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Coming of Age

Accept help, let others become instruments of mercy, writes columnist Maria Pia-Chin Negro, page 12.

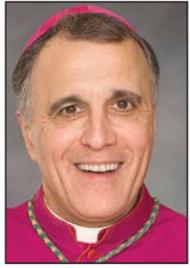
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Bishops still have hope Congress will pass immigration reform

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Despite the apprehension over policies that could be enacted by a Republican-led Congress acting in accord with a Republican president in Donald Trump, the U.S. Catholic bishops remain hopeful that Congress will pass an immigration reform bill.



Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo

“This is a new moment with a new Congress, a new administration. We should up our expectations and move very carefully on comprehensive immigration reform,”

said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, of Galveston-Houston, who is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

“I think this might be a very good time, a better time, to pursue our goals,”

Cardinal DiNardo said during a Jan. 12 conference call promoting the Church’s National Migration Week, which was celebrated on Jan. 8-14.

“I think the [bishops’] conference is trying to start a conversation with the transition team of the president-elect,” said Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, USCCB vice president. “We continue to help elected officials ... to understand the issue,” he added. “I think we are trying to establish that communication.”

“We are very much concerned about keeping families together. It’s important to respect the security of this nation ... but never to lose that human face to this reality,” added Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Migration.

“People are suffering. People want to be welcome. People want to be a part of this great American society,” Bishop Vasquez said. “We need to bring about some change,” he added. “We hope the president will work with us and with Congress as well to pass some laws that will be humane and respectful.”

“In the days and weeks ahead, there will be intense debate over immigration reform and refugee policy. Ultimately, the question is this: Will our nation treat all migrants and refugees, regardless of their national origin

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‘God gave me a second chance’



Ethan Velazquez is back enjoying the things he loves—including playing the guitar—thanks to the life-saving efforts of three staff members at Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis: Stacy Inman-Davidson, left, Lucas Stippler and Lauren McLaughlin. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

School staff’s quick actions help to save the life of a child who had a heart attack

By John Shaughnessy

The fear flashes in their eyes again as the educators recall rushing to the child who was lifeless on the ground.

In one moment, 11-year-old Ethan Velazquez raced across the playground at Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis, playing soccer with his friends. In the next moment, he collapsed—becoming immediately unresponsive, showing no signs of breathing.

Stacy Inman-Davidson reached Ethan first, followed soon by Lauren McLaughlin and Lucas Stippler. The three Holy Spirit staff members worked quickly to give Ethan CPR, the cardio-pulmonary resuscitation that all teachers and extended-care staff

members in Indiana are required to learn.

“I was scared when I ran over to him, seeing him lifeless, not breathing, turning purple,” says Inman-Davidson, a recess worker at the time. “I was holding him and talking to him and giving him air. I thought every time I was giving him air, I was giving oxygen to his brain.”

McLaughlin joined in, doing chest compressions.

“There was the feeling, ‘Oh, my God! Are we doing the right thing?’ ” says McLaughlin, a kindergarten teacher. “He didn’t have a pulse. When we had done one round of 30 compressions, he started to gasp. Then he lost all coloring, he started to foam at the mouth, and there was no pulse again.”

As Stippler kept telling Ethan, “Stay

with us, Ethan! Stay with us!” the other two continued CPR, trying to revive his heart and keep oxygen flowing into his lungs and brain until an ambulance arrived.

When it did, the paramedics took over Ethan’s care, and the emotions suddenly poured from the three educators.

“Stacy had lost a child in a drowning,” says Rita Parsons, the principal of Holy Spirit School. “When the ambulance came, she just broke down. It’s amazing the strength she had.”

As the paramedics lifted Ethan into the ambulance, he was still lifeless.

‘God, I don’t think this is the time ...’

There are certain phone calls that parents never want to get, and the ones

See LIFE, page 2

New embassy a sign of pope’s love for Palestine, President Abbas says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas thanked Pope Francis for his support of the country’s new embassy to the Holy See.

“This is a sign that the pope loves the Palestinian people and loves peace,” Abbas told the pope on Jan. 14 before heading to the inauguration of the Palestinian embassy to the Holy See in Rome.

