



The

# Criterion

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## Flying with God

Catholic Aviation Association seeks to build and evangelize world of aviation, page 9.

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## 'I saw the light of God again'



Adam and Lauren Megel of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus pose for a family photo with their daughters, Madelyn, left, and Abigail, in October of 2014, a few months before a great loss in their lives showed them how much they are loved. (Photo by David Bugert Photography)

### Family's heartbreak leads to poignant lesson of great love in the midst of great loss

(Editor's note: As the archdiocese and the Church prepare for the 2015 World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in September, The Criterion is inviting readers to share their stories of how their faith has made a difference in their families. Here is one of these stories.)

By John Shaughnessy

Looking back, Lauren Megel never imagined that her devastating loss would teach her so much about the incredibly supportive love of others—or

the deepness of love that she could give and share.

She also never understood so fully the depth of God's love for her.

At the time—in early January of this year—Lauren was an expectant mother who couldn't wait to meet her new child.

She and her husband Adam had already been blessed with two daughters—Abigail, 4, and Madelyn, 2. And the joy of having a new family member filled all of them when they went together for what was expected to be a quick, pre-natal doctor's appointment for Lauren, who was 16 weeks pregnant.

As a technician set up the ultrasound machine, Lauren anticipated seeing her baby "doing swirls and dips and dives."

"Instead, I saw our baby laying there, still and lifeless," recalls Lauren, who is 30. "And right there, in front of strangers and my young children, I started sobbing big, ugly, loud and uncontrollable sobs.

"The ultrasound technician quickly turned off the screen, but it was too late. The picture was already seared into my memory."

Amid that heartbreak, Lauren couldn't

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### Pope seeks prayers for Egyptians beheaded by Islamic State

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis called for prayers for the Egyptian



Pope Francis

Christians beheaded by Islamic State militants in Libya and asked that God recognize these men killed for their faith.

He offered morning Mass on Feb. 17 in the chapel of his residence for the slain Christians he termed "our 21 brother Copts" whose

throats had been slit "for the sole reason of being Christians," and he requested people pray for the victims so "that the Lord welcome them as martyrs."

He called on people to pray as well for the victims' families and for Egypt's Orthodox leader, Pope Tawadros II, "who is suffering so much." Pope Francis called Pope Tawadros on Feb. 16 to express his sorrow over the deaths.

Egypt, meanwhile, continued to mourn its 21 nationals, who had been working in Libya when the extremist group kidnapped them. Their beheading was depicted in gruesome detail in a video released on Feb. 15 on a pro-Islamic State website.

On the same evening, in a nationally televised speech, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi called on his country's government to provide full support to the families of the victims and vowed that Egypt maintained the right to retaliate.

Soon afterward, the Egyptian air force began bombing what it said were Islamic State targets in Libya.

In a statement issued on Feb. 16 by the Coptic Catholic Church, Patriarch Ibrahim Isaac Sedrak of Alexandria, Egypt, extended his Church's "deepest sympathies" to the families and relatives of the murdered Christians.

In apparent reference to the retaliatory military action his country has since taken,

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### 'The Light Is on for You': Confession initiative expanded after successful first year

By Sean Gallagher

Father Christopher Craig was skeptical when he learned that priests across central and southern Indiana were to be available to hear confessions in parish churches from 6:30-8 p.m. on April 2, 2014.

It was the first time that the Archdiocese of Indianapolis would participate in a program titled "The Light Is on for You" that dioceses across the country had used to attract more Catholics to the sacrament of penance.

Father Craig, pastor of Most Sorrowful Mother of God Parish in Vevay and Prince of Peace Parish in Madison, didn't expect that many people would come to

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Like confessionals in many churches, a confessional in Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis features a light that shows if a priest is available to celebrate the sacrament of penance or, when a red light is showing, if he is currently hearing a confession. (Photo illustration by Sean Gallagher)

# Pope urges new cardinals to search for the lost, the sick

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The Catholic Church cannot call itself Church if it is a “closed caste” where the sick, the wounded and sinners are shunned, Pope Francis told the 20 new cardinals he created.

“The way of the Church is precisely to leave her four walls behind and to go out in search of those who are distant, those essentially on the outskirts of life,” the pope said on Feb. 15 as he celebrated Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica with the churchmen who received their red hats on Feb. 14, with about 140 other cardinals in attendance.

“Total openness to serving others is our hallmark; it alone is our title of honor,” he told the cardinals.

The Mass capped a four-day gathering of the cardinals. They met with Pope Francis on Feb. 12-13 to review ideas for the reform of the Roman Curia and Vatican finances as well as the progress made in the work of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

Pope Francis’ choice of new cardinals emphasized his focus on geographical peripheries and outreach to those often excluded from society. The 20 new cardinals came from 18 countries, including the first-ever cardinals from Tonga, Myanmar and Cape Verde.

In his second round of naming cardinals, he once again skipped large Italian dioceses usually headed by cardinals—notably Venice and Turin—and tapped Ancona and Agrigento, which is led by now-Cardinal Francesco Montenegro, a dedicated defender of the thousands of immigrants who risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

In the almost two years since his election, Pope Francis repeatedly has called Catholics to reach out to people on the margins of both the Church and society. He also frequently cautions against the temptation of being modern-day scribes and Pharisees, who can allow obedience to the letter of the law to prevent them from reaching out to others with compassion.

The Sunday Gospel reading was St. Mark’s version of Jesus touching a leper—which was forbidden by Jewish law—healing him and, in that way, allowing him back into the community.

The purpose of the law against touching someone with leprosy and forcing them to live outside the community “was to safeguard the healthy, to protect the righteous,” the pope said.

“Jesus, the new Moses, wanted to heal the leper,” the pope said. “He wanted to touch him and restore him to the community without being ‘hemmed in’ by prejudice,



Pope Francis greets new Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, after presenting a red hat to him during a consistory in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican on Feb. 14. The pope created 20 new cardinals. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

conformity to the prevailing mindset or worry about becoming infected.”

What is more, the pope said, “Jesus responds immediately to the leper’s plea, without waiting to study the situation and all its possible consequences.

“For Jesus, what matters above all is reaching out to save those far off, healing the wounds of the sick, restoring everyone to God’s family. This is scandalous to some people.”

But Jesus, he said, “does not think of the closed-minded who are scandalized even by a work of healing, scandalized before any kind of openness, by any action outside of their mental and spiritual boxes, by any caress or sign of tenderness which does not fit into their

usual thinking and their ritual purity.”

Pope Francis said there are two basic tendencies in the life of faith: being afraid of losing the saved, or wanting to save the lost. The Church’s way, he said, “has always been the way of Jesus, the way of mercy and reinstatement.”

Going out in search of the lost, he told the cardinals, “does not mean underestimating the dangers of letting wolves into the fold,” but it does mean “rolling up our sleeves and not standing by and watching passively the suffering of the world.

“The way of the Church is not to condemn anyone for eternity,” but “to pour out the balm of God’s mercy on all those who ask for it with a sincere heart.” †

## EGYPT

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Patriarch Sedrak also extended his Church’s “deepest gratitude” to al-Sisi and “our country’s loyal armed forces, especially the air forces, for the rapid response.”

“Egyptian blood is valuable and honorable,” he said.

Speaking after the video of the beheadings surfaced—but before the strikes against Islamic State in Libya were announced—Pope Tawadros offered his Church’s condolences to the relatives of the slain Christian migrant workers, most of whom local media reported had been from the same impoverished village in Egypt’s south.

Pope Tawadros said he trusted the way predominantly Muslim Egypt’s government was handling the situation.

“We trust that the role of all institutions of our state was clear since the beginning of the crisis in Libya, and we believe that they can ensure rights of Egyptian citizens,” the Egyptian portal

Ahram Online quoted Pope Tawadros as saying.

Condemnation for the beheading of the Egyptian Christians in Libya quickly grew beyond Egypt as regional leaders, Muslim and Christian alike, learned of the massacre.

Jordan’s King Abdullah II, whose country is also fighting Islamic State militants in neighboring Iraq and Syria, called the beheadings of the Egyptian Christians a “heinous crime” committed “at the hands of the terrorist gang ... hostile to all human values.”

Jordan’s Information Minister Mohammed al-Momani accused the Islamic State of “inciting blind hatred” with the killings, while Father Rifat Bader of the Catholic Center for Studies and Media in Amman called the beheadings a “crime not only against Arab Christians, but a crime against humanity.”

The Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate in Amman scheduled prayers of remembrance on Feb. 18, and the heads and representatives of all Christian denominations in Jordan were expected to attend the service.

The foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, meanwhile, referred to the Islamic State extremists as “sick souls frantic to shed the blood of innocents.”

Auxiliary Bishop William Shomali, chancellor of the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem, noted that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called for three days of mourning following the beheadings.

“It is unbelievable that this is happening in the 21st century,” said Bishop Shomali. “There is too much brutality. But what gives us comfort as Christians is the strong Muslim reaction against (the beheadings.) We do not feel alone, and Christians are united with all moderate Muslims, who are the majority.”

He said Christians and moderate Muslims in Israel and the Palestinian territories are less fearful of an Islamic State infiltration or attack than those in Jordan, since Jordan is surrounded by countries with a strong Islamic State presence and has joined the Western coalition fighting ISIS forces. †

## OPENING



## DOORS

(Editor’s note: “Opening Doors” strives to raise awareness and action regarding those in our Church with special needs and other life challenges, and offer resources to help individuals and families.)

“Most movies and many DVD resources you already use have options for captioning or subtitles. By using, and advertising your use of them, you can make these tools much more accessible to those who are deaf or hard of hearing.” †



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# Religious freedom legislation advances in Indiana Senate

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

Legislation to safeguard religious freedom in Indiana laws advanced in the Senate last week.

The Senate Judiciary Committee on Feb. 9 heard testimony on Senate Bill 101. If passed and signed into law, it would serve for state laws the same purpose that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) does for federal laws. RFRA, which became law on a broadly bipartisan basis in 1993, forbids that federal laws substantially burden a person's free exercise of religion. It also states that any burden on religious freedom must use the least restrictive way possible and can only be set in place if there is a compelling government interest.

The federal law played a central role in the U.S. Supreme Court's decision last summer that ruled that owners of closely held businesses cannot be required by the federal Health and Human Services administration's mandate requiring all employers to provide free of charge abortifacients, sterilizations and contraceptives to their employees if they oppose these medicines and procedures on religious grounds.

Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), testified before the panel in support of the bill.

"Religious freedom doesn't just apply to worship on Sunday or in our homes, but it involves enabling us to live our lives of faith in the community," he said. "The Catholic Church has done this for hundreds of years. We are provided an opportunity to serve the common good in the secular sense, while we live out our faith."

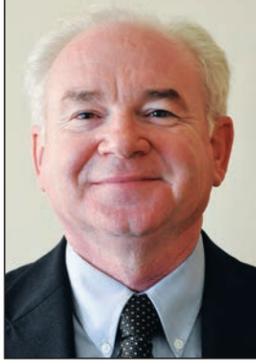


Sen. Scott Schneider

Sen. Scott Schneider, R-Indianapolis, co-author of Senate Bill 101, said the goal of the legislation is to create a workable test striking a sensible balance between religious liberty and competing prior governmental interests. "The purposes of this act are two-fold," he said. "It is to restore the compelling interest test and guarantee its application in all cases where free exercise

of religion is substantially burdened, and to provide a claim or defense to persons whose religious exercise is substantially burdened by government."

Schneider explained that the religious freedom bill establishes restoring the compelling interest test, meaning the religious practitioner must prove that his or her practice of religion has been substantially burdened by a state law or regulation. If this is determined to be true, the state government may then establish that it is a compelling interest for it to do so. Even if such



*'Religious freedom doesn't just apply to worship on Sunday or in our homes, but it involves enabling us to live our lives of faith in the community. The Catholic Church has done this for hundreds of years. We are provided an opportunity to serve the common good in the secular sense, while we live out our faith.'*

—Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC)

an interest is shown, the state government must use the "least restrictive" means in setting up a burden on religious liberty.

"This sets a foundation and framework for what government must do, and what tests they must pass before it restricts religious freedom," Schneider said. Sen. Dennis Kruse, R-Auburn, is also a co-author of the bill.

Currently, 19 states have passed state-level RFRA legislation, and 10 states' constitutions have been interpreted to restore the compelling interest test when cases of the exercise of religion are substantially burdened.

Father David Mary Engo, superior of Franciscan Brothers Minor in Fort Wayne, told the panel that freedom of religion is not simply the right to worship, but to serve.

Citing the parable of the Good Samaritan, Father David said Christians are called to serve without discrimination. "It has always been the Judeo-Christian faith that has taught us that faith must be expressed, acted upon, and lived in the church, at home, and in the public square," he said. "St. James tells us, 'Faith without works is dead' (Jas 2:26). My religious community of Franciscans and I continue this work. Our faith cannot be truly alive if Christians do not have the freedom to not only worship our God, but to serve him. Serving our God has always been the business of the Church."

Father David noted that Indiana is home to three-quarters of a million Catholics, with more than 400 Catholic churches, 20 Catholic hospitals, 20 Catholic nursing homes, and more than 200 institutions of Catholic learning ranging from pre-kindergarten to graduate school. "Where there is a need, the Church is there to help," he said.

Peter Breen, special council for the Chicago-based

St. Thomas More Society, said that the proposed Indiana RFRA law is not about "re-setting a right, but to put a broad fence around it." Breen, a constitutional lawyer added, "When we are looking at our core fundamental rights, free speech, free exercise of religion, a prudent lawmaker puts a broad fence around it." Breen, who serves as a state legislator in Illinois, called RFRA legislation making "rare moments" for legislators.

Fiona Devan, who represented the Columbus-based Cummins Inc., spoke in opposition, saying that the bill would cause potential liabilities in their ability to attract the best and brightest people to work for them because it sends an inhospitable or discriminatory message. It could also disrupt their company's policies to make reasonable religious accommodations for their employees, which they are currently making.

Jane Henegar, who represents the Indiana chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), also opposed the bill. She said that while the ACLU has for many years defended religious liberty, in more recent years the civil rights community has consistently expressed concerns about religious liberty protection, such as RFRA. They might create unintended consequences, namely a violation of civil rights, she said.

Constitutional lawyers who testified said that Indiana's proposed RFRA law does strike a reasonable balance between free exercise of religion and any state compelling interests including civil rights laws.

Senate Bill 101 is expected to be voted on by the Senate the last week of February.

*(For more information about the Indiana Catholic Conference, its Indiana Catholic Action Network and the bills it is following in the Indiana General Assembly this year, log on to [www.indianacc.org](http://www.indianacc.org). Brigid Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †*

## Poll shows majority support for religious freedom in marriage debate

WASHINGTON (CNS)—A recent Associated Press poll shows that while a plurality of Americans support the legal redefinition of marriage, a majority believe that the religious liberty of people, including owners of wedding-related businesses, who hold that marriage should be exclusively between one man and one woman should still be respected.

