Congress to keep the poor and marginalized a priority when they consider federal budget outlays.

Jeffrey Bialik, executive director of Catholic Charities CYO in the Archdiocese of San Francisco, described the effort to CNS as making "the invisible visible" to members of Congress.

This year's congressional visits took on a more serious tone given the widening support for social service spending cuts from congressional Democrats and Republicans and the White House.



Jeffrey Bialik

Several diocesan Catholic Charities directors told CNS some cuts are already being felt due to the sequestration, an automatic 5 percent budget cut in social services and military spending that began on March 1. Their goal this year was to avoid future funding cuts that would harm the elderly, veterans, single mothers and children.

Steve Bogus, executive director of Catholic Charities of



A staff member prepares the release and distribution of U.S. President Barack Obama's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget at the Government Printing Office in Washington on April 10. Diocesan Catholic Charities leaders visited members of Congress on April 17 to press their concerns that the needs of poor and marginalized people be a priority in upcoming budget negotiations.

Louisville, Ky., took his time with legislators to explain the challenges poor people face daily in trying to piece together their lives, often running from one social service agency to another.

"It's really a full-time job to survive when you're a poor person," he said. "A lot of people look and say people are just lazy, they've been very dependent and they just kind of milk the system. But it's very hard work to be poor."

"Most people who are on food stamps, for example, are disabled or are single moms trying to do the right thing by their kids. So they have to do something to feed their family ...," Bogus added.

He said he wanted to urge Congress to look beyond simply slashing social service spending in a time of sluggish economic recovery.

"If they're feeling pressured to redo government, then we need to find ways where government can be a catalyst," he said. "We need to get the whole community involved, including the private and business sectors as well as nonprofits."

In Montana, the needs and concerns are much the same for Rosemary Miller, who was part of the Hill Day event in earlier years.

"It's a crucial time for our social service agencies that are serving the poor and needy in Montana and every other state," said Miller, executive director of Catholic Social Services of Montana in the Helena diocese. "We really need for them [legislators] to be strong in promoting the needs of people."

Protecting Head Start and other services for children were top concerns for Miller. Such programs, she said, often prevent future social crises such as



Rosemary Miller



*'Hunger is alive and well in the middle of Ohio.'*

—Ted Bergh,  
CEO of Catholic Charities of Southwest Ohio

unemployment, homelessness and hunger.

"I'm sure they're very cognizant of those needs of the poor," she told CNS.

Laura Cassell, CEO of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Rockville Center, N.Y., brought concerns about proposals to cut housing support for families and military veterans. The agency continues to offer whatever assistance it can to residents who continue to struggle with the high cost of housing on Long Island, which has worsened in the aftermath of October's Hurricane Sandy, she said.

"In addition to folks who we were already providing some assistance to, we now have huge numbers of families, many who have never been in need, who have a very, very long road to recovery," she said.

The agency has helped 1,800 families and the case management program Catholic Charities established is expected to continue through at least 2014, Cassell said.

"When you hear representatives talk about housing, it's often affordable home ownership," she explained. "Our experience is that affordable rental is just as important. That sometimes gets lost in the conversation." †

## What was in the news on April 26, 1963? A cardinal believes that Catholics owe an apology to Orthodox Christians in the world

By Brandon A. Evans

This week, we continue to examine what was going on in the Church and the world 50 years ago as seen through the pages of *The Criterion*.

Here are some of the items found in the April 26, 1963, issue of *The Criterion*:



• **We Catholics owe Orthodox apology, cardinal declares**  
"BOSTON—Cardinal Richard Cushing said here that in the quest for Christian

unity Catholics should seek forgiveness from their Orthodox brethren for hostilities against them. The Archbishop of Boston said at a theological conference at Boston College that Eastern Christians estranged from the Holy See and those in union with it both have grievances in regard to the Catholic Church. But 'the Orthodox Christians, those not in union with the

*Holy See, our separated brethren, are our primary concern for the moment,' the cardinal said [April 16] at the two-day conference, which opened Boston College's weeklong observance of its centenary. ... 'Making all allowances for the complications of history, we must in simple honesty confess that they may hold certain things against us: neglect to help them when they were attacked by the Moslems, the pride and ruthlessness of the Crusaders, the sack of Constantinople, the assumption that Latin customs and outlooks were superior, the controversial and hostile spirit of so much Western writings—even in comparatively recent times.'*

- Ordination Day of Prayer planned
- Cardinal will address CCW luncheon Monday
- NCEA speaker: Sees more Protestants favoring 'shared-time'
- Pledges top \$233,000 for Woods campaign
- Unity talks predicted by Orthodox prelate
- Bologna cardinal: Hopes council will bring 'theology of the poor'

- Aid-to-education hearings slated
- St. Louis seeks to curb racial bias
- Dedication set for new college
- Sweeping social changes seen Latin American need
- *Pacem in Terris*—a new look at religious freedom and the State
- Father Pfau urges dual retreats for restored Catholic alcoholics
- Hutchins strongly backs aid to private schools
- CYO Songfest slated this Sunday
- Says Church art should help to 'elevate souls'
- 'Lawrence of Arabia' vaguely unsatisfying
- Pope notes dignity of farmers' work
- Marian's 'Music Man' to include cast of 80
- 'I am proud of it': President lauds peace encyclical
- 'New era of history' linked to encyclical

(Read all of these stories from our April 26, 1963, issue by logging on to our archives at [www.CriterionOnline.com](http://www.CriterionOnline.com).) †

# MARCOTTE

continued from page 1

"I truly wish to serve the people of God here."

## 'I thank God for my life'

Deacon Marcotte's favorite band is the Zac Brown Band, a country music group that has a song called "Chicken Fried" as one of its major hits. The tune is an infectious ode to the small pleasures and lasting relationships in life, including fried chicken, the sunrise, "the radio up," sweet tea, "the stars and stripes" and a mother's love. The song also includes the lyric, "I thank God for my life."

Deacon Marcotte knows that feeling. The favorite parts of his life—besides IU basketball, Notre Dame football and his relationship with God—include spending time with his family, reading about history and politics, and watching open wheel racing and stock car racing.

There's also his favorite quote: "Find your delight in the Lord who will give you your heart's desire" (Ps 37:4).

"I like that Bible verse because I think it sums up the Christian life very nicely," Deacon Marcotte says. "We are all created for eternal happiness and joy with God forever in heaven, and to be as happy as we can be in this life."

"However, we have a choice to accept what God freely offers—eternal happiness—or to try and find our delight in other worldly things which the devil tries to tempt us with."

## 'Ultimately, he is a man of prayer'

One of the favorite times in Deacon Marcotte's life was being in Rome and rushing to St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on March 13 when Pope Francis was introduced as the new spiritual leader of the Church.

Recalling how he stood among 200,000 people, Deacon Marcotte described that moment as "easily the most exciting night of my life, a time of great joy and a time to celebrate with the whole Church."

The time since then has shown him one of his favorite qualities about the new pope.

"I have been impressed with Pope Francis' focus on Jesus' message of mercy," says Deacon Marcotte, who has spent the past four years studying in Rome at the Pontifical North American College. "I believe there are many who do not know this message, and perhaps many more who have heard it but find it difficult to believe because of our own fallen nature."

Deacon Marcotte will bring his own collection of gifts to the priesthood, say family members, including his younger

brother and only sibling, transitional Deacon Dave Marcotte, who is scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood in the spring of 2014.

"Doug is a very intelligent man, one who has a great understanding of the Church and the world we live in," his brother says. "At the same time, he is very articulate. I believe that Doug will be able to do a great job through homilies, lectures and retreats of teaching the faith."

"Doug is also a people person. He really loves working with people and getting involved with the community that he is in. Ultimately, he is a man of prayer, and this serves as the foundation for all of his other great qualities. That is the sort of thing every parish needs."

## 'I am in awe of God's goodness'

As their only two children prepare for the priesthood, Bill and Irene Marcotte recall how they thought their older son was destined for a different life.

"It seems like a miracle that he's going to be a priest," his mother says. "It's something we never thought that much about. We talked about the priesthood with our sons when we talked about vocations, but we always thought Doug would be a politician. He's a very good speaker. He's very good about relating with people. And he has a passion for wanting life to be good for everybody."

Those qualities are also great for a priest, she says. And she and her husband are thrilled as his ordination nears.

"It's very gratifying," his father says. "Doug has always been fascinated with how he could change the world, or a small part of it. This is going to give him a chance to change the world. It may be in a small way, but it will be in a positive way. He's gone through all of this training, and now he'll be able to act on it. We're really thrilled for him. He's really been looking forward to it."

So have the members of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield. The parish has been in existence for 153 years, and Deacon Marcotte is believed to be the first person from the parish to become a priest, his father says.

"We've had a lot of farmers, and we've had baseball players that made it to the major leagues, but he'll be the first priest from the parish," his father says. "We used to joke with him about becoming the mayor of Greenfield someday. It's a higher calling, what he's doing."

Thoughts of his home parish lead Deacon Marcotte to remember the person who most influenced his decision to become a priest.