The pope welcomed Abbas with open arms, embracing the president and saying, “It is a pleasure to welcome you here.”

“I am also happy to be here,” Abbas replied.

The Vatican said the two leaders spoke privately of the contribution of Catholics in Palestine, and their “promotion of human dignity and assistance for those most in need, especially in the fields of education, health and aid.”

The pope and Abbas also discussed the peace process and expressed hope that “direct negotiations between the parties may be resumed to bring an end to the violence,” and to find “a just and lasting solution.”

“To this end, it is hoped that—with the support of the international community—measures can

See EMBASSY, page 8



Pope Francis is pictured with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas during a meeting at the Vatican on Jan. 14. (CNS photo/Giuseppe Lami, Reuters pool)

LIFE

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that Jenny and Enrique Velazquez received about Ethan that afternoon shook them to their core.

Jenny received her phone call first, telling her that Ethan had collapsed on the playground, to come quickly.

“When I see the ambulance and Ethan on the ground and him not responding, never in my mind did I think that his heart had stopped,” Jenny recalls.

She rode in the front seat of the ambulance as it rushed her son to Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis.

During the frantic ride, she turned to watch the paramedics give Ethan CPR a third time, followed by an attempt to revive his heart with electric shock paddles. It didn’t work.

“I told him, ‘Ethan, Mommy’s here! Please stay with me!’”

The paramedics used the paddles again. This time, his heart started beating.

In the ambulance, Jenny phoned her husband at work, crying as she told Enrique everything that had happened.

“I was scared, but I felt at peace,” he recalls. “I told her, ‘He will be OK. Talk with God.’”

When their call ended, Enrique had his own talk with God.

“When I talk to God, I know 100 percent he’s my Father and Ethan’s Father. I said, ‘God, I don’t think this is the time for you to take Ethan with you.’”

“Then I called Ethan’s godfather and my best friends. They’re really close to God. I tell them that I need them, that Ethan’s had a heart attack.

“When I got into the emergency room, Ethan looks really bad. There were 10 to 15 people in the room—doctors and nurses. When I took Ethan’s hand, he’s really cold. A lot of his chest is blue. I thought he had passed away.”

‘Doctor, it’s God’

As a medical team cared for Ethan, his doctors decided to put him in an induced coma.

“The doctor told us that Ethan had a heart attack, and the only thing we can do is wait,” Enrique recalls. “He said the next 72 hours are crucial. The doctor said there might be brain damage because he’s not sure there was enough oxygen to his brain.”

As each day passed, the prayer tree for Ethan grew. Its roots were in the friends and even strangers from Holy Spirit Parish and the school community. It also extended to family members in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Spain.

“We’re close to God,” Enrique says. “My faith is strong and big, but this is pain. I don’t want this to happen to anyone.”

“I get down on my knees and start praying. I say, ‘God, I know you are the best. You are really smart. But give me the opportunity to have Ethan here. Please don’t take him yet.’”

One of the people who prayed fervently every day was Inman-Davidson, whose 4-year-old son drowned in a swimming pool at an apartment complex in 2009.

“The whole time Ethan was in the hospital, I felt I had lost my son all over again,” says the mother of three daughters, Alana, 9, Layla, 5, and Athena, 4. “I was a mess.”

Yet three days after Ethan was rushed to the hospital—as his mother prayed the “Our Father” at her son’s bedside—all the prayers were answered as Ethan awakened from the coma.

In the days that followed, medical tests were done on Ethan.

“The doctor said, ‘Your boy isn’t sick. He’s 100 percent healthy,’” Enrique says.

“He doesn’t have any consequences. The doctor was impressed. He couldn’t explain what happened. I said, ‘Doctor, it’s God.’”

‘God gave me a second chance at life’

Eight months have passed since that May afternoon in 2016 when Ethan collapsed on the playground.

Since then, he has celebrated his 12th birthday. His recovery was also celebrated at a school Mass by the community that prayed countless rosaries for him during his time in the hospital. Everyone in the church that day gave Ethan a standing ovation.