The poll, which was conducted between Jan. 1 and Feb. 2, shows that 44 percent of Americans favor the legal redefinition marriage to include couples of the same sex, 39 percent oppose it and 15 percent "neither favor nor oppose" legalization of such marriages.

Respondents also were asked this question: "In states where same-sex couples can be married legally, do you think that wedding-related businesses with religious objections should be allowed to refuse service to same-sex couples, or not?" Fifty-seven percent of those polled said that "they should be allowed to refuse service," and only 39 percent said "no, they should not be allowed" to do so. Four percent refused to respond.

Ryan T. Anderson, William E. Simon fellow in religious and a free society at the Heritage Foundation, said that the poll's results show "that support for the truth about marriage is too low and, thus, we all must renew our efforts at explaining what marriage is and why marriage matters."



Ryan Anderson

"It's not that people have heard the case for marriage and rejected it—it is just that they have never heard it," he told Catholic News Service.

"The majority of Americans rightly recognize that everyone should be free from government penalties for believing and acting on the belief that marriage is the union of husband and wife," Anderson said. "We must continue to defend our freedoms to speak and act in the public square in accord with the truth about marriage."

The Catholic Church upholds marriage as a union between one man and one woman, and teaches that any sexual activity outside of marriage is sinful. The Church

also teaches that same-sex attraction itself is not sinful and that people with such attractions "must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity."

The issue of whether a business owner has the right to refuse services to a same-sex couple came to the forefront of public discussion over two years ago when the owners of the Sweet Cakes by Melissa bakery in Gresham, Ore., were threatened with fines of up to \$150,000 for refusing to sell a wedding cake to a same-sex couple because of the owners' religious beliefs.

Refusing the sale violated the Oregon Equality Act of 2007, which imposed a nondiscrimination order that prohibited businesses from refusing services based on a patron's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Following two years of subsequent lawsuits and the closing of their business, the former owners of Sweet Cakes by Melissa were found guilty of discrimination, meaning they will face up to the maximum \$150,000 fine.

The situation of Sweet Cakes illustrates the dilemma of Catholic employers who oppose providing certain services on the grounds that, according to Church teaching, it would be a form of "material cooperation" with evil.

"The question of whether baking a cake for a same-sex wedding—to use an example in the news recently—constitutes a material—and therefore, culpable—cooperation [with] evil would depend on several circumstances, including intent," said Stephen P. White, a fellow of Catholic studies at the Ethics and Public Policy Center. "But even if such a case constituted remote cooperation—which might be permissible—there is no requirement to cooperate against the dictates of conscience. Just the opposite, in fact.

"Thankfully," said White, "most Americans understand that the burden of proof falls on those who would force their fellow citizens to violate their religious beliefs, not on those whose rights of conscience are protected by common sense, common decency, and, as it so happens, the Constitution."

In Oklahoma, lawmakers on Feb. 12 approved a bill to protect clergy who refuse to preside over a same-sex wedding or to recognize a same-sex marriage. It passed by an 88-7 vote in the House of Representatives, and now goes to the state Senate for consideration.

The measure would protect members of the clergy against same-sex marriage from being sued over their stance.

In Washington, U.S. Rep. Randy Weber and U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, both Texas Republicans, introduced the State Marriage Defense Act of 2015 in their respective chambers. It would allow states to define marriage and block the federal government from imposing its definition of marriage on the states.

Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage, sent letters to both lawmakers strongly supporting the measure.



Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone

Marriage has been redefined to include couples of the same sex in 37 states and the District of Columbia. Eleven of those states changed their definition of marriage either through popular vote (three) or the state legislature (eight). For the rest, including Indiana, marriage has been legally redefined by federal court decisions. Thirteen states ban same-sex marriage—one by constitutional amendment and 12 by constitutional amendment and state law.

In April, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in four marriage redefinition cases it agreed to take—from Tennessee, Michigan, Kentucky and Ohio. The court is consolidating them into one hearing, tackling the questions of whether the 14th Amendment requires states to broaden its definition of marriage to include couples of the same sex and whether it requires them to recognize same-sex marriages licensed in other states.

The AP poll, which was conducted by Gfk Public Affairs, showed an even split among Americans about whether the high court should rule that same-sex marriage must be legal nationwide—48 percent said it should, but 48 percent said it should not.

The margin of error for the poll was plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. †



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## Editorial



Men in orange jumpsuits purported to be Egyptian Christians held captive by the Islamic State militants kneel in front of armed men along a beach said to be near Tripoli, Libya, in this still image from an undated video made available on social media on Feb. 15. The video is said to show the beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians kidnapped in Libya. (CNS photo/Reuters)

## ISIS and moderate Muslims

The militant Islamic group ISIS clearly considers itself at war against Christianity. It also considers the Holy See to be the leader of Christian faiths. It made this clear when the ISIS group in Libya released a video that showed the beheading of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians.

In the video, a militant said that ISIS was sending a message “from the south of Rome,” and at the end of the video he raised his knife and said that ISIS would “conquer Rome.”

If this is war, though, it’s not a war between Christianity and the overwhelming majority of adherents of Islam. Pope Francis has emphasized repeatedly that Islam is not to blame for the terrorists. In December, for example, he said, “You just can’t say that, just as you can’t say that all Christians are fundamentalists. We have our share of them.”

He is quick to condemn any group that uses religion as a pretext for violence. “One cannot generate hatred in God’s name,” he said. “One cannot make war in God’s name.” However, that is exactly what ISIS is trying to do.

When Pope Francis learned about the 21 Coptic Christians who were killed, he interrupted a talk he was giving to emphasize the unity of Christians regardless of their denomination. He said, “The blood of our Christian brothers and sisters is a testimony which cries out to be heard. It makes no difference whether they be Catholics, Orthodox, Copts or Protestants. They are Christians! The martyrs belong to all Christians.”

On this point, the Islamic extremists agree with the pope. Their war—we call it a war because they claim that they will conquer—is against all Christians.

Pope Francis, though, has followed the example of his immediate predecessors Pope Benedict XVI and St. John Paul II by working with moderate Muslims since the beginning of his papacy to promote peace in the Middle East and to protect Christians. At the same time, he has acknowledged that sometimes action must be taken to stop terrorism.

There are signs of a backlash against Muslims, both in Europe and in this country, because the terrorism that has been going on ever since 9/11 has been perpetrated by Muslims. As Christians,

though, we must not condemn all Muslims because of the actions of the most extreme among them.

However, there is only so much the moderate Muslims can do. Last September, more than 125 Muslim leaders from 32 countries signed a 17-page letter to ISIS condemning what it was doing in Syria and Iraq. We reported on that letter in our Oct. 31 issue.

The letter told ISIS, “These Christians are not combatants against Islam or transgressors against it. Indeed, they are friends, neighbors and co-citizens. From the legal perspective of Sharia [Islamic law], they all fall under ancient agreements that are around 1,400 years old, and the rulings of jihad do not apply to them.”

The letter also told ISIS, “As for killing prisoners, it is forbidden in Islamic law. Yet you have killed many prisoners.” It mentioned journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff and aid worker David Haines. Since then, of course, ISIS has killed many more prisoners.

The letter contrasted what ISIS is doing with what Muhammad did. Islam’s founder, it said, “over a span of 10 years and 29 battles . . . did not execute a single regular soldier; rather, he entrusted that they be treated with kindness.”

The moderates told ISIS that they “have provided ample ammunition for all those who want to call Islam barbaric” by broadcasting their “barbaric acts, which you pretend are for the sake of Islam. You have given the world a stick with which to beat Islam, whereas in reality Islam is completely innocent of these acts and prohibits them.”

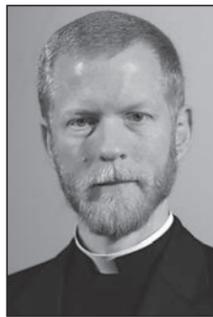
We don’t doubt that there are some American Muslims who are sympathetic to ISIS, and we must trust our government to identify them and protect us from them. The vast majority, though, are good citizens and neighbors. Unlike in some places in Europe, Muslims in this country have largely integrated into our society. We must not treat them as enemies.

We pray that moderate Muslims in the Middle East, with our help, will find a way to put an end to the ISIS extremists.

—John F. Fink

## Making Sense of Bioethics/*Fr. Tad Pacholczyk* Medical assistance with the battle of the bulge

Bariatric surgery, which often involves banding of the stomach, is a widely used procedure for treating severe obesity.



Another approach that relies on an implantable “stomach pacemaker” also appears poised to assist those struggling with significant weight gain.

Many people have already benefitted from these kinds of surgical interventions, enabling them to shed a great deal of weight, improve their health and get a new lease on life.

At the same time, however, it’s important for us to examine such interventions from an ethical point of view. It’s not simply a matter of weight loss, achieved by any means whatsoever, but a rational decision made after carefully weighing the risks, benefits and alternatives.

Bjorn Hofmann, a medical ethicist who writes about the ethical issues surrounding obesity-correction techniques notes, “Bariatric surgery is particularly interesting because it uses surgical methods to modify healthy organs, is not curative, but offers symptom relief for a condition that is considered to result from lack of self-control and is subject to significant prejudice.”

The healthy organ that is modified is the stomach, which may be either banded or surgically modified with staples to create a small stomach pouch. This causes food to be retained in the small pouch for a longer period of time, creating a feeling of fullness, with the effect of reducing how much a person ingests at a single meal.

Like any surgical technique, bariatric surgery has risks associated with it: Mortality from the surgery itself is less than 1 percent, but post-surgical leakage into the abdomen or malfunction of the outlet from the stomach pouch can require further surgeries.

Nearly 20 percent of patients experience chronic gastrointestinal symptoms. Wound infections, clot formation, vitamin deficiencies, cardiorespiratory failure and other complications like gallstones and osteoporosis can also occasionally arise.

A new device, sometimes described as a “pacemaker for the stomach,” was recently approved by regulators at the Food and Drug Administration. This rechargeable and implantable device blocks electrical nerve signals between the stomach and the brain, and helps to diminish the feeling of being hungry. The cost for the small machine, along with its surgical implantation, is expected to run between \$30,000 and \$40,000, making it competitive with various forms of bariatric surgery.

Because the stomach pacemaker does not modify the stomach or the intestines as organs, but instead reduces appetite by blocking electrical signals in the abdominal vagus nerve, some of the surgery-related complications associated with modifying or stapling the stomach are eliminated. Other surgical complications related to the insertion of the device into the abdomen have sometimes been observed, however, as well as adverse events associated with its use, like pain, nausea and vomiting.

Bariatric surgery, it should be noted, is not universally successful in terms of the underlying goal of losing weight, and some patients ultimately regain the weight they lose either through enlargement of the stomach pouch or a return to compulsive eating patterns or both. Results have been similarly mixed for

patients receiving the stomach pacemaker: some lose and keep off significant amounts of weight; others show only negligible improvements when they are unable to adhere to the needed lifelong changes in eating habits.

Among the ethical questions that need to be considered with regard to surgically-based approaches are: Should an expensive, invasive and potentially risky surgery be routinely used for an anomaly that might be addressed by modifications in diet and eating habits? What criteria should be met before such surgery is seriously considered?

It is also of ethical importance that physicians and surgeons not be unduly influenced by device manufacturers to utilize their various stomach banding apparatuses or their pacemaker devices.

In 1991, the National Institutes of Health developed a consensus statement on “Gastrointestinal Surgery for Severe Obesity” that offers guidance for clinical decision making. The statement notes that, beyond having a serious weight problem, patients seeking therapy for the first time for their obesity should “generally be encouraged to try non-surgical treatment approaches including dietary counseling, exercise, behavior modification and support.”

These broad guidelines are intended to spark discussion on the part of patients and their medical team: How much support has an individual really received prior to looking into weight reduction surgery or stomach pacemaker insertion? Some patients may have tried diligently for years to lose weight, while others may have made only cursory, poorly supported efforts. The need for support is also likely to continue following bariatric surgery, or after the implantation of a stomach pacemaker.

In sum, there are notable differences between such surgical interventions and traditional weight loss techniques involving exercise and diet.

With the surgical techniques, due diligence will be required both prior to and following such interventions, particularly in light of the ongoing discussions about the cost-effectiveness, safety, risks and outcomes of interventional surgery for the overweight patient.

(Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience at Yale University and did post-doctoral work at Harvard University. He is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See [www.ncbcenter.org](http://www.ncbcenter.org).) †

## Letters Policy

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

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

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar).

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367.

Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to [criterion@archindy.org](mailto:criterion@archindy.org).

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO JOSEPH W. TOBIN



REJOICE IN THE LORD

ALÉGRENSE EN EL SEÑOR

## Our Lenten journey, a pilgrimage of hope

This is the first of a series of articles I am writing for the season of Lent.

The Church provides us with this unique penitential season as a means of preparing for the joy of Easter.

As Pope Francis reminds us in his apostolic exhortation, *“Evangelii Gaudium”* (“The Joy of the Gospel”), joy is not something that comes to us without preparation. We must be ready to receive it—sometimes in surprising ways, and when we least expect it.

The six weeks of Lent are a time when we have the opportunity to get ready, to prepare ourselves, for the special joy that comes with the Easter Triduum, the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Earlier this week, I returned from a 12-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I can’t imagine a better way to prepare for the spiritual journey that is Lent. To be actually present in the land of Jesus, to pray where he prayed, and to experience firsthand all the holy places that the Gospels speak about so powerfully, is an experience that I wish every Christian could have.

My fellow pilgrims and I were very conscious of the fact that we traveled to the Holy Land on behalf of all the people of our archdiocese, the Church in central and southern Indiana. We prayed for you, and we brought you with us (in spirit) every time we visited one of the Holy Land’s remarkable sacred spaces.

Pilgrimages are as old as Judaism and Christianity (and many other religious traditions). St. Luke tells us that the Holy Family (Jesus, Mary and Joseph) made an annual pilgrimage from Nazareth to Jerusalem in observance of the Feast of the Passover.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI writes in *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives* that the deeper meaning of these annual pilgrimages for the Jewish people was the powerful affirmation that Israel was “God’s pilgrim people, always journeying toward its God and receiving its identity and unity from the encounter with God in the one Temple. The Holy Family takes its place within this great pilgrim community on its way to the Temple and to God.”

We Christians carry on this tradition of pilgrimage, but we recognize that our destination is not a building (the Temple)

or any earthly place no matter how holy.

Our pilgrimage is a spiritual journey that makes it possible for us to follow Jesus on the Way of the Cross. In this pilgrimage, there are many stops along the way, and sometimes many detours, but our final destination is the joy of heaven—our true homeland where we will be united with God and all his family for eternity.

During my ministry as a member of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists), I traveled to many different places in more than 70 countries, but I had never been to the Holy Land. When members of the archdiocese asked me to consider leading this pilgrimage, I thought about it and concluded that the time had come.