"Father Messick's witness of a life of joy as a priest probably did more for my vocation than any other single thing," he says about his former pastor at St. Michael



Seminarian Dave Marcotte, left, Benedictine Father Severin Messick, seminarian Doug Marcotte and the two seminarians' parents, Bill and Irene Marcotte, pose on July 19, 2009, at St. Michael Church in Greenfield. In a Mass on that day, Father Severin, at the time the pastor of the parish, blessed Doug as he prepared to leave the U.S. to enroll at the Pontifical North American College in Rome for his theological formation. Father Severin died on Sept. 28, 2011.

## Deacon Doug Marcotte

- **Age:** 28
- **Parents:** Bill and Irene Marcotte
- **Home Parish:** St. Michael Parish in Greenfield
- **Seminary:** Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad, and Pontifical North American College in Rome.
- **Hobbies:** Cheering for the men's basketball team of Indiana University and the football team of the University of Notre Dame; watching stock car racing and open-wheel racing; reading about history and politics
- **Favorite Bible verse:** "Find your delight in the Lord who will give you your heart's desire" (Ps 37:4).



Transitional Deacon Doug Marcotte, right, helps to vest his younger brother, Dave Marcotte, after Dave was ordained a transitional deacon on April 6 at Saint Meinrad Seminary in St. Meinrad. Deacon Doug Marcotte will be ordained as a priest on May 18. Deacon Dave Marcotte is scheduled to be ordained a priest in the spring of 2014.

Parish who died in 2011. "His love of God and the Church was infectious, and it drew me in. When I thought God might be calling me to the priesthood, I gave it serious thought because I saw that it was a vocation that brought him much joy."

Deacon Marcotte has a similar hope for his priesthood.

"I hope that I will be a good and holy priest, and that I will serve God and his people for many years," he says. "I also hope that when it is all said and done, people will be able to say I practiced what

I preached."

A sense of gratitude has also marked his thoughts as his ordination nears.

"I have been thinking a lot about the journey that brought me to the place that I am. I am so very thankful for all of the wonderful people God has placed in my life as well as for all the prayers I have received, many from people I have never even met."

"I am also in awe of God's goodness to me. It is amazing what saying 'yes' to God has meant for my life." †

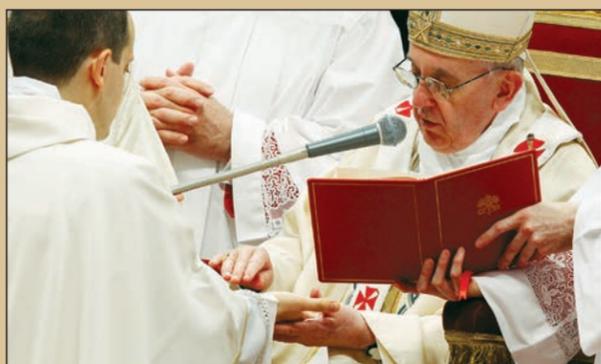
# Pope ordains new priests, talks about learning to hear Jesus' voice

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Before ordaining 10 men to the priesthood, Pope Francis prayed privately with them in the sacristy and entrusted them to Mary's care.

The private moment on April 21 was a repeat of a practice he began as bishop before celebrating an ordination Mass, according to Vatican Radio.

The 10 new priests—six Italians, two Indians, a Croatian and an Argentine—had prepared for the priesthood in one of three Rome diocesan seminaries.

Pope Francis' homily, the Vatican said, was basically the text suggested for ordinations by the Italian bishops' conference, although Pope Francis added personal remarks and observations as he delivered it.



CNS photo/Paul Haring

Pope Francis anoints one of the 10 priests he ordained in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on April 21.

He told the new priests they would have "the sacred duty of teaching in the name of Christ the teacher. Impart to everyone the word of God which you have received with joy."

The pope, who frequently mentions the wisdom and lessons he learned from his grandmother, told the men, "Remember your mothers, your grandmothers, your catechists, who gave you the word of God, the faith—the gift of faith."

"Meditating on the law of the Lord, see that you believe what you read, that you teach what you believe and that you practice what you teach," he said. "Remember, too," he added, "that the word of God is not your property. It is the word of God. And the Church is the custodian of the word of God."

In looking at the pastoral and sacramental ministry the men will be called to carry out, Pope Francis told them to "never tire of being merciful" in gathering people into the Church through baptism and forgiving sins in the name of Christ and the Church.

"You will comfort the sick and the elderly with holy oil," he said. "Do not hesitate to show tenderness toward the elderly."

Pope Francis told the new priests to remember they are chosen from among the faithful, and "appointed on their behalf for those things that pertain to God. Therefore, carry out the ministry of Christ the priest with constant joy and genuine love, attending not to your own concerns, but to those of Jesus Christ."

"You are pastors, not functionaries," he told them. "Be mediators, not intermediaries."

The ordinations are traditionally part of the pope's celebration of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, which takes place on the fourth Sunday of Easter each year when the Gospel reading presents Jesus as the good shepherd.

Reciting the "Regina Coeli" prayer at midday with tens of thousands of people in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis said the day's Gospel reading says the sheep hear Jesus' voice and follow him. "This is a beautiful parable."

"The mystery of the voice is striking. From the time we are in our mother's womb, we learn to recognize her voice and that of our dad," he said. "From the tone of a voice we can perceive love or contempt, affection or coldness."

"The voice of Jesus is unique," Pope Francis said. "If we learn to distinguish it, he will guide us on the path of life, a path that leads us even beyond the abyss of death."

The pope asked young people to listen carefully for Jesus' voice and to ask for help in discerning his call, his plan for their lives, and then have the courage to follow him.

A group of young people in the square began chanting the pope's name in Italian—"Francesco."

"Thank you very much for the greeting," he said. "But greet Jesus, too. Shout 'Jesus, Jesus' loudly." †

# BUECHLEIN

continued from page 1

In addition to the new dining hall, a new dormitory that will feature 10 double occupancy rooms is being constructed at the seminary. Both additions are expected to be completed during the summer in time for the start of the fall semester.

The announcement took place on what is known as Good Shepherd Sunday, which the Church also observes as the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

“As we honor Archbishop Daniel, we also honor and pray for vocations, that the Lord would continue to send laborers into his harvest, because there are people who are hungry for the word of God, people who are dying for the bread of life,” Archbishop Tobin said. “We don’t just need priests. We need good priests, priests that are after the heart of Jesus, the eternal shepherd.”

Archbishop Buechlein was honored after a mid-afternoon prayer service in the seminary’s recently expanded chapel. Also in attendance were Benedictine Archabbot Justin DuVall, the seminarians, faculty from Marian University and other supporters of the seminary.

In remarks afterward, Archbishop Buechlein recalled with emotion how Father Patrick Beidelman, the seminary’s vice rector, has said “that divine providence is written all over this place.”

“He had it right,” Archbishop Buechlein said.

He later recalled how he blessed the seminary in 2008 after it moved into the former Carmelite monastery, and prayed at the time that it would become a “school of prayer.”

“The ultimate justification for this seminary is that it is a house of prayer,” Archbishop Emeritus Buechlein said. “I visited here several times, and I’ve been so edified to be part of adoration. I watched how you guys are so calm about it. ... That really impressed me.”

Archbishop Buechlein later exhorted the seminarians to continue to grow in their life of prayer.

“I often say that the first duty of a priest, as the first duty of a bishop, is to be a man of prayer,” he said. “That’s so important. Everything else is secondary. Out of prayer blossoms the goodness of the faith and the love of God. And we learn that in intimacy of prayer with Jesus.”

Sitting in the front row listening to Archbishop Buechlein was seminarian Timothy DeCrane, a junior at the seminary and a member of Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove.

“It left tears in my eyes,” DeCrane said. “It was very emotional for me. I was very thankful that he was able to come all the way back from Saint Meinrad.”

Archbishop Buechlein suffered a stroke when DeCrane was a freshman in 2011.

“Seeing the dignity and prayerfulness and the way he approached his illness was very admirable and definitely left a mark on me as a seminarian,” DeCrane said. “He showed [me] how to encounter things like that.”

As DeCrane has walked the halls at the seminary over the past three years and spent time in prayer in its chapel, he has constantly been reminded of Archbishop Buechlein and Father Robert Robeson, who has led the seminary as its rector since its founding in 2004.

“It’s humbling being in the building that [Archbishop Buechlein] really helped to create,” DeCrane said. “He and Father Bob helped to create the seminary. It’s changed me in the past three years that I’ve been here, in so many different ways. I’m so appreciative of him for that.”

The fact that Archbishop Buechlein chose to establish the seminary to help seminarians like DeCrane is remarkable for Father Robeson.

“... It was an idea that had wisdom, but also kind of went against the current of what was going on at the time,”



Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, left, and Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buechlein join together on April 21 in blessing the seminarians of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis and other guests who attended a prayer service in the seminary’s chapel.



Seminarians Timothy DeCrane, left, Joshua Miller and William Jansen sing a hymn during an April 21 prayer service at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis. DeCrane, a junior, is a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Miller and Jansen are sophomores and are, respectively, seminarians for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the Diocese of Springfield, Ill.



Seminarian Anthony Cecil of the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky., left, and Father Robert Robeson, rector of Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary present a gift to Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buechlein on April 21 in the Indianapolis seminary’s chapel.