“That made me feel really happy,” Ethan says. “I was with my friends again. They were glad to see me.”

He’s back to playing soccer, swimming, playing his guitar and reading the Bible—all the things he used to do. The only difference is that the doctor implanted a pacemaker in him—as a precaution.

“Most people who saw me on the playground that day probably didn’t think I was going to make it,” he says. “God gave me a second chance at life.”

He feels the same way about Inman-Davidson, McLaughlin and Stippler.

“They care for me,” Ethan says. “They look out for everyone in the school. And they would do anything to save a life.”

His parents are ever grateful.

“God stayed with us,” his mother says. “God gave me my son again.”

“It happened in the right moment in the right place with the right people,” says Ethan’s father, citing how quickly the Holy Spirit staff members responded to give his son CPR. “I know that’s God. God is love.”

‘I wonder what God has planned for you’

The whole experience has also left its mark on the people who initially helped Ethan.

“I hug him every day, and he hugs me back,” Inman-Davidson says. “He looks for me. He and I are best friends. Even now, I think about him and worry about him, like he’s one of my own kids.”

McLaughlin says, “I’ve told Ethan, ‘I wonder what God has planned for you. There’s a reason you’re still here, kiddo.’”



The prayers of the Velazquez family have been answered as Ethan has recovered completely from the heart attack he suffered on the playground at Holy Spirit School in Indianapolis. The seventh-grade student is pictured with his mother Jenny, his father Enrique and his sister Jairy. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Stippler, an after-school recess worker who is studying to be a nurse, shakes his head in wonder whenever he sees Ethan.

“People die of this every day,” he says. “Everything had to fall into place for him to still be here. After everything that happened and he recovered, he came back to school and gave me a card and a bracelet.”

The bracelet is inscribed with a Bible verse from the Book of Joshua: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Jos 1:9).

Stippler wears the braided bracelet every day as a reminder of the difference that he hopes to make in people’s lives as a nurse, as a reminder of the difference everyone made to Ethan, as a reminder of the difference Ethan makes to them.

“I’ll never forget his face that day,” Stippler says. “He’s a miracle walking.” †

IMMIGRATION

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or religion, in a way that respects their inherent dignity as children of God?”

Cardinal DiNardo said. “Pope Francis reminds us we are all equal before God. In equal measure, we are in need of and can receive God’s great mercy. This is what makes us sisters and brothers, regardless of how we chose to divide ourselves.”

The morning of the conference call, Archbishop Gomez presented a video message from Pope Francis on immigration

during a Mass at the Dolores Mission Church in Boyle Heights, Calif., near Los Angeles. The clip was part of the pope’s interview with a U.S. television journalist.

Bishop Vasquez dismissed the notion that nationwide immigration reform is virtually impossible.

“I don’t know whether indeed working with the local level is sufficient. I think we as a Church have to work with our local communities, with our local diocese and our state Catholic conferences,” he said. “But it’s important that we engage the current administration, to make known what is taking place in our countries. We have to work at

the local level, but yes, we also have to work at the national level.”

“There are many in Congress who think that immigration reform is a definite possibility,” said Ashley Feasley, policy director for the USCCB’s Migration and Refugee Services. “We need to show the need for the reform of our broken system.”

Shortly after Trump’s election, Archbishop Gomez had preached about children in his archdiocese going to bed afraid. Bishops, he said during the conference call, “can be present to the people and give that sense of peace that we are together. There is a democratic process in our country, and this happens every four years. ... We can address



A U.S. Border Patrol agent frisks a man on Jan. 11 near the U.S.-Mexico border fence in Jacumba, Calif. Despite the apprehension over policies that could be enacted by a Republican-led Congress acting in accord with a Republican president in Donald Trump, the U.S. Catholic bishops remain hopeful that an immigration reform bill will pass. (CNS photo/Mike Blake, Reuters)

those situations and accomplish that in the specific area of immigration reform.”

He added that in his archdiocese, people are “more open to see the future with more peace and understanding.” †



‘I think the [bishops] conference is trying to start a conversation with the transition team of the president-elect. We continue to help elected officials ... to understand the issue. I think we are trying to establish that communication.’

—Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, USCCB vice president

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Lawmakers consider death penalty ban for serious mental illness

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

Legislation to ban the death penalty for those with serious mental illness was introduced in the Indiana General Assembly on Jan. 4. The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), the public policy arm of the Church in Indiana, supports the legislation.

Senate Bill 155, authored by Sen. James Merritt, R-Indianapolis, removes capital punishment as a penalty for those suffering from one or more of six types of serious mental illness.

Those diagnosed with schizophrenia; bipolar disorder; major depressive disorder; delusional disorder; posttraumatic stress disorder; or traumatic brain injuries qualify for the exemption. The bill defines “serious mental illness,” commonly referred to as SMI, using the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) criteria.

Merritt said he supports the death penalty, but draws a “bright line of distinction” between someone who is rational and normally functioning who commits a murder out of revenge or for other reasons, and a person who lacks normal mental faculties or control of themselves.

If passed, Merritt said those on death row in Indiana with serious mental illness could appeal their sentence and have it commuted to life in prison without parole.

“If a person is mentally ill, they are mentally ill. My intent of the bill is that no person who is mentally ill would be put to death because they committed murder,” the senator said. He added the fate of his bill is uncertain as “it is very early in the process,” but he plans to “work very hard” to get a hearing for the bill.

Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the ICC, said that the Church opposes the use of the death penalty in nearly all cases, noting that its use is permitted when it is the only means to protect the common good. He added Catholic teaching also asserts that an individual must have maturity and consciously choose an action for one to be morally responsible.

Indiana no longer executes the mentally disabled or minors because they may not be fully responsible for their actions, he said.

“Those who are mentally ill have an impediment that limits their culpability regarding their actions also,” said Tebbe. “As with the previous modifications in Indiana’s application of the death penalty, this change to exempt those with serious mental illness from execution is prudent and just. While Senate Bill 155 does not eliminate the use of the death penalty, it does restrict its use and corrects an injustice in its application. We support the bill.”

Tebbe asserts the death penalty ban for those with serious mental illness does not exempt an individual from being held accountable. Rather, removing the death penalty as an option for punishment allows the state to fulfill its obligation to the public and to the individual.

In Catholic teaching, Tebbe said, it is the state’s duty to protect the common good and to render an unjust aggressor



‘As with the previous modifications in Indiana’s application of the death penalty, this change to exempt those with serious mental illness from execution is prudent and just. While Senate Bill 155 does not eliminate the use of the death penalty, it does restrict its use and corrects an injustice in its application. We support the bill.’

—Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference

unable to do harm. The punishment, in addition to defending the public order and protecting people’s safety, should have the effect of correcting the guilty party and providing restitution. Senate Bill 155, in the view of the ICC, provides for public safety and does not take away an opportunity to correct and help the offender.

Matthew Willis, program director for the Hoosier Alliance for Serious Mental Illness Exemption, said, “I think it’s really important that we protect those who we deem not morally culpable from the death penalty. We’ve already decided to exempt juveniles and those who are intellectually disabled.

“Those with serious mental illness share the same inability to understand the nature of their crimes and know the consequences of their crimes,” he added.

Willis is aware of at least six other states that are actively seeking legislation to exempt those with serious mental illness including Virginia, Idaho, Tennessee, West Virginia, Ohio and South Dakota. Connecticut exempted those with serious mental illness from the death penalty in 2006, but subsequently

banned the death penalty.

Willis said there are 12 people in Indiana with active death sentences—one woman and 11 men.

“There are two men who definitely had SMI at the time of their crime,” said Willis, “but this number is not concrete because it’s possible other defense teams may argue their clients fit the exemption as well.”

Willis said to give a perspective on statistics, Mental Health America, a national support and advocacy group for mental health, in one analysis estimates that between five and 20 percent of people on death row have a serious mental illness.

Willis firmly believes there is a “real chance” of the bill passing because he has seen Indiana lawmakers open to expanding treatment and funding for mental health issues in recent years.