For most of my life, I have been fascinated by the meaning of our Church’s teaching that the “Word was made flesh.” St. John’s Gospel tells us that God took flesh and became one of us (literally that he “pitched his tent among us”) at a specific moment in human history, and that he really walked this Earth in a particular land.

I hoped that by tracing his footsteps and praying at many of the places that

were so important to Jesus, the Word made flesh, I could become a better disciple and a better shepherd for his people.

I also knew that pilgrimages to holy places can be a source of genuine, faith-filled friendship for all who participate. I was confident that 12 days in the Holy Land would unite my fellow pilgrims and me with God, with each other, and with the entire people of central and southern Indiana in a very special way.

The journey that my fellow pilgrims and I just completed was a vivid reminder of both the earthly experience of Jesus of Nazareth, and the spiritual journey that all of us are making as pilgrim people called to follow in his footsteps. I pray that it will make our Lenten journey all the more productive.

I also pray that my written reflections over the six weeks of Lent, which have been inspired by this very special Holy Land pilgrimage, will help us all in our spiritual journeys to our heavenly homeland.

May this Lent be a time of grace for all of us as we prepare for Easter joy. †

## La Cuaresma: una peregrinación de esperanza

Este es el primero de una serie de artículos que escribiré sobre la temporada de la Cuaresma.

La Iglesia nos ofrece esta temporada penitencial única, como una forma para prepararnos para la alegría de la Pascua.

Tal como nos lo recuerda el papa Francisco en su exhortación apostólica titulada *“Evangelii Gaudium”* (“La alegría del Evangelio”), la alegría requiere preparación. Debemos estar listos para recibirla, a veces de formas sorpresivas y cuando menos nos lo esperamos.

Las seis semanas de la Cuaresma representan nuestra oportunidad para alistarnos, para prepararnos para recibir la alegría especial del triduo Pascual: la pasión, muerte y resurrección de nuestro Señor Jesucristo.

A comienzos de esta semana regresé de una peregrinación de 12 días a Tierra Santa. No puedo imaginarme una mejor forma de prepararme para la travesía espiritual de la Cuaresma. Tener la oportunidad de pisar la tierra de Jesús, de orar donde Él oró, de visitar en persona todos los lugares sagrados de los que habla el Evangelio de una forma tan impactante, es una experiencia que desearía que todos los cristianos pudieran vivir.

Mis compañeros de la peregrinación y yo estábamos muy conscientes del hecho de que habíamos viajado a Tierra

Santa en representación de todos los fieles de nuestra Arquidiócesis, la Iglesia en el centro y el sur de Indiana. Oramos por ustedes y nos acompañaron (en espíritu) cada vez que visitamos los lugares sagrados más importantes de la Tierra Santa.

La peregrinación es un acto antiquísimo que se remonta a los albores del judaísmo y del cristianismo (y de muchas otras tradiciones religiosas). San Lucas nos dice que la Sagrada Familia (Jesús, María y José) peregrinaban todos los años desde Nazaret hasta Jerusalén para celebrar la festividad de la Pascua judía.

El papa emérito Benedicto XVI en su libro *Jesús de Nazaret: relatos de la infancia*, escribe que para el pueblo judío, el significado más profundo de estas peregrinaciones anuales era la poderosa afirmación de que Israel era “el pueblo peregrino de Dios, siempre en el camino hacia Dios, y que recibía su identidad y unidad a través del encuentro con Dios en el Templo. La Sagrada Familia ocupa su lugar en esta importante comunidad peregrina en el camino hacia el Templo y hacia Dios.”

Los cristianos continuamos con esta tradición de peregrinación, pero reconocemos que nuestro destino no es una edificación (el Templo) ni ningún otro lugar terrenal, no importa cuán santo sea.

Nuestra peregrinación es una travesía espiritual que nos lleva a seguir a Jesús en el vía crucis. A lo largo de esta peregrinación hay muchas paradas, en ocasiones muchos desvíos, pero nuestro destino final es la alegría celestial, el lugar al que verdaderamente pertenecemos y donde nos uniremos a Dios y a toda su familia por el resto de la eternidad.

Durante mi ministerio como integrante de la Congregación del Santísimo Redentor (Congregación Redentorista), viajé a muchos lugares en más de 70 países pero nunca había visitado la Tierra Santa. Cuando algunos integrantes de la Arquidiócesis me pidieron que considerara encabezar esta peregrinación, lo medité y concluí que había llegado el momento.

Durante buena parte de mi vida me ha fascinado el significado de la enseñanza de la Iglesia de que “el verbo se hizo carne.” El Evangelio según San Juan nos dice que Dios se hizo carne y se convirtió en uno de nosotros (literalmente que “armó su tienda entre nosotros”) en un momento específico de la historia de la humanidad, y que realmente estuvo en la Tierra, en un territorio determinado.

Me ilusionaba seguir la huella de sus pasos y orar en muchos de los lugares que eran tan importantes para Jesús—el verbo hecho carne—y que gracias a esta experiencia pudiera llegar a convertirme

en un mejor discípulo y en un mejor pastor para su pueblo.

También sabía que las peregrinaciones a lugares sagrados pueden dar origen a amistades genuinas, moldeadas por la fe, entre todos los participantes. Tenía plena confianza de que esos 12 días en Tierra Santa servirían para que mis compañeros de peregrinación y yo nos uniéramos a Dios, entre nosotros y a todo el pueblo del centro y el sur de Indiana, de una forma muy especial.

El recorrido que mis compañeros de peregrinación y yo acabamos de terminar fue un recordatorio vívido de la experiencia terrenal de Jesús de Nazaret y de la travesía espiritual que todos nosotros estamos viviendo, como un pueblo peregrino llamado a seguirle los pasos. Oro para que esta experiencia sean todavía más productivos; también rezo para que mis reflexiones plasmadas aquí en el transcurso de las próximas seis semanas de la Cuaresma, y cuya inspiración emana de esta peregrinación muy especial a Tierra Santa, nos ayuden a todos en nuestra travesía espiritual a nuestro hogar celestial.

Que esta Cuaresma sea un momento de gracia para todos nosotros a medida que nos preparamos para sentir la alegría de la Pascua. †

Traducido por: Daniela Guanipa

## Events Calendar

### February 20

Northside Knights of Columbus Hall, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Catholic Business Exchange Mass**, breakfast and program, "Community Safety and the Faith Community: How We All Can Help," Troy Riggs, director of Public Safety for the City of Indianapolis, 7-9 a.m., \$15 members, \$21 non-members, breakfast included. Reservations and information: [www.catholicbusinessexchange.org](http://www.catholicbusinessexchange.org).

St. Lawrence Parish, Fr. Conen Hall, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. **Fish fry**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Information: 317-546-4065.

St. Matthew the Apostle Parish, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Fish fry**, 5-8 p.m. Information: [tjergersbcglobal.net](mailto:tjergersbcglobal.net).

Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 89 N. 17th St., Beech Grove. **Fish fry**, 5:30-7 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454 or [Mstark@holyname.cc](mailto:Mstark@holyname.cc)

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King Church, 833 S. Triangle Road, Paoli. **Stations of the Cross**, 4:30 p.m. Information: 812-936-4568 or [ChristtheKing1948@gmail.com](mailto:ChristtheKing1948@gmail.com).

All Saints Parish, 8044 Yorkridge Road, Yorkville. **Fish fry**, 4:30-7 p.m. Information: 812-576-4302 or [parishoffice@etczone.com](mailto:parishoffice@etczone.com).

Mount Saint Francis Retreat Center, main chapel, 101 St. Anthony Drive, Mt. St. Francis. **Lenten Renewal**, Jesse Manibusan, performer, family friendly, 7-8:30 p.m. Information: 812-923-8355 or [nadyouth.org](http://nadyouth.org).

### February 21

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Helpers of God's Precious Infants**, Mass and Divine Mercy Chaplet at 8:30 a.m., followed by prayer at a local abortion center, and continued prayer at the church for those who wish to remain.

### February 23

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Serra Club of Indianapolis, monthly "Pray for Vocations" dinner meeting**, Father Rick Nagel, presenter, Mass, 5:30 p.m., dinner, 6:15 p.m., \$15 per person, reservations requested. Information: 317-850-1382.

St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 1723 I St., Bedford. **Lenten Supper/Speaker Program**, apologist and author Kevin Lentz will discuss "The Privilege and Obligation of Being Catholic." Supper at 6 p.m., speaker to follow. Free. Deadline to register is Feb. 21. Information: 812-583-2542 or e-mail [candrews1148@comcast.net](mailto:candrews1148@comcast.net).

### February 23-28

On WSPM 89.1 FM/WSQM 90.9 FM. **Faith in Action radio show, "Lent: Confession and Penance,"** Father Bob Robeson and seminarian Chris Trummer, Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary, 10 a.m., Feb. 23 and 26, 4 p.m., Feb. 17 and 20; 9 a.m., Feb. 28, **"Dammann's: Working through Catholic Radio,"** Jim Dammann, 4 p.m., Feb. 23 and 26, 4 p.m., Feb. 23 and 27, 9:30 a.m. Feb. 28.

### February 25

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, 7575 Holliday Drive East, Indianapolis. **Soup supper**, "Health, Wellness and the Spiritual Life," Dr. Casey Reising presenting, Mass 5:30 p.m., soup supper 6:30-7:15 p.m., speaker 7:15-8:30 p.m., reservations requested. Information: 317-259-4373, ext. 256 or [dcarlo@stluke.org](mailto:dcarlo@stluke.org).

St. Lawrence Church, 4650 N. Shadeland Ave., Indianapolis. **Life in Christ Lenten Series**, 7:00-8:30pm. "Listen to the Voice of God—Focus on Hearing." Information: [beiltra@sbcglobal.net](mailto:beiltra@sbcglobal.net).

Statehouse Capitol Rotunda, 200 W. Washington St., Indianapolis. **Celebrate Life—Alternative to the Death Penalty, speech and award ceremony**, 4:30 p.m. Information: 317-839-1618 or [Karen.burkhart.in@gmail.com](mailto:Karen.burkhart.in@gmail.com).

### February 26

St. Patrick Parish, Moran Family Center, 1807 Poplar St., Terre Haute. **John Paul II Annual Vera Bradley Bingo**, \$20 per person, must be 18 years of age, 5:30 p.m., to benefit John Paul II Catholic High School. Information: 812-232-8518.

### February 27

St. Lawrence Parish, Fr. Conen Hall, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. **Fish fry**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Information: 317-546-4065.

St. Matthew the Apostle Parish, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Fish fry**, 5-8 p.m. Information: [tjergersbcglobal.net](mailto:tjergersbcglobal.net).

Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 89 N. 17th St., Beech Grove. **Fish fry**, 5:30-7 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454 or [Mstark@holyname.cc](mailto:Mstark@holyname.cc).

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King Church, 833 S. Triangle Road, Paoli. **Stations of the Cross**, 4:30 p.m., **fish fry** following the stations. Information: 812-936-4568 or [ChristtheKing1948@gmail.com](mailto:ChristtheKing1948@gmail.com).

All Saints Parish, 8044 Yorkridge Road, Yorkville. **Fish fry**, 4:30-7 p.m. Information: 812-576-4302 or [parishoffice@etczone.com](mailto:parishoffice@etczone.com).

### February 27-March 1

Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, **"Retreat for Busy Catholic Moms."** Begins at 7 p.m. on Feb. 27, and runs through 1:30 p.m. on March 1. Cost for commuter, \$130; cost for single room \$200; room cost with roommate \$170. Meals included. Register by Feb. 17. Information: 812-249-3189 or e-mail [mmontgom@spsmw.org](mailto:mmontgom@spsmw.org).

### February 27-28

Marian University, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. **Department of Theatre, "Almost, Maine,"** 7 p.m., \$15 adults, \$5 students and senior 65 and older. Information: 317-955-6588 or [boxoffice@marian.edu](mailto:boxoffice@marian.edu).

### February 28

St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Faithful Citizens Rosary procession**, Mass, 12:10 p.m., procession following Mass. Information: [faithful.citizens2016@gmail.com](mailto:faithful.citizens2016@gmail.com).

The Slovenian National Home, 2717 W. 10th St., Indianapolis. **Day**

**of crafts**, bring your project to work on, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.; **"Simply Cabin Fever Party,"** 5-11 p.m., chili, ham and beans provided, bring an appetizer, side or dessert to share. Information: 317-796-8643 or [phribernik@sbcglobal.net](mailto:phribernik@sbcglobal.net)

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, White Violet Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. **"Beginning Spinning,"** John Salamone, instructor, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$100 per person, includes materials, use of equipment, meals and refreshments, registration deadline Feb. 25. Information: 812-535-2932 or [wvc@spsmw.org](mailto:wvc@spsmw.org).

### March 2

St. Joseph University Parish, 113 S. 5th St., Terre Haute. **Slow-motion Mass**, a narrated explanation of the Holy Mass, 7 p.m. Information: 812-232-7011 or [adultfaith@stjoeup.org](mailto:adultfaith@stjoeup.org).

### March 4

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: 317-243-0777.

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, 7575 Holliday Drive East, Indianapolis. **Soup supper**, "The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola," Mary Schaffner, presenter, Mass, 5:30 p.m., soup supper, 6:30-7:15 p.m., speaker, 7:15-8:30 p.m., reservations requested. Information: 317-259-4373, ext. 256 or [dcarlo@stluke.org](mailto:dcarlo@stluke.org).

St. Lawrence Church, 4650 N. Shadeland Ave., Indianapolis. **Life in Christ Lenten Series**, 7:00-8:30 pm. Sharing and reflecting on the sensory images of the Lenten Gospels. "Holy Zeal—Focus on Speech." Information: [beiltra@sbcglobal.net](mailto:beiltra@sbcglobal.net).

### March 6

St. Matthew the Apostle Parish, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Fish fry**, 5-8 p.m. Information: [tjergersbcglobal.net](mailto:tjergersbcglobal.net).

St. Lawrence Parish, Fr. Conen Hall, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. **Fish fry**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Information: 317-546-4065.

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Fish fry**, 5-7:30 p.m. Information: 317-636-4478 or [info@holyroaryindy.org](mailto:info@holyroaryindy.org).

Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 89 N. 17th St., Beech Grove. **Fish fry**, 5:30-7 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454 or [Mstark@holyname.cc](mailto:Mstark@holyname.cc)

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King Church, 833 S. Triangle Road, Paoli. **Stations of the Cross**, 4:30 p.m., **fish fry** following the stations. Information: 812-936-4568 or [ChristtheKing1948@gmail.com](mailto:ChristtheKing1948@gmail.com).

All Saints Parish, 8044 Yorkridge Road, Yorkville. **Fish fry**, 4:30-7 p.m. Information: 812-576-4302 or [parishoffice@etczone.com](mailto:parishoffice@etczone.com).