Father Robeson said. “Nobody was establishing new seminaries. ... And many, many seminaries had been closed [over the previous decades].”

At the same time, Father Robeson was, like DeCrane, grateful to Archbishop Buechlein for founding the seminary and

appointing him as its rector.

“I look back on my ministry here and every single day I thank God for what a beautiful, awesome experience it’s been,” Father Robeson said. “I thank God for the young men whose lives I’ve been privileged to be a part of. And I thank God for what

he has established here through Archbishop Buechlein and through the efforts of our seminarians and seminary formation staff.”

(For more information on Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis, log on to [www.archindy.org/bsb](http://www.archindy.org/bsb).) †

## Bishops: Immigration bill on right track, some changes sought

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Without getting into specifics, a panel of bishops said on April 22 that a comprehensive immigration bill introduced the week before is on the right track, though they alluded to some aspects they would like changed.

In a teleconference about the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, or S. 744, Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York also said the fact that the men believed by police to be the Boston Marathon bombers were immigrants is “a terribly unjust and completely irrational argument” for suggesting immigration reform shouldn’t happen.

About the same time as the teleconference, the Senate held its second hearing on the bill, with tempers flaring among Judiciary Committee members over comments by some senators linking the bombings with the immigration legislation.

Cardinal Dolan, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), said the connection is flawed for several reasons. First, he said, it’s “illogical, unfair and unjust” to label an entire class of hardworking



Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan

people because of the actions of a few. Second, he said, “good, solid, fair immigration reform” would make enforcement of immigration laws easier because there would be better records of who the immigrants already here are.

“We’ve been through this before,” said the cardinal. “When the Irish came, there were people who said, ‘We can’t let those Irish in because of those Molly Maguires.’” He explained

that the Molly Maguires were “a tiny minority of Irish who did resort to violence.” The Molly Maguires were a secret society that operated in Ireland and the United States, and were linked to a string of violent acts in the 19th century.

“What a travesty it would have been,” to deny immigration to other Irish because of a small minority, said Cardinal Dolan, adding that the angle seems to have arisen because opponents of comprehensive immigration reform “will seize on anything.”

Among concerns with the bill raised by Cardinal Dolan and two other bishops on the teleconference were:

- That the requirements for undocumented immigrants to participate in a path to citizenship will leave many behind, said Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Migration. He said the period of time the bill sets out for immigrants who are in the country illegally to get green cards and naturalize—13 years—is too lengthy and the cutoff date for arrival—on Dec. 31, 2011—“leaves too many behind.”

- The bill would end a system by which U.S. citizens may petition to bring in certain family members, including siblings.



Archbishop Jose H. Gomez

- It includes requirements for certain border security goals to be met before provisions allowing people to legalize their status can kick in. Salt Lake City Bishop John C. Wester, chairman of the Committee on Communications, said 10 years of ramped-up attention to border security hasn’t stemmed the tide of immigrants.

Enforcement-only approaches “don’t work if they’re not balanced by humane policies,” said

Bishop Wester.

• The root causes of migration should be included in the bill. “When are we going to address the push factors, people escaping poverty?” asked Bishop Wester. He said attention must be paid to helping people stay in their home countries if they so choose.

Bishop Wester said the way to ensure a good immigration reform bill passes is to “get the human story out.

“Lots of folks intentionally give wrong and bad information,” said Bishop Wester, saying facts get skewed “to foment passion and discord.” Much anti-immigrant sentiment is grounded in fear, he added, and that fear is “is put there by people who have an agenda.”

Cardinal Dolan, whose academic background is in American history, said there have often been spasms of anti-immigrant fervor in the United States, which “at its roots, very often, is anti-Catholic vitriol.”

He said he sees parallels between historic anti-Catholicism and anti-Muslim sentiment today. Cardinal Dolan said he recently met with some New York Muslim leaders who wanted to learn from the Catholic story of assimilation.

“They were sincere in asking,” he said, “tell us how you did it. How did [Catholics] become respected as reliable American citizens without losing the elements of their faith?”

Cardinal Dolan said Catholics should be called upon to keep their antennae up for prejudices against others that mirror the struggles Catholics have historically faced. †



Bishop John C. Wester

# Grand jury report likens Gosnell's clinic to a 'baby charnel house'

WASHINGTON (CNS)—When a team of health officials and investigators looking into illegal drug use raided Dr. Kermit Gosnell's Women's Medical Society on Feb. 18, 2010, they happened upon what many are calling a "house of horrors."

"There was blood on the floor. A stench of urine filled the air. A flea-infested cat was wandering through the facility, and there were cat feces on the stairs," said a grand jury report about the conditions found in the clinic Gosnell ran in West Philadelphia.

The two surgical rooms resembled a "bad gas station restroom," according to Agent Stephen Dougherty of the federal Drug Enforcement Agency. The team went on to recover the remains of 45 fetuses "in bags, milk jugs, orange juice cartons, and even in cat-food containers," the report explained.

Three days later, the Pennsylvania Department of Health suspended Gosnell's license. He was arrested in January 2011 and charged with seven counts of infanticide and one count of murder in the case of a Nepalese woman who died during an abortion.

Gosnell's trial on those charges began March 18 of this year. By the fifth week, beginning April 15, prosecutors were continuing to call witnesses, including several patients and several former employees, who testified about the squalid conditions they saw at the clinic. Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty against Gosnell.

Several pro-life leaders in interviews with Catholic News Service or in statements emailed to CNS discussed the Gosnell case and the attention it brings to what they said are deplorable conditions all too common at abortion clinics.

It was a "meat-market-style of assembly lines of abortions," Mallory Quigley, a spokeswoman for the Susan B. Anthony List, said on April 15, referencing the words of two nurses who recently left a Delaware clinic for similar reasons. "The Gosnell case is a lot more common than people realize," Quigley said.

Jeanne Monahan, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund, said that "Americans as a whole think that abortion clinics are sanitary decent clinics," but the "majority of abortion clinics in our country are held to very minimal standards—legally the same standards as beauty parlors and vet clinics."

According to Pennsylvania Department of Health spokeswoman Kait Gillis, because of "tougher regulation and new leadership, today, abortion facilities are being held accountable to higher standards



*'As long as these clinics enjoy such privileges—privileges no health department would ever grant to any hospital—we will never know how many Kermit Gosnells are out there. And every time we find the next one, it will be too late.'*

—Lila Rose, president of Live Action

to better protect the health and safety of women."

"We have a far deeper understanding of these facilities now than we did then [when Gosnell's abuses were uncovered] and conduct regular annual and unannounced inspections, not only because the law tells us to, but because we are committed to doing what is right," she said.

While Pennsylvania's Abortion Control Act prohibits some forms of abortion, not all clinics performing ambulatory surgical procedures at the time of Gosnell's arrest in 2011 were subject to the same standards of care for women.

The state's Abortion Facilities Control Act that came into effect late that year now holds abortion clinics to the same standards of health and safety as other outpatient clinics, such as eye care or urgent care facilities.

"Prior to the passage of this legislation, it was clear that the law favored the abortion industry—not women's health, as is so often claimed," the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference said in a statement on the law.

State law requires that abortions be done under 24 weeks of pregnancy because of the risks to the mother, but the grand jury report showed Gosnell routinely flouted that law. "The bigger the baby, the more he charged," it said.

He is accused of sticking a pair of medical scissors into the back of the necks of prematurely born babies and cutting the spinal cord, a procedure he called "snipping." Court records show he destroyed most of the documentation on his use of "snipping," but pictures taken by employees and other evidence are being used by prosecutors.

"Over the years, many people came to know that something was going on here. But no one put a stop to it," the report explained. The clinic went unchecked by the Department of Health for 16 years until its horrors were accidentally uncovered by the drug raid.

Several employees face similar charges. The grand jury report said Gosnell hired



Dr. Kermit Gosnell



Kristan Hawkins



Jeanne Monahan



Mallory Quigley

untrained, uncertified nurses, and taught them to view ultrasound pictures at an angle so that unborn babies to be aborted looked smaller than they actually were. It also said Gosnell and his wife performed late-term abortions on Sundays when no other staff was present.

In an April 16 statement Dayle Steinberg, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania, said that Gosnell "is a criminal who preyed upon vulnerable women, and committed illegal acts."

"As health care providers who work every day to protect women's health and safety, we are outraged by his criminal behavior and hope he is held accountable," she continued. "All health care providers must be regulated, and these regulations should be based on health care needs—not on politics."

"Planned Parenthood insists on the highest standards of patient care and has rigorous safety guidelines in place," Steinberg added.

Lila Rose, president of Live Action, told CNS in an e-mailed statement that "as long as these clinics enjoy such privileges—privileges no health department would ever grant to any hospital—we will never know how many Kermit Gosnells are out there. And every time we find the next one, it will be too late."

Rose, a 24-year-old Catholic convert, officially became involved with the abortion cause at 15 when she founded Live Action, a pro-life nonprofit

specializing in investigative journalism. Since then, she has received national recognition for her hidden-camera exposes of the Planned Parenthood abortion industry, which she calls "reckless [and] unregulated."

Kristan Hawkins, executive director of Students for Life of America, said that "just because abortion is legal doesn't make it safe."

Said Quigley, "Abortion doesn't help women." She explained that the pro-life movement operates more than 3,000 pregnancy resource centers for mothers and families in need, offering them assistance so they do not feel abortion is their only alternative.

"Those are the places we need to be building up," she said, noting that more than 90 percent of the funding for such centers is private.

While Monahan acknowledged the Gosnell case is a somewhat extreme case, she said that it highlights the violence of the abortion procedure, which she describes as being "deeply invasive" to the woman. She said it also shines a light on what she termed is the sad reality of the abortion business.

"There is no constitutional right to maim and kill women and girls nationwide," said Kristi Hamrick, spokeswoman for Americans United for Life. "One woman's death is too many. ... The mere existence of protective laws is not enough. State officials must also consistently enforce these laws." †

## Pope: God is real, concrete person, not mysterious, intangible mist

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Christian faith teaches that God is a real, concrete person, not some intangible essence or esoteric mist like "god-spray," Pope Francis said.

In his homily on April 18 at an early morning Mass in the chapel of his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae, Pope Francis said many people say they believe in God, but what kind of God do they believe in exactly?

God is a real person—a father—and faith springs forth from a tangible experience of an encounter with him, the pope told his listeners. The congregation was made up of members of the Inspectorate for Public Security at the Vatican—a special unit of the Italian police that provides security and law enforcement in St. Peter's Square, and guarantees and coordinates all armed escorts for the pope when he leaves the Vatican.

"We believe in God who is Father, who is Son, who is Holy Spirit," Pope Francis said.

"We believe in persons, and when we talk to God we speak with persons" who are concrete and tangible, not some misty,

diffused god-like "god-spray," that's a little bit everywhere but who knows what it is."

This faith in the real presence of Jesus is a gift from God himself, the pope said, and when he gives this gift of faith "we must continue on this path," rejoicing.

"However, if we take this path, it is always with our own baggage—because we're all sinners and we always have some things that aren't right. But the Lord forgives us if we ask for forgiveness," he said.

Referring to the day's reading from the Acts of the Apostles when Philip preached the word to a traveling officer of the queen's court, the pope highlighted the experience of the worldly officer who hears the Good News, is baptized and "continued on his way rejoicing."

The pope said it is important people never get discouraged, but keep pressing on like the officer so the same encounter "will happen to us."

The officer's joy is "the joy of faith, the joy of having met Jesus, the joy that only Jesus can give us, the joy that gives peace, not what the world gives, but what Jesus gives," he said. †

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## Christianity views leadership as founded on service

By David Gibson

Leaders come in many forms. They may be parents or government heads, parish pastors, factory supervisors, university professors or military commanders.

Leaders, for better or worse, are people whose influence is felt by others.

Many leaders exert influence through the powerful example they set. There are leaders, too, who are gifted at expressing their strengths in ways that strengthen those around them. Still other leaders are self-focused, slighting the contributions of others.

No doubt, most of us connect power of some type with leadership positions. The recently elected Pope Francis said as much on March 19 during the Mass for the formal inauguration of his pontificate.

“We are celebrating the beginning of the ministry of the new bishop of Rome, the successor of Peter, which also involves a certain power,” he told the huge crowd gathered in St. Peter’s Square. Then he posed this thought-provoking question:

“Certainly, Jesus Christ conferred power upon Peter. But what sort of power was it?”

Pope Francis asked his listeners never to forget that “authentic power is service.” In exercising power, he said, the pope “must be inspired by the lowly, concrete and faithful service that marked St. Joseph,” protector of Mary, Jesus and the Church. The inaugural Mass was celebrated on the solemnity of St. Joseph.

The new pope said he, like this saint, “must open his arms to protect all of God’s people and embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, ... the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison.”

St. Joseph’s example is that of “a strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love,” said Pope Francis.

He added, “We must not be afraid of goodness, of tenderness!”

Because St. Joseph “is able to hear God’s voice,” he “is all the more sensitive to the persons entrusted to his safekeeping,” Pope Francis commented. St. Joseph, he suggested, is someone who:

- “Can look at things realistically.”
- “Is in touch with his surroundings.”
- “Can make truly wise decisions.”

Pope Francis asked all who hold responsible positions in economic, political and social life, and “all men and women of good will,” to protect creation, as well as God’s “plan inscribed in nature,” and to protect one another. He cautioned everyone against forgetting “that hatred, envy and pride defile our lives!”

Throughout his inaugural homily, Pope Francis hinted at his understanding of leadership, not only for him



Pope Francis washes the foot of a prison inmate during the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper at Rome’s Casal del Marmo prison for minors on March 28. During the Mass on March 19 that inaugurated his ministry as leader of the universal Church, the pontiff noted that “authentic power is service.”

but for many types of leaders. He offered, I suppose, a countercultural view of leadership.

Bishop William S. Skylstad suggested in a 2007 speech to the U.S. Catholic bishops that understandings and misunderstandings of leadership represent “one of the great challenges to our society and culture” today. The now-retired bishop of Spokane, Wash., spoke at the conclusion of his term as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

A “conception of leadership” found “in certain circles” views it “not as a service to the common good, but as a means to victory and dominance,” he commented.

Can leaders ever grasp their roles with crystal clarity? Maybe not. Leadership requires the balancing of seemingly contradictory demands.

For example, leaders need to be communicators, able to articulate a vision clearly. But leaders also need to listen, respect others and welcome their contributions.

Leaders work alongside others. Yet leaders need to inspire others and facilitate mature responses on everyone’s part to difficult situations.

Today’s leaders continually grow into their roles. Faced

with the always new circumstances that characterize contemporary society, leaders are forced repeatedly to reassess their roles and how they exercise them.

With his astonishing choice of a name, Pope Francis revealed that St. Francis of Assisi, a peacemaking man who loved simplicity, the poor and all creation, inspires him as a leader.

Can the medieval saint’s example inspire other leaders in diverse fields? Perhaps a question to think through is: What do the Christian qualities of healing, peacemaking, love or concern for those suffering poverties of any kind have to do with leadership?

More than 30 years ago, when he was San Francisco’s archbishop, Archbishop John R. Quinn spoke of St. Francis as “the one saint whom all succeeding generations have agreed to canonize.”

The archbishop said St. Francis “represents for every age a life-giver and healer”—someone who, because he was “at peace with God ... was a maker of peace.”

(David Gibson served on Catholic News Service’s editorial staff for 37 years.) †

## Jesus taught that good leaders are called to be servants of others

By Fr. Lawrence Mick

I wrote this article the day after the election of Pope Francis, so I naturally thought of him when I began to think about the idea of leadership.

It is too soon, of course, to know how he will lead us as pope, but the history of Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the archbishop of Buenos Aires, and the impressions he



In this file photo, Pope Benedict XVI shakes hands with volunteers during a visit to the Caritas homeless center in Rome on Feb. 14, 2010. Following the example of Christ, the Church promotes a model of leadership based on service to those in need.

made in his first appearance after his election give us some hints.

He has been described as a man who is not interested in personal honors, and he lived a very simple lifestyle as archbishop—living in a small apartment, cooking his own meals and taking the bus or subway to work. Taking the name of Francis, after St. Francis of Assisi, gives us a glimpse of the kind of leader that he hopes to be.

This seems in keeping with Jesus’ teaching to his disciples about exercising authority:

“You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mk 10:42-45).

Servant leadership is not a simple model to exercise. It does not mean abandoning all use of power and authority because those are precisely the gifts that leaders need to get anything done. But how that power is used and how authority is exercised can vary tremendously.

It may be that the key question is one of motivation. Why is the leader making the decision or exercising his or her power? Is it truly for the sake of others and for the

common good? Is the leader being the servant of others or acting in his or her self-interest?

Jesus himself stands as the model of servant leadership. He used his power to heal people of various maladies. He used his authority to teach and to confront the religious leaders of his time. But never did he use his power or his authority for his interest. He always used them for the sake of others.

A good leader uses whatever power and authority is entrusted to him or her to serve the common good.

This is true of good leaders in government and good leaders in business. It is true of good leaders in the Church and good leaders in community organizations.

It also applies on a smaller scale, for leadership is needed in every home and family. Parents should be servant leaders for their children, and older children can be servant leaders for younger siblings.

All those who follow Christ Jesus are called to be servants, and most of us are called to be leaders at various times in our lives.

When we are called to lead, we should do so as servants, imitating our leader, who came not to be served but to serve.

(Father Lawrence Mick is a priest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.) †

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

## Year of Faith: Relativism and conscience

The day before he was elected Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Joseph



Ratzinger spoke out against what he called a new “dictatorship of relativism” that has pervaded society. It was interesting to see the secular media try to define relativism, none very accurately.

Basically, relativism is the belief that there is no such thing as absolute truth, that truth is relative. What is true for you might not be true for me. We see the results of such a philosophy in our society’s embrace of tolerance.

Harvey Cox taught Harvard undergraduates a course in “Jesus as a moral teacher” for about 20 years. In his book *When Jesus Came to Harvard*, Cox says that, in his discussions with his students, he soon learned that the virtue his students valued most was tolerance. They loathed being looked upon as judgmental.