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Holy Family Center, 1807 Poplar 2322 N 13 1/2 St., Terre Haute. **Annual Jonah fish fry**, 4:30-7:30 p.m.. Information: 812-232-8518. †

## Retreats and Programs

### February 20

Benedict Inn Conference and Retreat Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. **"4th Annual Girls' Night Out: Women Helping Women,"** 7-10 p.m., \$25 per person, a portion of the proceeds to benefit the Julian Center. Information: 317-788-7581 or [www.benedictinn.org](http://www.benedictinn.org).

### February 20-22

Mount Saint Francis Retreat Center, 101 Mt. St. Francis Drive, Mt. St. Francis. **Silent retreat for women,** Judy Ribar, presenter. Information: 812-923-8817 or [www.mountsaintfrancis.org](http://www.mountsaintfrancis.org).

(For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to [www.archindy.org/retreats](http://www.archindy.org/retreats).) †



## Centenarian

Archbishop Joseph Tobin, left, shares a laugh with Father Hilary Meny and Bishop Charles Thompson of Evansville during the 100th birthday celebration for Father Meny on Jan. 18 at SS. Peter and Paul Parish in Haubstadt, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, where Father Meny grew up. After being ordained in 1940, Father Meny served the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for 50 years in pastoral ministry. He retired to Haubstadt in 1990. Father Meny and his family welcomed scores of local people—along with many who traveled from outside the area—for the grand celebration. Among those who attended a Mass and reception afterward were many relatives, friends and members of the former St. Patrick Parish in Madison, where Father Meny served for more than 40 years. (Submitted photo)

## Ignatian Volunteer Corps hosting informational meeting on Feb. 24

The Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC), a Jesuit service program, is hosting an informational meeting at 7 p.m. on Feb. 24 at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St. in Indianapolis.

The meeting is open to semi-retired or retired men and women over the age of 50 who are eager to share their skills, wisdom and life experience in direct service to the poor and marginalized.

In return for a commitment



of one or two days per week at a local service site, IVC provides guidance for personal reflection and prayerful conversation with other IVC volunteers monthly.

For more information, call Jane Lafave at 317-442-3385 or e-mail [ivcindianapolis@gmail.com](mailto:ivcindianapolis@gmail.com). †

## Fifteenth annual Lenten speaker series begins with presentation on the Eucharist

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., in Indianapolis, will host its 15th annual Lenten speaker series, titled "Spaghetti and Spirituality," on Feb. 25-March 18.

Prior to dinner and each week's presentation, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for adoration following the conclusion of the traditional Latin Mass at noon. Another Mass, celebrated in English, will start at 5:45 p.m.

A light, meatless pasta dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. at Msgr. Priori Hall. Each presentation will begin at approximately 7:15 p.m. and ordinarily concludes by 8:30 p.m.

Father Joshua Wagner, a priest of the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, will give the first presentation in the series on Feb. 25. It is titled "The Four Phrases That Will Change Your Life: How the Mass Teaches Us How to Live."

A graduate of the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus and the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Father Wagner serves as pastor of two inner-city parishes in Columbus and travels the country giving parish missions and retreats.

Those interested in attending any of the presentations are asked to call Holy Rosary Parish at 317-636-4478 by no later than 5 p.m. on the Monday prior to each seminar. For more information about "Spaghetti and Spirituality," visit [www.holyrosaryindy.org](http://www.holyrosaryindy.org). To register for sessions in the series, log on to [www.kofcsantorosario.org/ss.htm](http://www.kofcsantorosario.org/ss.htm). †



Fr. Joshua Wagner

# Knights of Columbus to sponsor play about St. Maximilian Kolbe

By Sean Gallagher

In January 1945, 70 years ago last month, soldiers of the Soviet Union's Red Army liberated the Auschwitz concentration camp operated in Poland by Nazi Germany during World War II.



St. Maximilian Kolbe

Auschwitz still stands today as the primary symbol of the Holocaust in which millions of Jews were exterminated. It is also the place where a Polish Franciscan priest laid down his life so that another prisoner might live.

That priest, Maximilian Kolbe, was declared a saint in 1982 by St. John Paul II.

He is the subject of a one-man play, *Maximilian: Saint of Auschwitz*, which will be performed at 7 p.m. on March 3 and 4 at the Knights of Columbus' McGowan Hall, 1305 N. Delaware St., in Indianapolis. Admission for the play is \$15. It is suitable for ages 10 and up, and runs approximately 90 minutes.

St. Maximilian will be portrayed in the play by Leonardo Defilippis, the founder and president of the Battle Ground, Wash.-based Saint Luke Productions, which has produced plays and films about Christ and the saints for 33 years.

The play's performance in Indianapolis is being sponsored by the Central Indiana Chapter of the Knights of Columbus, which helps coordinate activities among a number of Knights' councils.

Knights of Columbus Council #437, which operates McGowan Hall, is also assisting in the production of the play.

Robert Newport, events coordinator for the council, said the Knights see the play as an important event for the greater community in central Indiana.

"We are keenly focused on providing programming that champions the highest of virtues," Newport said, "and Maximilian's moving story of self-sacrifice, courage and faith in the face of unimaginable cruelty is one that needs to be shared with as many people as possible, Catholic and non-Catholic alike."

Newport also thinks the play can share the Good News of Christ with a wider audience as it is embodied in the story of St. Maximilian.

"We hope that this presentation of *Maximilian: Saint of Auschwitz* will remind people of the fact that, while not always visible or readily apparent, their sacrifices and efforts for others in the name of Christ live on," he said. "We are not living for this world, but for the next. Our desire is that people are consoled by this truth when they are struggling to make sense of an often senseless and chaotic world, and, like Maximilian, have the courage to step out from the ranks and be a soldier for Christ no matter the cost. The message is as important and urgent now as it ever was."

(To purchase tickets for Maximilian: Saint of Auschwitz, call 317-631-4373, send an e-mail to [ranewport@gmail.com](mailto:ranewport@gmail.com) or go to [www.maximilian.eventbrite.com](http://www.maximilian.eventbrite.com). Please call in advance for groups of 10 or more. For more information about the play, go to [www.StMaxDrama.com](http://www.StMaxDrama.com).) †

*'We hope that this presentation of Maximilian: Saint of Auschwitz will remind people of the fact that, while not always visible or readily apparent, their sacrifices and efforts for others in the name of Christ live on.'* —Robert Newport, events coordinator for the council

SAINT LUKE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

**MAXIMILIAN**  
SAINT OF AUSCHWITZ

**TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 7:00 PM**  
**& WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 7:00 PM**  
**Knights of Columbus - McGowan Hall**  
1305 N Delaware Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202  
ADMISSION: \$15.00 each; call for groups of 10 or more  
Suitable for Ages 10 & Up

TICKETS: McGowan Hall Box Office, [www.maximilian.eventbrite.com](http://www.maximilian.eventbrite.com)  
INFO: Robert Newport, (317) 631-4373 or [ranewport@gmail.com](mailto:ranewport@gmail.com)  
SPONSORED BY: Knights of Columbus Central Indiana Chapter

PERFORMED LIVE BY LEONARDO DEFILIPPIS [www.StMaxDrama.com](http://www.StMaxDrama.com)

## Weekend retreat in Beech Grove geared to help answer Pope Francis' call to address challenges of poverty

In response to Pope Francis' social justice challenge to help the poor, the Indianapolis chapter of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is hosting a "Hope in Action" (HIA) training retreat the weekend of Feb. 28 and March 1 at the Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center in Beech Grove.



Pope Francis

Titled "Ending Poverty Through Systemic Change," the educational retreat experience is for area Vincentians, Catholic Charities Indianapolis staff members and parish social justice commission members, as well as anyone interested in eliminating poverty in area communities.

Attendees will participate in a powerful poverty simulation where they role-play a family in poverty attempting to access the most basic needed services. Participants will experience firsthand the very real daily challenges of the poor.

The program is based on the "Bridges

Out of Poverty" series, authored by nationally renowned poverty experts Phil DeVol and Ruby Payne. Participants will also learn more about recent and ongoing local efforts to help families living in poverty help themselves out of poverty—the key to real systemic change—and offering new hope to those in need.

The program begins at 8:30 a.m. on Feb. 28, and concludes no later than 5 p.m. on March 1. Due to the amount of material presented and provided, an overnight stay is required. Organizers are requesting a \$100 per person contribution toward the program cost, which includes materials, overnight accommodations (single or double rooms) and five meals. Register on-line at [svdpindy.org](http://svdpindy.org), and then scroll to "HIA Training Retreat."

At the conclusion of the program, participants will walk away with a new awareness and thorough understanding of poverty, its causes, and proven strategies for alleviating poverty in our communities and parish neighborhoods. The first step in eliminating poverty, those who participate will learn, is to educate ourselves on the subject.

For more information, contact Domoni Rouse at 317-985-2149, or Pat Jerrell at 317-783-7296. †

## Annual 'Lecture and Irish Coffee Night' set for March 12 at Cardinal Ritter House

The third annual "Lecture and Irish Coffee Night" will be held at the Cardinal Ritter House, 1218 Oak St. in New Albany, at 7 p.m. on March 12.



Dr. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty

The featured speaker will be Dr. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty, chair of the Department of Theology and professor of theology at Bellarmine University in Louisville.

She will discuss her new book,

*Dorothy Day for Armchair Theologians*, which chronicles the life and work of Dorothy Day, a social activist and Catholic convert who, along with fellow activist Peter Maurin, helped establish the Catholic Worker Movement in the United States in the 1930s. The lecture will also discuss Day's ties to southern Indiana.

Attendees of the event, hosted by The Cardinal Ritter Birthplace Foundation, may also visit the Cardinal Ritter Museum.

The event is free and open to the public. Reservations are requested by March 6.

To make a reservation, call Indiana Landmarks at 812-284-4534. †

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# HOW TO MAKE A GOOD CONFESSION

## Before confession

Confession is not difficult, but it does require preparation. We should begin with prayer, placing ourselves in the presence of God, our loving Father. We seek healing and forgiveness through repentance and a resolve to sin no more.

Then we review our lives since our last confession, searching our thoughts, words and actions for that which did not conform to God's command to love him and one another through his laws and the laws of his Church. This is called an examination of conscience.

Questions that can help with an examination of conscience can be found at [www.archindy.org/thelightison/guide.html#before](http://www.archindy.org/thelightison/guide.html#before).

## Going to confession

1. The priest gives a blessing or greets the person coming to make a confession.
2. The person going to confession makes the sign of the cross and says, "Bless me father, for I have sinned. My last confession was ..." (give weeks, months, or years).
3. Confess specific sins to the priest. If you are unsure or uneasy, tell him and ask for help.
4. After finishing confessing his or her sins, the person going to confession says to the priest, "I am sorry for these and all my sins."
5. The priest will then give a penance (often some prayers to pray or simple works of mercy to perform), and offer advice to help you become a better Catholic Christian.
6. The person making the confession then prays an act of contrition such as the following: "My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy."
7. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, then absolves the person going to confession from his or her sins.

## After confession

Give thanks to God in prayer for the mercy that he has showered upon you in absolving you of your sins, and seek his grace to avoid those sins in the future. Also, take time soon after confession to perform the penance that the priest assigned during the celebration of the sacrament of penance. †



CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Catholic New World

## CONFESSION

continued from page 1

confession that night.

"I fully expected to sit there for an hour and a half," he said. "I was looking forward to it. I was going to sit there and catch up on homily readings and spiritual readings."

As it turned out, he had a steady stream of people coming to confess their sins and experience the mercy of God through sacramental absolution.

"I was just amazed," Father Craig said. "I was busy the whole time and stayed an extra hour."

His experience of "The Light Is on for You" was not unique. Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Spiritual Life and Worship, said that a "large

majority" of archdiocesan pastors said that the program was a success in 2014.

As a result, "The Light Is on for You" will take place in the archdiocese this year on two days—March 4 and March 18.

From 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. on those days, priests will be available in each parish or parish cluster across central and southern Indiana to celebrate the sacrament of penance. Members of clustered parishes will be informed at which church the sacrament will be available.

Father Michael O'Mara's experience of the program last year went a good bit beyond what happened with Father Craig.

Father O'Mara heard confessions until midnight at St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, where he serves as pastor.

The parish's pastoral associate, Aaron Thomas, whom Father O'Mara jokingly describes as his "boss," was concerned enough about him that he sent him refreshments between confessions.

"I'd been in there for all that time, and it was 10:30," said Father O'Mara with a laugh as he recalled the story. "So



Fr. Michael O'Mara



*"I hope that people are hearing this as an invitation to utilize again a dramatically underutilized sacrament in the Church. My prayer is that it's the beginning of a trend, so that people have access to this great artery of God's mercy in their lives."*

—Father Patrick Beidelman, executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Spiritual Life and Worship



*' "The Light Is on for You" is a reminder that God always leaves the light on. We can always come home and receive the forgiveness we so desire and need. There is no sin too great that God would not forgive.'*

—Father Sean Danda, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Brookville

a kid comes in and he brings me a Diet Coke. I said, 'Well, that was awfully nice of you.' Then the little kid said, 'Well, your boss sent it in because you might need a drink.'

Although he spent nearly six hours hearing confessions well into the night, Father O'Mara enjoyed every minute of it.

"That's when a priest is most being a priest," he said. "When we're hearing confessions and are one-on-one with our people, we're with them in the muck of life.

"Anything that we can do like this connects us with who we are and what our main task is—to be reconciled with one another and with God."

Father Craig thinks that the availability of priests to hear confessions across central and southern Indiana at the same time on the same day encouraged people to experience the sacrament.

"They were impressed with the availability," he said. "We need to be available to people in the best possible times for them. And this seems to be something that works [for them]."

Father Sean Danda, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Brookville, agreed.

"The Light Is on for You" is a reminder that God always leaves the light on," he said. "We can always come home and receive the forgiveness we so desire and need. There is no sin too great that God would not forgive.

"The priest is there to extend that mercy, forgiveness and healing that we need in order to live in the freedom of being children of God."

Father Beidelman hopes that the success of "The Light Is on for You" is a sign that more Catholics are returning to the sacrament of penance.

"I hope that people are hearing this as an invitation to utilize again a dramatically underutilized sacrament in the Church," Father Beidelman said. "My prayer is that it's the beginning of a trend, so that people have access to this great artery of God's mercy in their lives."

(For more information about "The Light Is on for You" in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, log on to [www.archindy.org/thelightison](http://www.archindy.org/thelightison).) †

# Catholic Aviation Association seeks to build, evangelize world of aviation

By Natalie Hoefler

NOBLESVILLE, IND.—In the dark of night over the sea, the F-4 fighter jet was having problems.

“We didn’t know if we could get the aircraft back to the carrier,” recalled Thomas “Wulf” Beckenbauer, who was riding in the backseat as the radio intercept officer.

“The pilot called back to me, ‘OK, Wulf, you need to start praying for us because I’m having a lot of trouble up here.’

“So I’m in the back praying for him to have the wisdom and the skill to land. We finally landed, and he said, ‘OK, God, I can take it from here.’

“We knew it was only by God’s grace that we were able to get back and land.”