They were, he said, “benevolent but uncomfortable relativists.” However,

he wrote, “I was glad they were coming to realize that a nation with 250 million separate moral codes is an impossibility, and a world with six billion individuals each doing his or her own thing would become unlivable.”

Blessed John Paul II condemned relativism often, including in his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (“The Splendor of Truth”) that he issued in 1993. The third sentence of that encyclical said, “People are constantly tempted by Satan to exchange ‘the truth about God for a lie’ (Rom 1:25), giving themselves over to relativism and skepticism.”

The encyclical called everyone to “act in accordance with the judgment of conscience.” However, it said, as Pope John Paul also had said in his encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* (“Lord and Giver of Life”), “conscience does not establish the law; it bears witness to the authority of the natural law” and, “in order to have a ‘good conscience’ one must seek the truth and make one’s judgments accordingly” (#60).

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, by the way, devotes 27 paragraphs (#1776-#1802) to the conscience,

including the formation of conscience, which, it says, “is a lifelong task.”

Unfortunately, too many people today have a mistaken idea of the role of conscience. It has come to mean the freedom to act as one thinks best, each person choosing his or her own ideas of morality: “If it feels good to me, it must be OK.” This is almost synonymous with relativism.

Blessed John Henry Newman wrote often about the role of conscience. For him, conscience meant much more than a person’s preference or the right to reject a teaching of the Church.

In his *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, he wrote, “Conscience is not a long-sighted selfishness, nor a desire to be consistent with oneself; but it is a messenger from him who, both in nature and grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by his representatives.”

A well-formed conscience is difficult to achieve. If we find ourselves at odds with the Church over some matter, our obligation is to form our conscience in conformity with the Church as the most reliable authority on matters of faith and morals. †

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

## It’s the chase, plus the goal, that counts in life

Setting goals has always interested me. For some reason, if I plan ahead for something, it gives me a focus I seem to need to feel that my life is on a trajectory to the future.



When I was a kid, this involved things like learning another level on the multiplication tables, or selling X amount

of Girl Scout cookies to meet the troop’s expectations. In fact, many of my goals then included winning approval from teachers and mentors, and even from other kids.

Getting good grades in school was one of my priorities, because I loved learning and there was never a lack of new things to find out about (still true). It pleased me to be a “good girl,” following the rules and obeying adults.

Later I learned to establish goals that pleased me alone, and if they made others happy and didn’t harm them, so much the better. Maybe we’d call that maturity. Whatever it is, it’s been keeping me afloat.

One of my early goals was to marry a

doctor and have four sons. (I’d been reading *Little Men*. I don’t know where the “doctor” came from). As it happened, I married an engineer and had five sons, plus the bonus of a wonderful daughter. So much for that goal.

Another thing I aimed for was to travel to New York City and to Europe. At the time, New York City seemed to me to be the center of the civilized universe and Europe the same, only on a larger scale. Later I fulfilled those goals and enjoyed them, but in the end I came to believe as Dorothy did in *The Wizard of Oz*, that “there’s no place like home.”

That’s the thing about goals—they change over time. When we’re young, our goals may be romantic or unrealistic, often unattainable and maybe even undesirable. We may or may not achieve them, but we learn from the pursuit of them. We find out that we need to adapt them to the realities of who we are, where we are, and all the other factors in our lives. That’s maturity, too.

Not that the goals we set later are so much better, they’re just different. We abandon the ideas of becoming chief engineer, or bishop, or president of our union, and settle for completing our work every day in the best way that we can. We

give up what I once called “sentimental motherhood” for the satisfaction of dealing efficiently with tantrums and diapers.

We give up trying to transform our spouse into Price Charming or the Prom Queen, and settle cheerfully for the person we married. We remember the real attractions they presented to us, not only of passion, but also of humor and stability, kindness and loving support. Having said that, I must admit it’s not a requirement that our spouse be good-looking, but it doesn’t hurt, either.

Now we have less responsibility but more time to focus on enjoying “grands” and “greats” as we never could when raising our kids. Now we can enjoy relating to our parishioner friends without the stress of running the parish plant or keeping within diocesan expectations. Now we can enjoy the love of friends and the professional successes we’ve earned.

In other words, now we may enjoy the fruits of our vocations in life. Now our goals will be realized, as part of that larger goal we all look forward to.

(Cynthia Dewes, a member of St. Paul the Apostle in Greencastle, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Emmaus Walk/Debra Tomaselli

## Do you hear what I hear? ‘God loves you, and so do I’

“God loves you, and so do I.”

That was Grandma Peg’s tagline. She wrote it in every communication. I can still envision her cursive handwriting, complete with loops and scrolls.



“God loves you, and so do I.”

She penned that on birthday cards, holiday greetings and gift tags.

Once, when flowers arrived with a card that simply read, “God loves you, and so do I,” we knew Grandma Peg sent them.

Peg was my stepmother. She married Dad, who was widowed, when my husband and I were juggling our first baby. Instantly, Peg became grandma. Although we lived states away, she began teaching invaluable lessons.

Faith was our connection. We attended Mass and prayed together. But Grandma Peg brought holiness to a new level. She was the first person to “pray over” me, although I nearly cringed at the thought. She introduced me to prayer meetings and charismatic music.

During our visits, I’d awake to find her

sitting in a chair, reading her Bible and praying. That image was captivating. For those precious moments, she seemed to be in another world, a very peaceful place.

Once Grandma Peg and I were in the kitchen when she reached for something to write on, which happened to be a grocery receipt.

“Sometimes, things just come to me,” she said. She scribbled a few lines and handed it to me.

“My children,” it said. “I bring you my love. Remain steadfast. Walk with me. Trust me. Obey me. Believe me. Love me. I am your Lord God.”

Another time, we were chatting when she arose, dug through her purse, wrote a check and handed it to me. I tried to resist, but she insisted.

“I just felt like God was asking me to do that,” she said.

I wonder if she knew the money was a lifeline at that particular time.

Dad died, but she remained a central figure in our lives. We continued to receive letters, flowers and cards from her with the enduring message, “God loves you, and so do I.” Eventually, I began writing it in my correspondences back to her.

In fact, I found myself following in her footsteps. I’d start my day reading the Bible and praying. When her health declined, I’d quote Scripture to encourage her. In her darkest moments, I’d pray right over the phone with her.

Within hours of her death, I arranged flights and made plans to attend her funeral. Days later, I flew home and returned to work.

That’s when the enormity of the loss hit. I felt overwhelmed by sadness. In my sorrow, I longed for a connection to her.

The afternoon passed slowly. At closing time, I wiped my tears and shut the computer down. As was our custom, I hugged my co-worker Michelle goodbye.

As we embraced, Michelle, knowing I’d had a difficult day, spoke.

“I wanted to tell you something my mama always used to say,” she said.

Then, unbeknownst to her, Michelle delivered a message straight from the heart of Grandma Peg. It was balm for my sorrowing soul.

“God loves you, and so do I.”

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

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

## Time flies when you’re being obedient

Time supposedly flies when you’re having fun.

That may be the case. But, according to my 5-year-old son Victor, time flies when you’re being obedient. That was the long and the short of what he’s told me from time to time when at bedtime I’ve asked him to come to the bathroom so I could brush his teeth.



He’ll come trotting

back and want me to get done as quickly as I can so that he can get the last moments of play out of his day. But I guess that I’ve told him enough times that he’ll be able to go back to playing faster if he obeys me right away at teeth brushing time. So now he’ll sometimes say to me with a big smile on his face as he arrives in the bathroom, “How can we get done quickly? By obeying Daddy!”

I hope Victor holds on to this sentiment as he grows up. It’s not because I want things a bit easier for me—although that would be a nice side effect. But in these three short words, Victor has summed up the recipe for happiness in life.

As long as we’re doing the will of our heavenly Father—our ultimate Daddy—and embrace it with as much gusto as Victor welcomes teeth brushing time, then there’s nothing that can shake the peaceful happiness that God wants to plant firmly in our hearts.

The great medieval Italian poet Dante Alighieri wrote in his *Divine Comedy* that “in his will,” that is, God’s will, “is our peace.”

I think we can all agree with Dante in theory. But when the rubber hits the road, we would probably tend to question his wisdom. How often is God’s will in our lives clear for us, and we simply don’t want to do it?

Being a dutiful spouse or parent can be hard when we’re tired, when it seems to us that too many demands are being made of us, or if we just want to do our own thing for a while. The difficulty of doing God’s will in the case of our state in life can become especially challenging, say, when we’re called out of love to care for a spouse or child who suffers from severe physical or developmental disabilities.

But Dante’s words—and those of Victor, too—are vindicated when we cooperate with God’s grace and allow all of its transforming power to shape a new understanding of peace and happiness in our hearts and minds.

This happens as we enter more and more into the life of grace—the very life of Jesus found in the Gospels that we embody by the power of God in our daily lives. When this happens, we’ll realize in a deeply profound and concrete way that happiness and peace come through giving of ourselves in loving service to others, not in grasping after power for ourselves, even if it might only be power over the use of time in our daily lives.

When in our daily lives we go against the inclinations of our whims and passions and make choices to advance the peace and happiness of other people around us, then the peace and happiness of God will grow in our hearts and reveal the world’s version of the same to be the cheap imitations that they are.

On the surface, it may seem to others that peace and happiness are far away from us since we may work long, hard hours in caring for our friends or loved ones. But if we, in the midst of this service, truly open ourselves to God’s grace, then we are living on a much higher plane than the two-dimensional existence that this world apart from God has to offer.

Who knew that such wisdom could come from a 5-year-old’s mouth? I pray that someday I can make Victor’s wisdom my own. †

Fifth Sunday of Easter/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 28, 2013

- Acts of the Apostles 14:21b-27;
- Revelation 21:1-5a;
- John 13:31-33a, 34-35

Once again in this Easter season, the Acts of the Apostles supplies the first reading for the Mass. It reports some of the missionary activities of Paul and Barnabas. Although eventually they parted ways, the pair visited several prominent cities in Asia Minor, the Roman Empire of the first century.

While ancient traditions see all the Apostles as missionaries, most of whom went far and wide to proclaim the Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles concentrates on Paul's efforts in missionizing.

The reading is more than a travelogue. It is a lesson about the faith of Paul and Barnabas, and about their uncompromising determination to make Jesus known. It also reveals the conditions in which these two great figures in early Christianity lived.

As they spoke to Christians in the cities that they visited, they warned these followers of Christ that hostility and difficulties, faced them. Their warnings sprang from their own personal experiences. Paul and Barnabas themselves met opposition and endured difficulties.

It is not surprising that these two great champions of the Gospel faced hardships. The culture of the Roman Empire was absolutely hostile to the values of the Gospel. The political order was becoming hostile as well.

Nevertheless, Paul and Barnabas were undaunted. They continued to move from city to city, from local Church to local Church, to reassure believers in Christ and to promote Gospel values. Despite the risks, and the more than occasional rejections, their faith inspired them and impelled them.

For the second reading, the Church this weekend offers a passage from the Book of Revelation. This book, the last book of the New Testament in the translations and

versions that have been used for centuries, is highly poetic and symbolic. It is moving and strikingly beautiful in its imagery very often, but often its symbolism is so involved, or so unique to the first century, that understanding the book is not easy without reading scholarly commentaries along with the text itself.

In this reading, the vision is of heaven, symbolized by the holy city of Jerusalem, but a transformed Jerusalem, and of God. It is a look into eternity and to the reward promised to those who love God.

St. John's Gospel is the source of the last reading. This is not a Resurrection narrative, but it is strongly reminiscent of the Resurrection, and of the Lord's death on Calvary.

Jesus obliquely refers to the crucifixion. He also refers to rising from the dead. Eternal life is an option for humans who follow the Lord in obedience to God, in sacrifice and in faith. With Jesus, the faithful will die but also rise to eternal life.

## Reflection

A month ago the Church called us, with joy and the deepest faith, to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus after the terrible event of the crucifixion.

Gradually, but unrelentingly, the Church has called upon us personally to respond to Jesus, to bond ourselves with the salvation brought to humanity by Jesus.

This weekend's readings proclaim the sacrificial death as well as the rising of Jesus from the dead, but they also call upon us to respond by following the Lord.

As the second reading from Revelation declares, eternal life with God in heaven will be our reward.

While still in this life, we authentically become disciples by loving God, each other, and all people, as Jesus loved. In this divine love, Jesus died on Calvary as a sacrifice. In God's plan, divine love triumphed when Jesus rose.

We are not alone in our effort to be with God, to love as Jesus loved. The Apostles are with us in their successors, successors to early bishops such as Barnabas, who still guide us and strengthen us in the Church. †



## Daily Readings

### Monday, April 29

St. Catherine of Siena, virgin and doctor of the Church  
Acts 14:5-18  
Psalm 115:1-5, 15-16  
John 14:21-26

### Tuesday, April 30

St. Pius V, pope  
Acts 14:19-28  
Psalm 145:10-13ab, 21  
John 14:27-31a

### Wednesday, May 1

St. Joseph the Worker  
Acts 15:1-6  
Psalm 122:1-5  
John 15:1-8

### Thursday, May 2

St. Athanasius, bishop and doctor of the Church  
Acts 15:7-21  
Psalm 96:1-3, 10  
John 15:9-11

### Friday, May 3

St. Philip, Apostle  
St. James, Apostle  
1 Corinthians 15:1-8  
Psalm 19:2-5  
John 14:6-14

### Saturday, May 4

Acts 16:1-10  
Psalm 100:2, 3, 5  
John 15:18-21

### Sunday, May 5

Sixth Sunday of Easter  
Acts 15:1-2, 22-29  
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8  
Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23  
John 14:23-29

## Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

### A pall is placed on a casket at a funeral as a sign of the deceased person's baptism

**Q**I have noticed that the casket of a veteran is no longer draped with an American flag at the funeral Mass. Why not? The service of these men and women helps provide the freedom of worship that



we all enjoy. Why does the Church no longer honor that? (Daly City, Calif.)

**A**The Order of Christian Funerals says in #132 that "any national flags or the flags or insignia of associations to

which the deceased belonged are to be removed from the coffin at the entrance to the church."

The guidelines of most dioceses provide that the flag is then replaced by the pall, a large white cloth draped over the coffin as a symbol of the person's baptism. Surely no disrespect for the flag or the nation of the deceased is intended. Instead, the pall represents the fact that all are equal in the sight of God and that, as St. Paul pointed out in his Letter to the Philippians (Phil 3:20), our primary citizenship is in heaven.

At the end of the funeral Mass, the pall is removed and the flag can be placed back on the casket before it is carried from the church. Often, at the cemetery, military honors are then accorded to the deceased. A bugler might play "Taps." Sometimes, there is a gun salute and a military honor guard carefully removes the flag from the casket, folds it respectfully and presents it to the next of kin with comforting words from a grateful nation.

The Church, of course, is worldwide and must set policy to cover many contingencies. Besides indicating the primacy of the spiritual and the baptism of the deceased, using the pall rather than a national flag for a funeral Mass avoids the awkwardness of a situation where the Church might not agree with the moral stance of a particular nation.

In World War II Germany, for example, the use of a Nazi flag during a funeral Mass could have been seen as an endorsement of the Nazi party and the German war effort, when, in fact, the Church opposed both.

**Q**My son, who is 20 years old, has left the Catholic religion for a Bible-based faith. We have had many lively discussions which we both enjoy, and it has actually helped to reinvigorate my own Catholic beliefs. There is one of his questions,

though, which I'm not sure how to answer. He wants to know, if the death of Jesus paid in full for the sins of all believers past, present and future, why would God punish someone if they fail to go to confession? (Chesapeake, Va.)

**A**I was caught short by your first sentence. You seem to concede that your own Catholic religion is not a "Bible-based faith." There's no need to do that. Instead, explain to your son that Catholicism is built on twin pillars—called technically, "modes of revelation"—namely Scripture and tradition.

A Catholic does believe in the Bible, and is guided by the teachings of Jesus found therein. But Catholics also believe that authentic teaching from God did not end with the Ascension of Jesus. It also continued through the Apostles, who were inspired by the Holy Spirit in preserving and expounding upon the Gospel.

Their successors, including today's bishops, continue to spread the Gospel and defend its teachings through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, although this is not part of revelation.

As to your specific question about confession, Catholics believe, in reliance on St. John's Gospel, that on the first Easter Sunday evening, the risen Jesus appeared to the Apostles and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them; whose sins you retain are retained" (Jn 20:22-23). That is the biblical foundation for the confession of sins to a priest, a practice that took root early in the history of the Church.

So while it is true that the pardon for our sins is based on the merits of Christ's death and resurrection, that pardon is transmitted to individual Catholics through the sacrament of penance, or reconciliation.

The Church holds that one must seek absolution from a priest for any mortal sins (i.e., grievous actions or omissions done with knowledge and full consent), and encourages us to go to confession for lesser offenses also, as a means of making steady progress on the way to holiness.

For a non-Catholic who does not have the sacrament of penance available, we can believe that God has figured out a way to forgive that person, too, presuming the proper dispositions of sorrow and purpose of amendment.

But I sure think that it's a real plus to be a Catholic and to have the comfort of hearing the priest say on behalf of Christ, "I absolve you of your sins in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." †

## My Journey to God

### For A Child Born in April

By Linda Abner

Overnight  
The colors came  
Bathed in the glow of Spring.  
Where before was muted silence;  
Grey, still expectation,  
Is now a wonderment of beauty  
And symphony of light and sound.  
Birds rejoice  
Trees bud  
The sun makes glad,  
Hearts wearied with shadow.

Overnight  
You came.  
We waited,  
God answered.  
And though all the Heavens sing  
With the chorus of nature,  
Yours is the sweetest sound;  
Though all the flowers burst triumphant  
And brilliant from their hidden beds,  
You  
Are the most beautiful bloom of all.

(Linda Abner is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis. In this file photo, a father admires his newborn son in Chesapeake Beach, Md.)