Faith and aviation have formed the fabric of most of Tom Beckenbauer’s life.

He and his wife, Joy, now hope to evangelize and build the aviation community through their recently launched non-profit, Catholic Aviation Association (CAA).

The chapter-based organization, which holds an Indianapolis address, provides a way for those interested in learning to fly to do so in a more economical way.

But unlike other aviation-based organizations, CAA includes a faith focus, encouraging members to grow closer to God and live Christ-centered lives.

For Beckenbauer, the organization is the latest chapter in a life that he calls “a very wandering trail.” The journey eventually led him to his wife, his Catholic faith, and the creation of CAA.

## ‘To find the truth’

Tom, a member of St. Maria Goretti Parish in Westfield, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese, admits he wasn’t always faith-filled.

“But once I decided to turn my life over to God and make him my number one priority, I went in search of the best way to do that, to find the truth,” he says.

His search for the truth led to an unexpected destination—marriage.

While taking a class on the Old Testament at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Va., in 1990, he struck up a conversation with Joy, the assistant director of admissions.

“It started out with just casual conversations, but I could soon tell this was a woman who loved God and was committed to his will,” Tom recalls.

As for Joy, the reaction was more immediate.

“I knew from the minute I saw him that God had a place for him in my life,” she says.

Tom and Joy married in 1992.

Beckenbauer retired from the Navy in 1995 at the level of commanding officer. He taught and worked with the Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) at a high school in California, then worked for 10 years as flight operations manager for Federal Express.

Meanwhile, he and Joy continued searching for “the truth” of God.

One night, at a time when the Beckenbauers were members of the Episcopal church, Joy happened to watch “The Journey Home” on the Catholic Eternal Word Television Network.

“They happened to have an Episcopal priest talking about his journey to the Catholic faith,” she said.

“I sat up in bed and said, ‘Oh, no, Lord! You’re not calling us to be Catholic,

are you?’”

Several years later, in 2005, the Beckenbauers were received into full communion with the Catholic Church.

By this time, the couple had moved to Indianapolis for Tom’s job with Federal Express. He was given the task of laying off an entire division—then was laid off himself.

“I basically came to Indianapolis to put myself out of a job,” says Tom, who was 59 at the time.

He started praying about his next step in life, and his desire to combine his faith life with his love for aviation.

## ‘Faith, Flying and Fellowship’

“I had two things going on in my mind,” Tom recalls. “One is, I’d like to do a career in flying, and the second is I want to teach young people, because I had experience teaching the ROTC program.

“I was praying in the adoration chapel. I looked up, and I saw an airplane go by, and I heard the Lord say, ‘Well why don’t you do both? Use aviation to teach people about life and life’s lessons.’

“That was an ‘ah-ha’ moment for me.”

The idea made even more sense to Tom as he considered a troublesome trend in aviation.

“It’s gotten so expensive to fly,” he explains. “And the pilot population ... is all hitting retirement.

“So there’s a huge shortage of pilots and not enough young people getting into it. If you go to college to get a degree in aviation, you’ll spend \$100,000—that’s just to fly. Then there’s another \$50,000 for your education.

“So you’ve got significant debt. The way the airline pay structure is, it’s just not really possible to support yourself and a family.”

The solution, says Tom, is to make learning how to fly more economical.

The structure he and Joy developed for Catholic Aviation Association involves chapters and flying clubs comprising people experienced or interested in aviation.

“The leadership, headquarters, clubs and chapters will be Catholic, that’s a requirement,” Tom says. “However, it’s open to all people of faith.”

The goal of the chapters is for members to support each other spiritually through prayer and faith discussions at each meeting, grow in faith and aviation knowledge, and participate in social activities—fulfilling CAA’s motto of “Faith, Flying and Fellowship.”

“Out of those chapters, we hope to get people who want to develop flying clubs—let’s get an airplane and let’s fly,” says Tom.

He envisions CAA headquarters purchasing planes and leasing them to these “Cupertino Clubs,” named for St. Joseph of Cupertino, who was known for levitating while in prayer or at Mass.

## ‘Connections between flying and God’

The first Cupertino Club started last fall at St. Theodore Guérin High School in Noblesville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese.

Once a week, 17 students gather for prayer and to learn about flying—and its correlation to faith—from Tom and other CAA leaders.

There are a number of such lessons he hopes to impress upon the students.

“You’ve got natural law that affects how you fly an airplane; you’ve got God’s law that affects how you live your life,” Tom explains.

Federal Aviation Association (FAA)



Tom Beckenbauer, middle, discusses the model plane built by Spencer Leonard, holding the model, during a Catholic Aviation Association Cupertino Club meeting at St. Theodore Guérin High School in Noblesville, Ind., in the Lafayette Diocese on Nov. 6, 2014. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

regulations must be abided by for safety reasons. Likewise, he says, “If you get outside of God’s guidelines and laws, including the magisterium and catechism, you can make bad choices that hurt your life.”

Just as the FAA is the authority in the world of aviation, he continues, so God should be the authority in the lives of Christians.

And just as any good pilot goes through a checklist before taking flight, so should each Christian begin their day in prayer. The CAA website, [www.catholicaviation.org](http://www.catholicaviation.org), offers prayer resources, including “Daily Pre-flight” and “Daily Post-flight” checklists.

Tom, Joy and other members involved in starting up the Catholic Aviation Association also seek to teach the Cupertino Club youths.

At each weekly meeting, the students learn about various aspects of aviation. They recently practiced with remote controlled planes. By late spring, Tom hopes to provide glider flight instruction for the students.

“A glider is a great way to learn to fly because you learn all the basics” without having the other components of engine-propelled craft, says Tom.

Matt Farrell, a freshman at Guérin High School and a member of the school’s Cupertino Club, learned about gliders last summer at a two-day camp that Tom led.

“That was my first time in a glider ever,” says Matt. “It was really cool seeing the world from a bird’s eye view. I liked the thrill of it.”

He has enjoyed the weekly club meetings, and not just from an aviation point of view.

“I like the Catholic aspect, too,” he says. “It’s neat seeing connections between flying and God.”

The Cupertino Club started at the right time and place for Brigid Clarey, also a freshman at the school.

“I had an interest in being a pilot, so when I heard about this club, I wanted to join,” she says, paging through an *Aviation for Women* magazine during one of the club’s sessions.

Guérin High School sophomore Spencer Leonard has his eye on the engineering side of aviation.

“I really like aircraft. That’s my glider up there,” he says, pointing to a model hanging from the ceiling of the physics classroom where the Cupertino Club meets. “I like the idea of engineering.

There are a lot of connections between aviation and engineering.”

Michael Green, whose son is a member of the club, is a maintenance test pilot for United Airlines.

“I think [CAA] is great,” he says. “I think it’s beautiful that these kids can integrate faith and a career, their vocation, and ask our Lord, ‘Is this what you want me to do?’”

## ‘A journey of discovery’

With their first chapter and Cupertino Club in place, Catholic Aviation Association is looking to expand—a lot.

“The vision I had for [CAA] was so big it scared Tom for a while,” admits Joy, who has extensive computer and organizational experience. “My thought was to go international with this eventually.”

She says running the organization has become almost a full-time job for her and Tom. So to accomplish their goal of expanding and eventually purchasing planes for Cupertino clubs to rent, they are launching a “3-3-3” campaign.

“We’re trying to raise \$3,000 to help the Guerin Cupertino Club effort,” Tom explains. “We’re looking to get \$30,000 to hire a part-time assistant and support six months of headquarter operations [which include administration, accounting, training, safety oversight and more], and another \$300,000 to cover another year of operating costs and establish the first Cupertino club with an airplane.”

With a plane to lease to flying clubs, says Tom, CAA will be better able to keep existing pilots flying, bring young people into aviation and rebuild the pilot population.

As CAA literature notes, this allows for “affordable flying [while] affirming values.”

The launching of Catholic Aviation Association has been a nine-year journey.

“CAA is a lot of little strands that God has only revealed to us over time as internal spiritual development was happening in me and Joy,” says Tom.

He likens the journey to a lesson he’s learned through flying.

“In aviation, you’re always making different trips,” he says. “We’re on a journey of discovery.”

(For more information on Catholic Aviation Association, including how to start a chapter, Cupertino Club or to make a donation, log on to [www.catholicaviation.org](http://www.catholicaviation.org).) †

## Public is invited to CAA meeting on Feb. 28 at Lions Club in Carmel

The Carmel Deanery Chapter of the Catholic Aviation Association (CAA) is hosting a breakfast buffet and meeting from 8:30-10:30 a.m. on Feb. 28 at the Lions Club, 141 E. Main St., in Carmel, Ind. The public is invited to attend.

After breakfast, there will be a presentation of CAA’s plans to support all who are interested or

involved in any aspect of aviation while establishing an environment that promotes faith, flying and fellowship.

If you love aviation and flying, you are invited to see the group’s plan that supports general aviation, provides for affordable flying and charts a path to a pilot’s license for those who want to learn to fly.

A \$5 donation is requested for all attendees older

than 14 years of age. Please RSVP by Feb. 25 with the number of people in your party by sending an e-mail to [CAA@CatholicAviation.org](mailto:CAA@CatholicAviation.org) with “CAA Chapter Meeting” in the subject line. Also, visit the website at [www.CatholicAviation.org](http://www.CatholicAviation.org) and sign up to receive the CAA newsletter.

For more information, call (317) 662-4359. †

# Bishop says ruling means Church not free 'to practice what we preach'

PITTSBURGH (CNS)—A three-judge panel's Feb. 11 ruling on a court challenge to the federal contraceptive, sterilization and abortifacient mandate "says that the Church is no longer free to practice what we preach," Pittsburgh Bishop David A. Zubik said.

The panel of the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a decision by a federal judge last November to grant the Pittsburgh and Erie dioceses a temporary injunction against enforcement of the mandate.

Under the federal health care law, most employers, including religious ones, are required to cover employees' artificial birth control, sterilization and abortion-causing drugs, even if employers are morally opposed to such coverage.

"I am deeply disappointed in this decision," Bishop Zubik said in a statement. "Such a ruling should cause deep concern for anyone who cares about any First Amendment rights, especially the right to teach and practice a religious faith. Some of our Catholic beliefs are countercultural.

"Our employees work for us understanding that and, in many cases,

giving thanks that they work for an institution that upholds those very values."

The Pittsburgh and Erie dioceses filed suit against the federal government over the mandate citing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The appeals panel ruling would require Catholic institutions, such as Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, to facilitate access to contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization coverage through its employee health care plans, or else face massive fines.

The Pittsburgh and Erie dioceses "maintain that the mandate to facilitate actions that the Church deems immoral will create a substantial burden on the free exercise of religious beliefs," said a news release from the Pittsburgh Diocese.

The panel's ruling, written by Judge Marjorie Rendell, said the court found that the regulations did not impose a substantial burden on the religious organizations.

The court also disagreed with the U.S. District Court's conclusion last



*'I am deeply disappointed in this decision. Such a ruling should cause deep concern for anyone who cares about any First Amendment rights, especially the right to teach and practice a religious faith. Some of our Catholic beliefs are countercultural.'* —Bishop David A. Zubik

November that the regulations improperly divided the Catholic Church into two tiers with houses of worship getting an exemption, and related religious organizations getting lesser protection. The court also reversed the order granting an injunction for Geneva College in its case. The Geneva case had been consolidated on appeal with the dioceses' cases.

The Pittsburgh Diocese said Bishop Zubik and his advisers were studying the opinion with their legal counsel, and would decide whether to ask for a rehearing of the suit by the full appeals court or to file a petition for a review in the U.S. Supreme Court.

Only those religious employers

that meet narrow criteria set by the Obama administration are exempt from the mandate.

Nonexempt religious employers can opt out of providing the coverage using what the administration calls a "work around." They must notify Health and Human Services (HHS) in writing of their religious objections. Then HHS or the Department of Labor in turn tells insurers and third-party administrators that they must cover the services at no charge to employees.

But many religious groups object to the notification, saying they still would be complicit in supporting practices they oppose. †

# Pennsylvania governor puts off executions, says system 'riddled with flaws'

PHILADELPHIA (CNS)—Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia praised the announcement by Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf on Feb. 13 that he is granting a reprieve for death-row inmate Terrence Williams, who was scheduled to be executed on March 4.

In a memo, Wolf said he would extend the reprieve to each of the 186 inmates on the state's death row as their scheduled executions approach, all pending the outcome of a study of the use of the death penalty in Pennsylvania.

Archbishop Chaput said he was grateful to Wolf "for choosing to take a deeper look into these studies, and I pray we can find a better way to punish those who are guilty of these crimes.

"Turning away from capital punishment does not diminish our support for the families of murder victims. They bear a terrible burden of grief, and they rightly

demand justice," said the archbishop. "But killing the guilty does not honor the dead nor does it ennoble the living. When we take a guilty person's life, we only add to the violence in an already violent culture, and we demean our own dignity in the process."

Wolf said there was no question Williams was guilty of the 1984 murder he committed at age 18, and for which he was convicted and sentenced to death in 1986. But the governor said he was granting the reprieve "because the capital punishment system has significant and widely recognized defects."

The governor cited the "unending cycle of death warrants and appeals," the cost to the judicial system for the appeals process and the surfacing of painful memories for victims' families in each step of the process.

He also noted instances of miscarried justice due to

flawed convictions and sentencing in several cases.

In the 40 years since Pennsylvania reinstated the death penalty, governors have signed 434 warrants, but only three executions were performed.

"If the commonwealth of Pennsylvania is going to take the irrevocable step of executing a human being, its capital sentencing system must be infallible," Wolf said. "Pennsylvania's system is riddled with flaws, making it error prone, expensive and anything but infallible."

The reprieves would remain in effect at least until Wolf has reviewed a forthcoming report of the Pennsylvania Task Force and Advisory Committee on Capital Punishment.

"I take this action only after significant consideration and reflection," he said. "There is perhaps no more weighty a responsibility assigned to the governor than his or her role as the final check in the capital punishment process." †



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### Lenten programs at Fatima Retreat House and The Benedict Inn

March 9, 2015

#### Quenching Your Spiritual Thirst

##### An 'FBI: Fatima/Benedict Inn or Faith Building Institutions' Evening of Reflection with Sr. Betty Drewes, OSB

The 'FBI' invites you to Fatima Retreat House for an evening of reflection for Lent. Through the teachings shared by the desert Fathers and Mothers, Sr. Betty will help the participants expand their journey through Lent. This time of prayer, penance, and preparation for Easter will be enhanced by the wisdom they left us as their legacy. Come and explore ways to quench your spiritual thirst by integrating their legacy and enriching your personal journey toward Christ!

\$30 per person includes dinner, the program and materials. Mass will be celebrated. This program will be held at Fatima Retreat House.  
5:00 pm Mass / 6:00 pm Dinner

The program concludes no later than 9:00 pm  
To register for this program, please go to [www.archindy.org/fatima](http://www.archindy.org/fatima)

March 30, 2015

#### St. Teresa of Avila

##### An 'FBI: Fatima/Benedict Inn or Faith Building Institutions' Evening of Reflection with Fr. Mark O'Keefe

This program will be held at the Benedict Inn. For more information and to register, please contact the Benedict Inn at 317-788-7581.



Scan the QR code to view the full calendar of events and more information.



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## Detachment, discernment can lead to growth in faith

By David Gibson

I suspect most people know what it feels like to be pulled in two directions at once. I know I do.

Lent for many of us is a story of being pulled in two directions at once. From one side, a not-distant Easter pulls us forward into Lent with a message about a new creation and the countless possibilities it holds for renewing personal, family and community life.

From the other side, however, powerful forces pull in a quite different direction. They argue that Lent next year might be a better time to pursue answers to questions we have about faith, to find some way to give care to people who suffer or hunger, or to flesh out our vision of what Christian life is all about.

The problem is that we are human beings with limited energies, strengths and time. We do not accomplish all that we wish. Why? Because responsibilities and commitments of all kinds press upon us, and it takes so much effort just to prevent chaos from taking over our households and work.

So we may not feel entirely free to pursue the noble dream of Lenten renewal now. But are we freer than we think? Could we become freer?

Personal freedom is limited in hundreds of ways: by fears of what others might think of us; by workaholicism that leaves us no disposable time; or by a too-rigorous adherence to our daily routine at home that can be enslaving.

The list is endless. Freedom is hemmed in by Internet addictions that consume us, or by old angers blocking our pathway to present-day happiness. Then there is the situation created when we do not communicate with those we love about the aspirations of our souls, depriving us of the support they might otherwise provide.

This brings me to a curious term in the Christian lexicon starting with the letter “d,” a word heard infrequently nowadays though it is relevant for anyone hoping to undertake a Lenten journey toward new life and freedom: “detachment.”

This and another little-understood term beginning with the letter “d”—“discernment”—often are proposed as ways of resolving issues that hold people back from growing as Christians.

Through Christian detachment, people zero in on God’s centrality in their lives. The challenge is to detach from whatever keeps God at arm’s length, like an excessive attachment to one’s own way of planning and doing things. Stated that way, little room is left for God’s voice, his way of doing things or his surprises.

Of course, Christians are not called to detach from caring about their own lives. Neither are they called to devalue their God-given talents. Baptism actually calls Christians to put their best talents to good use, though not selfishly.

Neither is a detached Christian someone who is cold and unfeeling—detached, that is, from the needs of others.



Evening light shines on a crucifix in the vestibule of St. Paul’s Basilica in Toronto in this 2008 file photo. During the season of Lent, Catholics are called on to practice the virtue of detachment to help redirect their energy to focus on following God’s will, which is often discovered through prayerful discernment. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

Many today, especially those familiar with a popular slogan of the 12-step programs calling people to “let go and let God,” are more likely to speak of “letting go” than of “detaching” from a habit, lifestyle or fear that limits and holds them back. The message, though, is similar.

If we can identify an internal or external force that tugs us away from renewing our lives, will we find, particularly with the support of others and over time, that we are able to let go of it? Is it possible, for example, to let go of some demanding daily task that eats up the bit of time we might like to invest in Lenten spirituality?

Lent is a time when the faithful are invited to attempt to let go of something troublesome that keeps them from turning toward the Lord of Easter, who calls them in a new direction, calls them to ongoing conversion.

But how do people know the new direction God wants for them? This is where discernment enters the picture. For Christians, discernment is a process of paying close attention both to all that it is good, and to whatever is troubling in their lives in order to detect the voice of God speaking here

and now.

In a pastoral letter issued at the end of 2014, Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster, England, discussed Christian discernment. Basic to this process, he suggested, are questions such as:

What makes me fearful and anxious? What warms my heart of faith? What is wrong and needs forgiveness? Where is God present and working in my life?

That final question might easily set the tone for reflection throughout the days of Lent. The challenge comes in realizing that God’s voice is heard not just in tranquil, peaceful moments, but in the midst of troubles and moments of feeling overwhelmed or lost.

Powerful forces may pull people in one direction, but God, “present and at work” in their lives, also tugs at them, urging them to detach from fears and anxieties, and to open up to the renewal of their lives.

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

## Lent helps Catholics reorder their priorities and ‘put God first’

By Fr. Lawrence Mick

One of the more difficult sayings of Jesus is found in the Gospel according to St. Luke: “If any one comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my



Jennifer Perlick, right, delivers some of her possessions to a Boulder, Colo., donation center in 2010. Many Catholics try to practice the virtue of detachment during Lent by giving something up, or donating some of their possessions as a way of making sure those things don’t control their lives. (CNS photo/Rick Giase, EPA)

disciple” (Lk 14:26-27).

Does Jesus really expect us to hate our families? The 1970 edition of the *New American Bible* translated Luke this way: “If anyone comes to me without turning his back on his father and mother ...”

Jesus is not advocating hate, but Luke uses stark language to make the point forcefully. The issue really is who comes first in our lives.

A little later in the same chapter, Jesus insists that “everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple” (Lk 14:33). Like family members, possessions can get in the way of doing the will of God.

The same point is made in the Gospel according to Matthew, but here the language is a bit softer and perhaps clearer: “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me” (Mt 10:37-38).

So the issue really is not “hating,” but “loving less.” Anytime that we love anyone or anything more than we love God, we have our priorities mixed up. Jesus calls us to put God first, above everyone and everything else. And that’s really the point of the virtue we call detachment.

Detachment is the opposite of attachment. If we get too attached to someone or something, we cannot let

that person or object go, even when such letting go is necessary. So practicing detachment means practicing letting go.

Many Catholics have tried to practice detachment during Lent by giving up something they like or something to which they have become too attached. Giving up coffee or candy or smoking can be a way to make sure that those things don’t control our lives.

But we might want to look a bit more deeply at other things or habits or relationships that keep us from following Christ completely. It may be there that we really need to learn detachment.

We must be detached enough from other people and possessions, Jesus insists, that they cannot interfere with following God’s will.

The issue comes into focus when someone in our lives urges us to do something that pulls us away from God. Who comes first, that person or God? Or it may be attachment to our possessions that keeps us from helping the needy as Christ commands us. Again, what comes first, our wealth and possessions or the will of God?

So don’t hate anybody, but stay detached enough from everything and everyone who is not God that you can always put the love of God first in your life. Then love everyone and everything else as God loves them.

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

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

## Jesus began his mission along the Jordan River

“Bye, Mom. I’ll be gone for a couple months, but I promise to be back in time



for the wedding in Cana.”

We can imagine Jesus saying something like that to Mary sometime either in the year 26 or 29 A.D., although, of course, the year wouldn’t have been called that.

Rather, according to Luke’s Gospel, it was during the 15th year of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius (Lk 3:1), which would have made it 29 A.D.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke have Jesus’s public life lasting only one year. John’s Gospel, though, reports three Passovers before Jesus’s death and resurrection in the year 30. If this is true, Jesus’s goodbye to his mother would have occurred in 26 A.D.

Furthermore, in John’s Gospel, we see the statement, “This temple has been under construction for 46 years” (Jn 2:20). Since the Temple was started

by King Herod in 18 B.C., that statement must have been made in the year 28.

Since many scholars believe that Jesus was born in 6 or 7 B.C. (since Herod died in 4 B.C.), he would have been about 32 or 33 in the year 26. Luke says he was “about 30” when he began his ministry (Lk 3:23).

Jesus left Nazareth after he learned that his cousin John was preaching and baptizing on the lower Jordan River, near Jericho. So Jesus walked to the Sea of Galilee, where he likely joined a caravan down the Jordan Valley along the east side of the Jordan River to avoid Samaria. It was in the territory of Perea, which is in present-day Jordan. It would have taken about a week.

When he met John, he asked him to baptize him. As he was coming out of the water after the baptism, he heard God’s voice telling him, “You are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased” (Mk 1:11).

Then, as reported in the Gospel that is read at Masses this weekend, Jesus went on a 40-day retreat in the desert to meditate about what his Father’s will was

for him, what his mission was to be. He was also tempted by the devil.

A Greek Orthodox monastery was built in 1874 on the eastern side of the Mount of Temptation, over the cave thought to be where Jesus stayed and was tempted by the devil.

After his 40 days in the desert, Jesus learned that John had moved up to Bethany Across the Jordan, or Batanea, near the Sea of Galilee, at a tributary of the Jordan called the Yarmuk River. Jesus followed, and this is where he was introduced to two of John’s disciples, one of whom was Andrew. Andrew, in turn, introduced him to his brother Simon, whom Jesus renamed Peter.

All this time Jesus had been somewhere along the Jordan River, the eastern border of Palestine.

Then, John reports, the next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee, although he doesn’t say where in Galilee. Here he found Philip, who in turn found Nathanael. So now Jesus had a few disciples.

Then he kept his word to his mother, going to Cana for the wedding. †

Your Family/Bill Dodds

## The challenges of Lent after the death of a spouse

Lent has a way of sneaking up on all of us each year. It can be especially hard if you’ve recently lost a loved one.



On Ash Wednesday two years ago, shortly after my wife died of uterine cancer, I was determined to get to Mass and receive the ashes on my forehead. But as I drove

closer to church, thoughts of the annual reminder, “Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return,” were just too much for me.

I drove to the cemetery where Monica is buried and prayed and cried there. Later that morning, I was still wishing I had been able to get to Mass and receive the ashes when I headed to the assisted-living facility/nursing home where Monica’s mother and my mom lived.

As I walked onto the nursing home floor where my mother was being cared for, the chaplain, a nun, gave me a big, smudgy thumbs-up from down the hallway. She was distributing ashes to the residents. Would I like to receive them?

I was close to tears, an oh-so familiar sensation.

Yes!  
And to receive holy Communion?  
Yes, yes, yes!

I realized that on a day when I couldn’t get to church and to the Eucharist, Christ and his church came to me.

I went on to have lunch with my mom and to spend some time with my mother-in-law in her apartment. On my way home, I stopped by an electronics store and bought a PlayStation 3 video game console.

I started that Lent with a new toy, something that was out of keeping with the penitential season, a little silly for someone my age, out of character for me,

and a wonderful distraction. A way to call a “timeout” from the overwhelming thoughts, emotions and necessary tasks associated with the death of a spouse.

Those 40 days were, without a doubt, a time of prayer and a time of reflection on life and death. But it was also a period of long walks, grief-support group meetings and hours playing video games. (Again and again saving the world from space aliens or earthly monsters!)

It was a challenge that, at the time, seemed completely impossible.

I’m telling this story for those who have recently lost their loved one, for those who would like to mark this Lent as they have in the past but just can’t.

God knows. God understands. God is with you. Right here. Right now. Be kind to yourself. Be patient. And, sometimes, be pleasantly surprised.

(Bill Dodds writes for Catholic News Service.) †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

## Ecumenism includes personal conversion, institutional renewal

To argue. To debate. To dialogue. These are very different means by which ideas are shared.



Arguments more often than not are a contest often fraught with emotion.

Debates are more formal “contests,” less about emotion yet by their nature involve a winner and a loser.

Dialogues are formal. What emotion there may be is passion for the truth. They have ground rules, most importantly respect for the person with whom one is in dialogue, and respect for the truth they speak from their knowledge, and in the case of religious dialogue, their faith.

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, there was little formal dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian communities or other religions. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation were steeped in debate, at best. “Being right” was seen essential. Therefore, there had to be a winner.

Pope Pius XII cautiously opened the possibility of dialogue. St. John XXIII widened the avenues of dialogue through calling the “ecumenical council” known as Vatican II. Official representatives of various Christian traditions were present during the sessions. They did not speak, though their reactions and input were

sought in informal gatherings.

Two documents of the Council in particular lead to official dialogues being established: the “Decree on Ecumenism” (“*Unitatis Redintegratio*,” 1964), and the “Declaration on Religious Freedom” (“*Dignitatis Humanae*,” 1965).

Cardinal Walter Kasper, president emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, wrote the following in a 2003 reflection “Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue”: “Ecumenical dialogue is a dialogue between those who believe in Jesus Christ and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, but belong to different Churches often contradicting each other in matters of faith, church structures and morals.”

He went on to say: “... ecumenical dialogue must be understood as a Spirit guided spiritual process and as one way in which the Church grows in insight into the once and for all revealed truth, and advances towards a fuller understanding of divine truth.”

The “Decree on Ecumenism,” Cardinal Kasper states, “presents three dimensions of ecumenical dialogue. Firstly, there is theological dialogue, where experts explain the beliefs of each individual Church, so that their characteristics become clearer, and better mutual understanding is fostered.

“The second dimension involves practical cooperation and especially common prayer, and represents the very

heart of the ecumenical movement. This aspect of dialogue encompasses not only academic theological dialogue, but the whole life of the Church and of all the faithful.

“The third dimension is renewal and reform of our own Church, so that she becomes more fully an authentic sign and witness of the Gospel and an invitation for other Christians.” There cannot be ecumenism without personal conversion and institutional renewal.

“The ecumenism *ad extra*, the dialogue with the other Churches and ecclesial communities, presupposes therefore the ecumenism *ad intra*, learning from each other and self-reform. Full communion cannot be achieved by convergence alone but also, and perhaps even more so, by conversion which implies repentance, forgiveness and renewal of heart. Such a conversion is a gift of grace.”

Over the next several months, this column will explore this vital spiritual and theological exercise begun some 50 years ago. Much has been accomplished. Yet challenges and hurdles remain.

But I am confident that the Spirit is at work, and will one day bring us to unity in Christ.

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism. He is also dean of the Terre Haute deanery and pastor of St. Patrick and St. Margaret Mary parishes, both in Terre Haute.) †

Catholic Education Outreach/

Erin Jeffries

## Crossing the culture gap

“In the diversity of peoples who experience the gift of God, each in accordance with its own culture, the Church expresses her genuine catholicity and shows forth the beauty of her varied face” (“*Evangelii Gaudium*,” #116).

A few weeks ago I was attending Pastoral Week, a conference/retreat geared toward deaf and hard-of-hearing Catholics and those who



work in ministry with deaf and hard-of-hearing Catholics.

Though there were hearing speakers and participants, and Mass, prayer, talks and meetings were either interpreted or voiced, the majority of the communication took place in American Sign Language—

something I know a little of, but definitely not proficient in.

This meant that to communicate with most of the people around me, it required patience, a little creativity, and/or asking for help. In short, I experienced being on the other end of a language barrier.

Yet, it provided a great opportunity to observe and listen and engage with a vibrant community and culture. I learned a lot—from remembering to look at the speaker rather than the interpreter, the importance of visibility, and what a silent Mass looks like! I also saw and heard many things: a group of people who love to laugh, dance and talk, and who are so happy to be together as a community of faith.

I also heard a good deal of sadness: communities whose parishes have been closed, or who have been moved to different parishes several times, something that was well intentioned, but often done without consultation.