CNS photo/Bob Rolier

# 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.

**BERTRAND, Ann Elizabeth (Wilburn)**, 92, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, April 9. Mother of Donald, Johnny and Vaughn Wilburn. Stepmother of Sister of Charity Paul Colette, Clara Mayfield and Frank Bertrand.

**CLARK, Josephine**, 99, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), March 21. Mother of Paula McAfee. Sister of Dorothy Gladdis. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of five.

**DONAHUE, Norma Ruth**, 81, St. Anne, New Castle, April 14. Mother of Karen Moses, Frank and Sean Donahue. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 11.

**ENNEKING, Edna M.**, 90, St. Louis, Batesville, April 10. Mother of Helen Kramer, Donna Kraus, Marilyn Weberding, Patti Weberding, Daniel, James, Richard and Ronald Enneking. Grandmother of 25. Great-grandmother of 63.

**FARMER, Cleo Carl**, 93, St. Anne, New Castle, April 8. Father of Randy Farmer. Brother of Thais Harry and Norbert Farmer. Grandfather of two.

**GEHRING, George M.**, 96, St. Mary, New Albany, April 4. Father of Judy Criner and Martin Gehring. Brother of Dorothy Daugherty. Grandfather of five. Great-grandfather of seven.

**HANAGAN, Judith Katherine**, 76, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, April 5. Mother of Tracy Corbett, Audrey Staats and Daniel Hart. Stepmother of Audrey, Deborah, David and Steven Hanagan. Grandmother of five. Step-grandmother of three.

**HOLLEN, Charles**, 88, Holy Family, New Albany, March 29. Husband of Mary

Hollen. Father of Ginny Gilezan, Ken and Terry Hollen. Brother of Beverly Hollen. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of two.

**HONEYCUTT, Thomas**, 38, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, March 30. Father of Justin and Tayler Wilkerson-Honeycutt. Brother of Clayton and Clinton Honeycutt.

**HUGHES, Anna Jean**, 91, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, April 6. Wife of Edward Hughes. Mother of Bob and Jim Hughes. Sister of William O'Brien. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of nine.

**HUTT, Louis C.**, 92, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville, April 3. Husband of Norma Hutt. Father of Michael and Robert Hutt. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of five.

**JERGER, Eileen C.**, 78, St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, March 30. Mother of Daniel and Kenneth Jerger. Sister of Virginia Wilde, George, James and Joseph Scanlon. Grandmother of one.

**KINNEN, Ruth Ethel**, 94, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, March 24. Mother of Pamela, Luanne and Charles Kinnen. Sister of Paul Zende. Grandmother of three. Great-grandmother of one.

**LANTIS, Lucile Cordelia (Joly)**, 82, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Indianapolis, April 10. Mother of Kathryn and Patricia Lantis and Frank Figley. Grandmother of one. Great-grandmother of one.

**LUKEN, Mary Ann**, 84, St. Mary, Greensburg, April 9. Mother of Linda Reiger, Bill, Jim, Mike and Tom Luken. Sister of Marjorie Fisse and Jean Scheidler. Grandmother of 16. Great-grandmother of 16.

**MARTIN-PHILLIPS, Marilyn**, 64, St. Paul, Sellersburg, April 2. Daughter of Vera Martin. Sister of Carol Miller, William Martin and Marc Phillips.

**MAUER, Mildred A.**, 93, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), April 5. Aunt of several.

**MCCABE, Richard A.**, 72, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, April 10. Husband of Helenmarie McCabe. Father



## Papal prayer

A girl holds a banner with an image of Pope Francis before the "Regina Coeli" (Queen of Heaven) prayer delivered by Pope Francis from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on April 15.

of Christine, Michael and Scot McCabe. Grandfather of five.

**McINTYRE, Gilbert Lee**, 86, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, April 8. Husband of Evelyn McIntyre.

**MEYER, Victor J.**, 89, St. Mary-of-the-Rock, St. Mary-of-the-Rock, April 14. Husband of Marie Meyer. Father of Eileen Duff, Susan Everage, Grace Schneider, Yvonne Schneider, Carolyn Sorber, Mary Louise, Dennis, Eugene, Gary, Jerome, Joe, John and Roy Meyer. Grandfather of 33. Great-grandfather of 13.

**MUCKERHEIDE, Alicia Marie**, 36, St. Maurice, Napoleon, March 8. Wife of Danny Muckerheide. Mother of Evyn, Kellan, Sebastyn and Teryn Muckerheide. Daughter of Dale and Maudie Herbert.

Sister of Linda Wise, Allen, Charles, Michael and Roger Herbert.

**NASH, Carol J.**, 67, St. Pius X, Indianapolis, April 10. Wife of Pat Nash. Mother of Betsy Leavitt, Julie Stevenson, Michael and Steve Nash. Sister of Bill and Bob Beckstedt. Grandmother of 11.

**NAUERT, Karen Lee (Osborne)**, 47, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, April 7. Wife of Christopher Nauert. Mother of Rachelle Killion, Kelly, Christopher L. and Christopher N. Nauert. Daughter of Regina Osborne. Sister of Kathy Briley, Jeanne Foster, Patty Osborne, Janie Sullivan, David, John and Steve Osborne. Grandmother of four.

**RIPBERGER, James E.**, 85, St. Gabriel, Connorsville,

April 8. Husband of Rita Ripberger. Father of Harold and Herbert Ripberger, Loren, Scott and Steven Haynes. Brother of Marilyn Anderson, Pat Boughner, Phyllis Glaub, Carolyn Hall, Joyce Houseworth, Charles, David, Donald and Robert Ripberger. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of 10.

**SMITH, Mary Dorothy**, 94, Christ the King, Indianapolis, April 3. Mother of Daniel, David and Dr. James Smith. Sister of Don and George Norris. Grandmother of six.

**WURTZ, Rosemary**, 86, St. Anthony of Padua, Morris, April 6. Mother of Kathy Back, Connie Napier, Renee Simon, Jane Wood and Tim Wurtz. Sister of Leo and Thomas Merkel. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of five.

**ZIMMER, Carl Bernard**, 83, St. John the Baptist, Dover, April 4. Husband of Rose Zimmer. Father of Pam Ammer, Mary Schier, Angie Turner, Susan, Charlie, John and Paul Zimmer. Brother of Betty Sizemore. Grandfather of six.

**ZINS, Thomas C.**, 55, Holy Family, Oldenburg, April 5. Father of Sarah Zins. Son of Howard Zins and Ruth Doolan. Brother of Mary Bergman, Judy Franzen, Carol Roell, Patty, Therese, Jerry and Mike Zins.

**ZUBERER, Margaret E. (Sappenfield)**, 90, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, April 6. Mother of David, Robert and Thomas Sappenfield. Sister of Marilyn Gettelfinger. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of four. †

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# Battle with the devil: Pope Francis frames the fight in Jesuit terms

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—In the teaching of Pope Francis, the devil has a more dastardly agenda than just convincing people to break one of the Ten Commandments. “The enemy” wants them to feel weak, worthless and always ready to complain or gossip.

In his first month in office, Pope Francis continually preached about God’s love and mercy, but he also frequently mentioned the devil and that sly dog’s glee when people take their eyes off of Jesus and focus only on what’s going wrong around them.

In the book *On Heaven and Earth*, originally published in Spanish in 2010, then-Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, said, “I believe that the devil exists,” and “his greatest achievement in these times has been to make us believe he doesn’t exist.

“His fruits are always destruction—division, hate and slander,” he said in the book.

As pope, his comments about the evil one reflect pastoral knowledge of the temptations and injustices oppressing people, but they also echo the Ignatian spirituality that formed him as a Jesuit, said one of his confreres, U.S. Jesuit Father Gerald Blaszcak, secretary for the service of faith at the Society of Jesus’ headquarters in Rome.

“Francis comes from a tradition—the Jesuit tradition—where the presence of the evil spirit or ‘the enemy of our human nature’ is mentioned frequently,” Father Blaszcak said.

In almost all his homilies, the Jesuit said, Pope Francis talks about “the battle” people face between following the crucified and risen Christ and “falling prey to negativity, cynicism, disappointment, sadness, lethargy”—and the temptation of the “dark joy” of gossiping or complaining about others.

In the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, who founded the Jesuits, and in his *Rules for the Discernment of Spirits*, sowing pessimism and despair “is the M.O. of ‘the enemy,’” Father Blaszcak said.

St. Ignatius believed making progress in following Christ gives birth to a sense of peace and harmony, even in the face of challenges, he said. The enemy doesn’t like that and tries to disrupt it, particularly by tempting Christians to focus all their attention on themselves and their problems—real or perceived—and to doubt whether they really are or even can be capable of following the Lord.

“In these many homilies that Pope Francis has given in which he’s warning people to avoid discouragement, to seize hope, to move on with courage and not to fall

prey to negativity or cynicism, he’s drawing on this fundamental insight of St. Ignatius,” he said.

The Jesuit’s explanation of “the enemy” in Ignatian spirituality can be seen in several of the statements the pope has made about the devil, including:

- At his weekly general audience on April 17, the pope spoke about Jesus being always near, ready to defend and forgive. “He defends us from the insidiousness of the devil, he defends us from ourselves, from our sins,” the pope said. “He always forgives us, he is our advocate. ... We must never forget this.”

- At a meeting with cardinals on March 15, the pope spoke about how the Holy Spirit unifies and harmonizes the Church. “Let us never yield to pessimism, to that bitterness that the devil offers us every day,” the pope said. Rather, be certain that the Spirit gives the Church “the courage to persevere.”

- In his homily on Palm Sunday, Pope Francis said: “A Christian can never be sad. Never give way to discouragement.” Christian joy comes from knowing Jesus is near, even in times of trial when problems seem insurmountable. “In this moment, the enemy—the devil—comes, often disguised as an angel and slyly speaks his word to us.”

Father Blaszcak said the idea that the devil might disguise himself as an angel also fits with the teaching of St. Ignatius, who said “the enemy” often tries to corrupt generally positive inclinations and attractions—including the desires for love or accomplishment and an attraction to beauty—to create despair or “disordinate attachments” that destroy interior peace and end up moving a person’s focus away from loving and serving God alone.

In Ignatius’ teaching, and in the teaching of Pope Francis, “there is an edginess,” a seriousness about “the campaign, the opposition of the evil one,” and about the strength and grace people need to resist, and to make the right decisions, he said. People must discern where God is calling them, and following that call requires courage and “a willingness to accept suffering and rejection.”

Ignatius “never gets away from the cross, which means there is nothing fluffy about this. It will involve putting yourself in situations of difficulty and strain. There’s a continual call to align ourselves with the cause of Jesus, the cause of the kingdom,” the Jesuit said.

The founder of the Jesuits was convinced, he said, that “it would be the evil one who would try to dissuade us, who would say: ‘That’s silly. That can’t be done. You’re not good enough. You couldn’t be called to that. You don’t



Pope Francis leads his general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on April 17, one of several occasions on which he mentioned the devil.

have what it takes. You don’t have the goods to make a difference in building the kingdom.’”

On the other hand, Father Blaszcak said, Pope Francis—like Ignatius—would say that what God tells people is: “Yes, you are weak. I know who you are, and I call each one of you to lend your talents and energy, commitment, love and gifts to the cause of the kingdom.”

It’s not that Pope Francis has been focusing on the power of the devil, he said, but temptations are the realistic flip side to the heart of the pope’s message about “the world that is replete with the mercy and presence and fidelity of God.” †

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# Rwandan genocide survivor becomes American citizen

WASHINGTON (CNS)—At the end of a process that has taken her 15 years to complete, world-renowned Rwandan genocide survivor and peace advocate Immaculee Ilibagiza became an American citizen on the morning of April 17 in New York City.

“I was completely in tears,” she told Catholic News Service in a phone interview on April 18. “To be accepted in this country ... was like receiving a gift. ... I hear my father saying, ‘now you have the right to be here, you don’t have to worry.’”

An estimated 800,000 people—including most members of her family—were brutally murdered during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In the early stages of the conflict, Ilibagiza was sent to hide with a member of another tribe at the behest of her father.

“I am here today ... because my father had trust in the man from that tribe,” she told an audience of 50 other immigrants who received their citizenship at the same ceremony.

A Catholic, the then-college student endured 91 days hiding in a bathroom from the “killers” who were looking for her.

In her book *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*, she wrote: “They were ... right on the other side of the wall. Less than an inch of plaster and wood separated us. Their footsteps shook the house, and I could hear their machetes and spears scraping along the walls. In the chaos, I recognized the voice of a family friend. ‘I have killed 399 cockroaches,’ he boasted. ‘Immaculee will make 400.’”

As she sat down at the citizenship ceremony, the memories of the genocide came drifting back, but it was as if the war had finally ended, Ilibagiza told CNS, noting, “It was like a victory.”

She looks forward to reading more about the history of the United States, especially the struggles to uphold the values on which it was founded.

“It’s not about how America has changed. It’s more [about] the foundation of America,” she said.

“This country has God on their money. ‘What, who does that?’” she asked, expressing amazement at the religious freedom in America.

“When I first came here, everybody seemed foreign. People looked [different], and so I [was] still looking for [the actual] Americans,” she said. “It was beautiful” to see this country embrace every nationality, she said.

After escaping the genocide, Ilibagiza went back to the jail cell of the killer who had shouted out her name while only inches from her hiding spot. As he sat in front of her, she reached out to touch his hands and said, “I forgive you.”

“I believe in love no matter what,” she said. “True love comes from loving others.”

Many people in America do not think suffering is a part of life, she said. “People take a drug or a drink so they do not feel.

“[But] nobody lives in this world without going through pain,” she added, challenging Americans to find solace by meditating on the suffering of Jesus on the cross.

“Jesus went on the cross to take the maximum of what man can go through in this world to show us, ‘I love you this much,’ and ‘you matter this much,’” Ilibagiza said.

“You accept your pain, look at it in the face, don’t avoid it, but ask for help,” she said.

A popular speaker now, she travels the world telling her story of peace, love and forgiveness to all she meets.

“Please, in a small way, be a builder of peace,” she said.

Her latest book, *The Rosary: the Prayer that Saved My Life*, will hit the bookshelves in August. †



Rwandan genocide survivor Immaculee Ilibagiza has become an American citizen. A best-selling author, Ilibagiza has given talks around the country about the 1994 slaughter in her home country and how her Catholic faith and trust in God helped her survive. She is seen in a 2012 photo at the papal villa in Castel Gandolfo, Italy.



## ‘Pope Day’

Nathaniel Akroush, dressed as Pope Francis, makes his way through the halls of Everest Academy in Lemont, Ill., as the school marks its annual “Pope Day” on April 19. Students at the Catholic academy learned about the pope and what he does as spiritual leader. They also chose a peer to represent the pontiff, basing their selection on character, spirituality and dedication to serving others.

# Student pro-life leader says she ‘won’t be bystander’ on abortion issue

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (CNS)—Reagan Nielsen isn’t afraid of being screamed at, threatened or despised for her beliefs.

The college junior, who grew up in Monument, and is receiving national attention for her pro-life work, said she is used to it.

“It helps when you know that you are on the right side of things and have God on your side and you know you are doing the right thing,” she said. “I’m standing there with my fellow people who are pro-life, and I know that I am a soldier in this fight for life. I get an adrenaline rush from it.”

Reagan’s father was in the military, and the family moved a lot when she was a child. At one time, they lived in Monument and, while attending Mass at St. Peter Church, she first heard the word referred to as the “A-word.” Her mom explained the word “abortion” to her later that day.

“I didn’t totally understand it, but it was still traumatizing to hear about,” she told *The Colorado Catholic Herald*, newspaper of the Colorado Springs Diocese.

When she was older, she became more traumatized when she saw pictures of post-abortive babies. From then on, she made it her mission to work to end abortion.

In high school in South Dakota, she became actively involved in pro-life activities and started to receive training on how to be active in the movement. After high school, her parents, Pete and Carla Nielsen, returned to Monument and now attend Our Lady of the Pines Parish in Black Forest. Nielsen started school at the University of Missouri—nicknamed “Mizzou”—majoring in journalism.

When Nielsen went to the school, she was disappointed that there wasn’t an active pro-life student organization. She immediately set out to start one herself. She was able to quickly set one up with the help of Students for Life, a national organization which supports pro-life student groups.

In just a few months, the Mizzou group was formed, and membership swelled to more than 100 students. They decided their first event should garner attention, and they invited the Genocide Awareness Project to the campus. The group displays huge billboards with images

of aborted babies.

They got the recognition they wanted, but the event angered many people on campus—a reaction she expected. She said she had professors walk up to her and call her a disgrace to women. The student newspaper published a piece that “bashed us,” she said.

Next on their agenda, the group invited Catelynn Lowell and Tyler Baltierra from MTV’s “16 and Pregnant” to talk to the campus. The couple became pregnant and put their baby up for adoption and now often speak to pro-life groups. More than 750 people showed up to hear the couple talk, Nielsen said. In mid-March, they put up clothes lines in the middle of campus displaying 370 baby onesies to represent the estimated 3,700 babies aborted a day in the United States.

“Hopefully it [was] a visual thing for people to see,” she said. “It’s not so graphic, and it gets the point across.”

All of that work was recognized by the National Students for Life organization at its annual conference in January. There, the Mizzou chapter was named “Best New Chapter.”

Brendan O’Morchoe, director of field operations for the organization, said the chapter won the annual award because of its immediate influence on the campus.

“They really kicked it off big,” he said. “They made a big impact right away on their campus. They are doing a lot of campus activism.”

Along with the chapter, Nielsen, too, has made herself known to national pro-life leaders. She was recently chosen as one of a small handful of students to take part in its Students for Life of America Wilberforce Leadership Fellowship. The program, O’Morchoe said, selects the top pro-life student-leaders in the U.S. and mentors them to eventually become leaders in the national movement.

“Reagan is a great leader,” O’Morchoe said. “She has been really effective on her campus and has been a great example for other leaders across the county.”

Nielsen said the recognition is nice, but it is not why she works as hard as she does.

“People just don’t want to talk about this. They just want to hide under the covers,” she said. “It’s happening. It’s part of our generation, and I won’t be a bystander and let it happen.” †