People asked loving, but tough questions: Why aren’t more resources at least captioned? How do we participate in service, when so often liturgy, classes, meetings and trainings are not accessible to us? What is the deaf Catholic’s role in the new evangelization: who exactly are we to “go to?”

I left with many thoughts and ideas, new connections, and a deep admiration for this amazing community of people.

Just days after returning, I took part in a workshop, called “Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers.” The three day conference explored five guidelines laid out by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for intercultural competence in ministry.

Now, within the framework of racial and ethnic diversity, we were talking about the very same issues. We learned through documents, such as the one above, about the rich beauty of and the value in the Church’s diversity. We gained a greater understanding of what makes a culture distinct, and how it shapes people in visible and not so visible ways.

Culture affects the ways in which we communicate and work with each other, and to work with different groups implies knowing those parameters. Are they a more individualist or collectivist group? Is it a culture of hierarchy or equality? What is a culture’s tolerance for ambiguity? And what is their time orientation like?

We saw that to effectively reach out to other cultures, we have to first look reality in the face and acknowledge obstacles that would get in the way of effective relationships, looking first at ourselves, our own fears, ignorance and perhaps guilt. Then we are able to take steps toward an environment that is hospitable to others, and in which we can truly work together and learn from one another.

When we begin to engage and build a relationship with the different communities around us, whether Latino or African-American, persons with disabilities, or the deaf Catholic community, we are all enriched, and through the Holy Spirit can come to a “a multifaceted and inviting harmony” (“*Evangelii Gaudium*,” #117).

(Erin Jeffries works in the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education (OCE) as Coordinator of Ministry to People with Special Needs. For more information on how OCE is raising awareness of disabilities, sharing inclusion techniques and resourcing specialized approaches such as SPRED, contact Erin at [ejeffries@archindy.org](mailto:ejeffries@archindy.org).) †

First Sunday of Lent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

# Sunday Readings

Sunday, February 22, 2015

- Genesis 9:8-15
- 1 Peter 3:18-22
- Mark 1:12-15

The first reading, from the Book of Genesis, presents the familiar story of Noah. It is a story of contrasts and of the consequences of these contrasts. Noah was faithful to God, whereas the world almost universally was not.



God protected Noah from the doom to which the sinful world succumbed. Warned by God, Noah took his family and pairs of various animals onto a ship, traditionally called the ark, that Noah constructed. As the floodwaters ebbed, the ark settled on dry land. By God's help, all aboard Noah's ark survived.

God assures Noah, and all people, that he would never again allow a flood to destroy the Earth. God promises a covenant with Noah's people. Under this covenant, or solemn agreement, the people would obey God's law. In turn, God would protect them from peril.

It is the foundational story of all that would be revealed in the long history of salvation. Sin destroys. God gives life itself to the faithful.

The second reading is from the First Epistle of St. Peter. It states that it was composed in Babylon, likely a symbol of Rome, the mighty, magnificent-to-behold imperial capital, but also the center of paganism and of the impious culture of the time.

Roman Christians at the time needed encouragement. This epistle provided such encouragement by recalling the faithfulness of Noah. God protects and saves the faithful, who in baptism and in holiness identify themselves with Jesus.

St. Mark's Gospel furnishes the last reading. It is very brief, only a few verses. But its brevity gives it drama and a directness to its message.

Use of the number 40 is revealing, suggesting as it does the 40 days spent by

Moses in the desert before God gave him the law on Sinai. Jesus is the bearer of God's holy word, as was Moses. Jesus is concentrated in the task of serving God as was Moses in his time.

That wild beasts were all about was no literary figment but a reality, as it is today in the Judean desert. Yet, angels protected Jesus. Mark does not lose the chance to assert that Jesus is the Son of God.

At last, indicated by John's arrest and his removal from the role of prophet, the culmination of salvation awaits. Jesus steps forward, proclaiming that the reign of God will be seen. The Lord calls upon the people to repent. "The time of fulfillment" is at hand (Mk 1:15). God will be vindicated. Jesus has come to set everything in balance. The sinful will be laid low. The good will endure.

## Reflection

The Church has begun Lent, the most intense period in its year of calling its people to union with God. While Ash Wednesday was the first day of Lent, many Catholics will begin the Lenten process with this weekend's Mass.

The readings call people to face the facts of life as humans, of good and evil, and of the products of good and evil.

Regardless of the exact details of the flood described in Genesis, so often discussed and indeed questioned on scientific grounds, the religious message of Noah and his ark is clear. It supplies a fitting beginning to reflection for Lent. Sin, the willful rejection of God, leads necessarily and always to destruction.

The message of Christ is never, in the end, filled with woe and despair. God offers eternal life and peace. For those who fail, God is forgiving and merciful, so long as the wayward see their faults and ask for mercy.

Essential to asking for forgiveness is to acknowledge personal sin. We must delve deeply into our hearts and minds, and scrutinize what we have done.

We must focus. We must be frank with ourselves. For these purposes, we now begin our 40 days of concentration upon salvation. †

## Daily Readings

### Monday, February 23

St. Polycarp, bishop and martyr  
Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18  
Psalm 19:8-10, 15  
Matthew 25:31-46

### Tuesday, February 24

Isaiah 55:10-11  
Psalm 34:4-7, 16-19  
Matthew 6:7-15

### Wednesday, February 25

Jonah 3:1-10  
Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19  
Luke 11:29-32

### Thursday, February 26

Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25  
Psalm 138:1-3, 7c-8  
Matthew 7:7-12

### Friday, February 27

Ezra 18:21-28  
Psalm 130:1-8  
Matthew 5:20-26

### Saturday, February 28

Deuteronomy 26:16-19  
Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8  
Matthew 5:43-48

### Sunday, March 1

Second Sunday of Lent  
Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18  
Psalm 116:10, 15-19  
Romans 8:31b-34  
Mark 9:2-10

## Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

# The Gospel of St. John used less in Sunday Mass readings than other Gospels

**Q**I must confess first to a bias because John the Evangelist is my baptismal patron saint, but I have always wondered why—in the A, B and C cycles of Scriptural readings for Sunday Mass—the rotation includes only the Gospels written by Matthew, Mark and Luke. (Wisconsin)



**A**Prior to the Second Vatican Council, the same readings were used every year for the Sunday Masses. The first reading was usually from one of the epistles, and the Gospel readings were most often taken from Matthew or John, less frequently from Luke and only rarely from Mark.

The bishops of Vatican II declared that "the treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's word" ("Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," #51).

The result is the *Lectionary* as we have it today, with a three-year cycle of Sunday readings. Year A uses the Gospel of Matthew for the most part. In year B, the Gospel of Mark (the shortest of the Gospels) is used, along with Chapter 6 of the Gospel of John. Year C uses Luke's Gospel. In all three years, the Gospel of John is read during the Easter season.

John's Gospel stands out among the four in that it is more deeply theological and sometimes pastorally difficult, which would help to explain why it is not used in the Sunday Scripture readings as often as the other three.

Some Scripture scholars do feel, though, that the readings from John are underrepresented in the present version of the *Lectionary* used at Sunday Masses—e.g., John's accounts of the call of Philip and Nathanael and of Christ's post-resurrection appearance to Mary Magdalene are not used at all.

**Q**A close friend of mine died recently at the age of 77. He was very active in the Church, involved in several parish ministries and outwardly seemed always happy, enjoying a near-perfect life. I did know that he had some family, health and business problems, but most people didn't have even a hint of that. He was universally respected and revered.

To my great dismay, his persona was dismantled by our pastor, who said in his funeral homily: "[Name omitted] recently

came into my office and opened his heart, telling me that he had physical, emotional, psychological and family problems. Who could think that this man who was always smiling—friendly and ready to help everyone—had so many serious issues?"

I was shocked that a priest would reveal a private conversation, and saddened that my friend's shining armor was tarnished for no reason. No one wanted to hear anything but the best about this beloved friend and brother. Did our pastor overstep his bounds and the vow of confessional privacy when he stepped on my friend? (City of origin withheld.)

**A**First (and foremost), your last sentence mentions "confessional privacy." I am quite certain that nothing your pastor said in his homily had been revealed to him in the context of your friend's confessing his sins. Every priest I have ever known recognizes the sacredness of that seal and guards it carefully.

When the homilist mentioned the man's "problems," he probably meant to praise him for carrying himself with apparent joy even while dealing internally with such difficulties. Your question does serve, though, as a valuable caution for priests. Before delivering a homily, a priest ought always to imagine how his words might be received by people in the pews.

Funeral homilies demand a particular delicacy. If the issues the deceased dealt with are common knowledge, a reference might be proper. If, however, the congregation is largely unaware of such matters, they are best left unmentioned.

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at [askfatherdoyle@gmail.com](mailto:askfatherdoyle@gmail.com) and 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.) †

## My Journey to God

# An Ash Wednesday Life

By Natalie Hoefler

The ashes are traced  
In a cross upon my forehead.  
I know the cross is there,  
But I cannot see it.

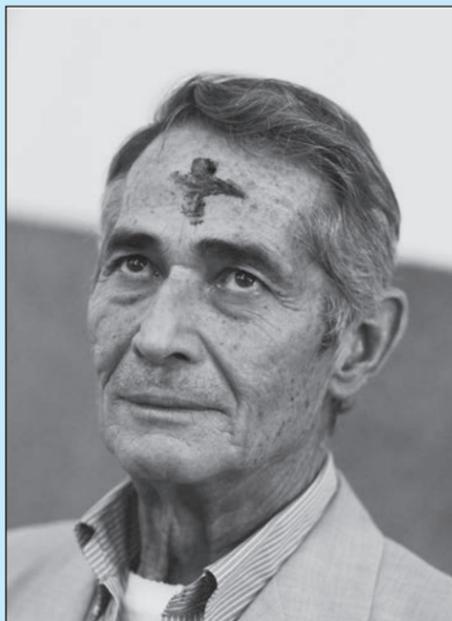
I even forget about it,  
Remembering only when  
An accidental touch  
Leaves my fingers stained.

But I see others' crosses,  
Drawn across brows  
Sometimes creased with  
Lines of worry and concern.

Would that it were this way  
Beyond the first day of Lent—  
That I would be more aware  
Of others' crosses than of my own.

Lord, help me live  
An Ash Wednesday life,  
Aware of those around me  
And not focused on myself.

Give me a heart that seeks  
Not relief from my own burdens,  
But to be a Simon to others  
As they bear their crosses.



Natalie Hoefler is a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and is a reporter for The Criterion. A man is seen with a cross on his forehead after receiving ashes during Ash Wednesday Mass at the cathedral in Guatemala City on March 5, 2014. (CNS photo/ Jorge Dan Lopez, Reuters)

## Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

The Criterion invites readers to submit original prose or poetry relating to faith or experiences of prayer for possible publication in the "My Journey to God" column.

Seasonal reflections also are appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to "My Journey to God," The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to [nhoefler@archindy.org](mailto:nhoefler@archindy.org). †

# 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.

**BOESCH, Roy**, 92, St. Andrew, Richmond, Jan. 30. Husband of Pauline Boesch. Father of Melinda Antrim, Celeste Chandler and Cameron Boesch. Stepfather of Cheryl Kaufman, Donna Walter, Gary and Kim Kutche. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of 20.

**COOKE, Dolores K.**, 93, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Jan. 30. Mother of Patrice Hughes, Jeanine Skirvin, Dennis, Doug and Larry Cooke. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of nine.

**FRELJE, Elizabeth**, 80, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Jan. 26. Wife of Thomas Freije.

Mother of Maria Armstrong, Ruth Semmler and Keith Freije. Grandmother of 13.

**HAFFNER, John M.**, 83, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Jan. 26. Husband of Susan Haffner. Father of Carol Hackman, Helen West, Paula and Steven Haffner. Brother of Nancy Boylan and Colette Haffner. Grandfather of five.

**HUFF, Barbara J.**, 92, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Jan. 23. Mother of Lana Miller and Michael Huff. Grandmother of one. Great-grandmother of two.

**MACK, David B.**, 53, St. Louis, Batesville, Jan. 24. Father of Amy and Justin Brine and Will Mack. Son of James and Mary Mack. Brother of Anne Schebler, Mary Trenkamp, Margaret, Susan, Joseph, Peter, Thomas, Timothy and William Mack. Grandfather of two.

**MASTROPAOLO, Dorothy**, 80, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bright, Jan. 19. Mother of Tonia Eidam, Dante III, David and Timothy Mastropaolo. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 13.

**MEYER, Marilyn R.**, 92, St. Barnabas, Indianapolis, Feb. 2. Mother of Daniel Myers. Grandmother of one.

**MILES, Margaret Jane (Ryan)**, 91, St. Augustine, Jeffersonville, Dec. 19. Mother of Jeanne Marie Crosier, Carol Dunn, Mary Lou Metcalfe, Janie Pillott, Joe Jr., Mike and Robert Miles. Grandmother of 16. Great-grandmother of 24.

**NAGEL, Chester K.**, 79, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Jan. 29. Father of Carla Mertz, Cheryl Sheeks and Craig Nagel. Brother of Mary Jo Castaldo, Kathleen and Edward Nagel Sr. Grandfather of six.

**PITCHKITES, Edward T.**, 83, Sacred Heart, Clinton, Jan. 24. Husband of JoAnn Pitchkites. Father of Kim Bruce and Kevin Pitchkites. Brother of Lillian Campbell and Joyce Shew. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of one.

**RIEGER, Eugene F.**, 93, St. Joseph, Corydon, Jan. 15. Father of Kathleen and Thomas Rieger. Grandfather of two. Great-grandfather of three.

**RILEY, Wanda Rose**, 79, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, Jan. 23. Mother of Clara Spurr, Donna Workman, J. Patrick, Ronald, Thomas and William Riley. Sister of Jeanette Allen, Mary Martin and Sara Simms. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of seven.

**SANQUENETTI, Joyce**, 88, Sacred Heart, Clinton, Jan. 17. Mother of Linda Farrington. Grandmother of one. Great-grandmother of two.

**SIMMERMEYER, Viola C.**, 93, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Jan. 31. Wife of Louis Simmermeyer. Mother of Mary Beth Welsh. Sister of Jim Moorman. Grandmother of two.

**SURENKAMP, Barbara Jean**, 83, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Indianapolis, Jan. 27. Wife of Willis Bohall. Mother of Rebecca Galyean, Karen Hacker, Kathleen Robinson, Donald, James, John, Michael, Ronald and Stephen Surenkamp. Sister of Margaret, Charlie, George, Jim and John Miller. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 15.

**WEISS, Mary Jeanette**, 89, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City, Jan. 30. Mother of Jane Bennett, Carolyn Myers, Teresa Tannyhill, Margaret Wynn, Luke, Mark, Matt and Mike Weiss. Grandmother of 23. Great-grandmother of 21. Great-great-grandmother of two.

**ZELLER, Sondra**, 67, St. Mary, Rushville, Jan. 23. Mother of Shelby Metze and Phillip Zeller. Grandmother of one. †

## Franciscan Sister Alice Ann Deardorff served in Catholic schools for more than 50 years

Franciscan Sister Alice Ann Deardorff died on Jan. 23 at the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Oldenburg. She was 89.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 26 at the Motherhouse Chapel in Oldenburg. Burial followed at the sisters' cemetery.

Rita Ann Deardorff was born on May 19, 1925, in Indianapolis. Prior to entering the Sisters of St. Francis, she attended St. Joan of Arc School and the former St. Mary Academy, both in Indianapolis.

She entered the Sisters of St. Francis on Feb. 2, 1947, and professed final vows on Aug. 12, 1952.

During 67 years as a Sister of St. Francis, Sister Alice Ann ministered as an educator for more than 50 years in Catholic schools in Indiana, Missouri and Ohio. In the archdiocese, she served in Indianapolis at St. Mark the Evangelist School from 1958-61, Our Lady of Lourdes School from 1963-68, the former Holy Trinity School from 1970-75 and at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) School from 1975-84. She continued serving in Indianapolis as a substitute teacher from 1984-2000.

Sister Alice Ann returned to the motherhouse in 2000, where she served in pastoral care and community service until she retired and devoted herself to prayer in 2008.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of St. Francis, P.O. Box 100, Oldenburg, IN 47036-0100. †



## Our Lady of Lourdes

Pope Francis prays in front of a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes as he begins his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Feb. 11, the memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

## Ursuline Sister Anthony Wargel ministered as an educator in Catholic schools for more than 60 years

Ursuline Sister Anthony Wargel died on Jan. 24 at Mercy Sacred Heart nursing home in Louisville, Ky. She was 100.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Jan. 30 at the Motherhouse Chapel for the Ursuline Sisters of Louisville. Burial followed at St. Michael Cemetery in Louisville in

a section designated for the Ursuline Sisters.

Clare Marie Wargel was born on July 17, 1914, in Evansville, Ind.

She entered the Ursuline Sisters of Louisville on August 24, 1932.

Sister Anthony earned a bachelor's degree from the former Ursuline College in Louisville, a master's degree from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh and did further studies at Marquette University in Milwaukee.

During 83 years as a member of the Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, Sister Anthony ministered as an educator for more than 60 years in Catholic schools in Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland,

Pennsylvania, South Carolina and West Virginia. In the archdiocese, she taught at the former St. Mary School in Madison from 1948-50. She remained an active tutor until 91. And from 2005-14, she led rosary prayer services and repaired rosaries in nursing homes.

Sister Alice Ann returned to the motherhouse in 2000, where she served in pastoral care and community service until she retired and devoted herself to prayer in 2008.

Memorial gifts may be sent to Ursuline Sisters, Mission Advancement Office, 3105 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40206. †

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# Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

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

## Batesville Deanery

- Feb. 23, 6:30 p.m. at St. Catherine of Siena, Decatur County, Enochsburg campus
- Feb. 26, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg
- March 1, 1:30 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Milhousen
- March 6, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. at All Saints, Dearborn County, St. Martin Campus (individual confession)
- March 18, 6:30 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County
- March 18, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
- March 21, 10 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m. at St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bright

## Bloomington Deanery

- March 10, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville
- March 19, 7 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford
- March 24, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
- March 25, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude, Spencer
- March 26, 6 p.m. at St. John the Apostle, Bloomington
- April 1, 4 p.m. at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington

## Connersville Deanery

- March 3, 7 p.m. at St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City
- March 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m., "The Light Is on for You." Individual confessions offered at all deanery parishes.
- March 11, 6:30 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Connersville
- March 12, 7 p.m. at St. Mary (Immaculate Conception), Rushville
- March 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m., "The Light Is on for You." Individual confessions offered at all deanery parishes.
- March 24, 6 p.m., Richmond Catholic Community at St. Mary, Richmond

## Indianapolis East Deanery

- March 11, 7:30 p.m. at Holy Spirit
- March 24, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas, Fortville
- March 25, 7 p.m. at St. Mary

## Indianapolis North Deanery

- March 15, 2-3:30 p.m. at St. Matthew the Apostle
- March 16, 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Joan of Arc
- March 17, 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Joan of Arc

## Indianapolis South Deanery

- March 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m., "The Light Is on for You." Individual confessions offered at all deanery parishes.
- March 16, 7 p.m. at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

- March 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m., "The Light Is on for You." Individual confessions offered at all deanery parishes.
- March 19, 7 p.m. at St. Roch
- March 30, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

## Indianapolis West Deanery

- 6-7:30 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville (individual confession available every Wednesday during Lent excluding Ash Wednesday)
- March 10, 7 p.m. at St. Monica
- March 11, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
- March 12, 7 p.m. at St. Malachy, Brownsburg
- March 12, 7 p.m. at St. Michael the Archangel
- March 16, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas More, Mooresville
- March 18, 7 p.m. for St. Anthony and St. Christopher at St. Christopher
- March 19, 7 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield

## New Albany Deanery

- March 3, 7 p.m. at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville
- March 11, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navilleton
- March 12, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford
- March 19, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany (individual confession)
- March 29, 4 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight

## Seymour Deanery

- March 3, 7 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace, Madison
- March 8, 2 p.m. for Holy Trinity, Edinburgh, and St. Rose of Lima, Franklin, at St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
- March 10, 6:30 p.m. for St. Ann, Jennings County; St. Mary, North Vernon; and St. Joseph, Jennings County, at St. Joseph, Jennings County
- March 11, 7 p.m. for Our Lady of Providence, Brownstown, and St. Ambrose, Seymour, at St. Ambrose, Seymour
- March 12, 7 p.m. at St. Bartholomew, Columbus
- March 22, 4 p.m. for American Martyrs, Scottsburg and St. Patrick, Salem, at St. Patrick, Salem

## Tell City Deanery

- March 22, 2 p.m. at St. Paul, Tell City

## Terre Haute Deanery

- 7:30 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle (individual confession available every Monday during Lent)
- 7 p.m. at St. Joseph University Parish, Terre Haute



A priest listens to a confession during Mass in 2012 at the Temple of Divine Providence in Warsaw, Poland. (CNS photo/Kacper Pempel, Reuters)

- (individual confession available every Wednesday during Lent excluding Ash Wednesday)
- 7:30 p.m. at Annunciation, Brazil (individual confession available every Wednesday during Lent excluding Ash Wednesday)
- March 4, 6 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton
- March 4, 6:30 p.m. at St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute
- March 4, 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods
- March 10, 1:30 p.m. at St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute
- March 10, 7 p.m. at St. Benedict, Terre Haute
- March 11, 7 p.m. at St. Benedict, Terre Haute
- March 18, 6:30 p.m. at St. Patrick, Terre Haute
- March 18, 6:30 p.m. at Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute
- March 18, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton
- March 25, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton
- March 25, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph University Parish, Clinton †

## Lenten activities available online

Be sure to visit *The Criterion's* Lenten Web page at [www.archindy.org/lent](http://www.archindy.org/lent).

The page consists of links to daily readings, archived Lenten columns by Archbishop Emeritus Daniel M. Buechlein, a full list of communal penance services taking place at parishes and other features. †

# Farming family uses contest winnings to help St. Mary School in Rushville

By John Shaughnessy

Having the winning entry in a contest not only shocked Jeff and Dana Fussner, it also led to a nice surprise for the students and staff at St. Mary School in Rushville.

For years, the standing joke between the Fussners was that Jeff has never won anything. So they were stunned when the 55-year-old Rush County farmer's entry won the America's Farmers Grow Communities contest, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund.

Winning the contest meant that the Fussners could donate \$2,500 to the charity of their choice. After thinking about it, the couple decided to donate the money to St. Mary School even though neither of them attended the

school or had a child who attended the school.

"There's a whole bunch of places where it could have been put to good, but we thought this would be a good one," said Jeff, a longtime member of St. Mary Parish in Rushville. "The kids always seem so good when they come out of there, and [Catholic] schools always have trouble coming up with money for things they need, so we thought this would be a good place for it."

The donation was a welcomed surprise for the principal of St. Mary School.

"We are so thankful," said Sherri Kirschner. "It's one of those things where there are tight budgets in Catholic schools. We were talking about how we'd like to do certain things if we had the funds for them, and the next

day they called about the donation. God does provide."

The school will use the funds to help reach its goal of providing a new computer for every student by the beginning of the 2015-16 school year.

The Fussners are glad they could help. "They were really excited," said Jeff, who farms a 1,660-acre spread with his brother, Thomas Fussner, and their cousins, James and Richard Fussner. "We're glad we could help. I've gone to the church there all my life, and I went to Sunday school there."

Kirschner says the donation reflects the family's generosity and faith.

"It's instilled in their family that you give back," said the principal. "And they have." †

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

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# FAITH

continued from page 1

envision that another reality would also soon have a lasting place in her mind.

It's her story of great love in the midst of great loss.

## 'I listened, but I couldn't hear God'

Overwhelmed with grief about her miscarriage, Lauren initially "walked around numb" and cried herself to sleep before she visited a place that has often offered her peace and solace in her life.

"I was always taught to turn to God in times of struggle," says the member of St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus. "So the next morning, I went to our church and sat in the Blessed Sacrament chapel. I sat in the quiet and wept and prayed. I began praying the rosary, looking for comfort. I began to think about Mary. She was a mother, just like me. She would understand my grief and take it to the Lord. I wanted God to tell me why this had happened to us."

She insists that she wasn't mad at God, "just sad and confused."

"Surely he had a reason," she says.

"We had prayed for this baby. We had truly and deeply loved our unborn child. We had excitedly shared the news with everyone. The next day, I was scheduled to go into the hospital to deliver. So I sat in the chapel on what I knew would be my last day with my baby. Even though his or her life was already gone, the idea of being separated from him or her seemed unbearable. I listened, but I couldn't hear God. He was quiet."

She wondered, "Why wasn't he sending the light I was so desperately searching for? The darkness seemed like it might be endless. I left the church feeling lost."

Minutes later, she started to experience glimmers of light.

## Embracing 'a new normal'

"The phone calls and texts started coming," she recalls. "Our family and friends were calling and sending out words of comfort and love; letting us know they

were praying for us. Some shared their own stories of miscarriage. Many offered to bring over meals or to help with the girls—whatever we needed. Through our friends and family, God was sending the light.

"With each kind word, the darkness turned to gray, and I thought that maybe my grief would not suffocate me. I was not alone. We were deeply loved."

As the weeks have passed, the heartbreaking loss of their child and the healing love of so many have evolved into "a new normal" for their family, Lauren says.

"I made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for my girls, folded towels and watched TV after bedtime stories," she notes. "But in our new normal, my grief would sneak up on me at random times during the day. For a few minutes, and sometimes hours, my grief would overwhelm me, and the tears would flow. But there was something else different about our new normal. It was so full of love, kindness and support that I could hardly believe it.

"Our marriage felt stronger and more precious than ever. On the worst day of our lives, we had each other. My husband saw the weakest and ugliest parts of me that day in the hospital. He held my hand the entire time and whispered words of encouragement. Then he held together the pieces of my broken heart in the dark days that followed. In our new normal, we were reminded why marriage is a sacrament, a vocation."

She also views her daughters in a different light.

## 'We had never felt so loved'

"I had loved them both beyond words from the minute the pregnancy tests read positive. But now I began to see them through God's eyes. They were our greatest gifts from God, meant to be protected and cherished."

Through it all, Lauren has seen her own faith grow because of the faith and the prayers of all the friends, family members and co-workers who rushed to support them.

"We were covered in Christ-like



The sisterly bond of Abigail, left, and Madelyn Megel shines through in this photo from October of 2014. (Photo by David Bugert Photography)

friendship and blessings," she says.

"Through my husband, my daughters, our family and friends, I saw the light of God again. I saw the light of God shine brighter than I had ever had, through the goodness and love of others.

"It's strange that during our darkest grief, we had never felt so loved. It brings new meaning to one of my favorite sayings, 'God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good.'"

(Has faith made a difference in your family's life? Has it deepened your

relationships as a parent, a grandparent, a sibling, a son or a daughter? Do you have rituals and experiences of faith that have helped to make your family more Christ-centered? If so, we'd like to hear about it.

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

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## Pope Benedict has no regret, doubt about decision to retire, aide says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Retired Pope Benedict XVI has never doubted or regretted his decision to resign, knowing it was the right thing to do for the good of the Church, said Archbishop Georg Ganswein, prefect of the papal household and personal secretary to the retired pope.



"The Church needs a strong helmsman," and Pope Benedict was keenly aware of his own waning strength while faced with such a demanding ministry, the archbishop said in an interview published on Feb. 12 in the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*.

Two years after Pope Benedict's historic announcement on Feb. 11 to step down as supreme pontiff, Archbishop Ganswein said the retired pope "is convinced that the decision he made and announced was the right one. He has no doubt.

"He is very serene and certain in this: His decision was necessary and made 'after having repeatedly examined my conscience before God,'" he said, citing words from the pope's Feb. 11, 2013, announcement.

Pope Benedict had told a stunned audience of cardinals assembled for an ordinary public consistory that "I have come to the certainty that my strengths, due to an advanced age, are no longer suited to an adequate exercise of the Petrine ministry."

Archbishop Ganswein said in the interview that Pope Benedict was aware of his "duty not to look out for his own self but for the good of the Church."

The pope spelled out the precise reasons for his decision, the archbishop said, and "all the other considerations and hypotheses are wrong," including assumptions that the pope's

resignation was not valid or had not been done in full freedom.

"Hypotheses cannot be based on things that are not true and totally absurd," Archbishop Ganswein said. "Benedict himself said he made his decision with freedom, without any pressure, and he assured his 'reverence and obedience' to the new pope."

The archbishop said doubts about the validity of the resignation and subsequent election of Pope Francis stem from a lack of understanding of the Church.

Also, the option for a pope to resign is explicitly written in the *Code of Canon Law*, which says a pope may step down as long as the decision is made freely and is "duly manifested."

Archbishop Ganswein said Pope Benedict, who will turn 88 in April, is still following the prayerful, quiet life he wanted to dedicate himself to upon his retirement.

Like his namesake, St. Benedict—the father of Western monasticism—the retired pope "has chosen a monastic life. He goes out [in public] only when Pope Francis asks him to; as for the rest, he does not accept other invitations," said the archbishop, who lives with retired Pope Benedict in a renovated monastery and has been his personal secretary since 2003.

Archbishop Ganswein told the newspaper that in addition to the pope's usual routine of prayer, reading, keeping up with correspondence, receiving visitors, watching the evening news and walking in the Vatican Gardens, he has been playing the piano much more often: "Mozart especially, but also other compositions that come to mind at the moment; he plays from memory."

The only health issues, the archbishop said, are "every now and then his legs give him some problems, that's all." The pope, who has had a pacemaker for several years and uses a cane, still has an incredibly sharp mind, the archbishop added. †