Senate Bill 155 is assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee and now awaits a hearing. Tebbe said he hopes the bill gets a hearing within the next few weeks.

(Brigid Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †

Bishop disappointed with change in U.S. policy to Cuban refugees

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The chairman of the Committee on Migration at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said he was disappointed with President Barack Obama’s new policy ending a long-standing agreement that allowed Cubans who arrive in the U.S. without visas to remain in the country and gain legal residency.

“Effective immediately, Cuban nationals who attempt to enter the United States illegally and do not qualify for humanitarian relief will be subject to removal, consistent with U.S. law and enforcement priorities,” Obama said in a Jan. 12 statement. “By taking this step, we are treating Cuban migrants the same way we treat migrants from other countries.”

The repeal of the policy, dubbed “wet foot, dry foot,” was effective immediately and followed months of negotiations. It was praised by the Cuban government as “an important step in advancing relations” between the two countries.

In a Jan. 13 statement, Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, migration committee chairman, said the U.S. bishops have “welcomed normalizing relations with Cuba,” but he also noted that “the violation of basic human rights remains a reality for some Cubans, and the ‘wet foot, dry foot’ policy helped to afford them a way to seek refuge in the United States.”

The bishop also noted the remarkable contributions of Cuban Americans, saying they have been “one of the most successful

immigrant groups in U.S. history,” and that the protections that had been given to them “were a model of humane treatment.”

Bishop Vasquez said ending the policy will “make it more difficult for vulnerable populations in Cuba, such as asylum seekers, children, and trafficking victims, to seek protection.”

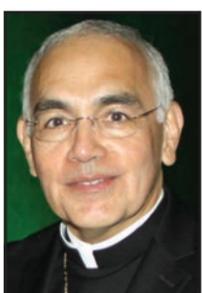
President Bill Clinton created the policy for Cuban immigrants in 1995, revising one that had allowed Cubans caught at sea on their way to the United States to become legal residents in a year.

Under the terms of the new agreement, Cuba has agreed to take back those turned away from the U.S. if the time between their departure from Cuba and the start of deportation hearings in the U.S. is four years or less.

The Associated Press reported that since October 2012, more than 118,000 Cubans have presented themselves at ports of entry along the U.S. border. The number included more than 48,000, who arrived between October 2015 and November 2016.

Cubans already in the United States under the old policy will be able to continue the process toward gaining legal status.

Bishop Vasquez said that moving forward, he and his fellow bishops would continue to work to ensure “humane treatment for vulnerable populations, from Cuba and elsewhere, seeking refuge in the United States.” †



‘The violation of basic human rights remains a reality for some Cubans, and the “wet foot, dry foot” policy helped to afford them a way to seek refuge in the United States.’

—Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, USCCB migration committee chairman

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Editorial



Orthodox Metropolitan Gennadios of Italy and Pope Francis leave a prayer service at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls on Jan. 25, 2016. The service concluded the 2016 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Our ecumenical Pope Francis

We are in the middle of the ecumenical celebration of the “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.” It began on Jan. 18 and concludes on Jan. 25. It’s an international celebration, co-sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches.

It was called the Church Unity Octave when it was begun 109 years ago by Father Paul Wattson. He was an Episcopalian in 1908, but entered into full communion of the Church and his cause for canonization is in process. He’s a Servant of God, the first step in the process.

The theme this year is “Reconciliation—The Love of Christ Compels Us” (2 Cor 5:14). Pope Francis used the quote in 2013 in his apostolic exhortation “The Joy of the Gospel.”

Popes have promoted ecumenism ever since the Second Vatican Council promulgated its “Degree on Ecumenism” in 1964, and it’s difficult to say that Pope Francis does it more than, say, St. John Paul II. But it seems that Pope Francis uses every possible opportunity to encourage good relationships among communities of Christians.

He did that long before his election as pope. In Argentina, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio became friends with Marcelo Figueroa, who was director of the United Bible Society in Argentina. They worked together on biblical projects, including 31 television programs in which they and Jewish Rabbi Abraham Skorka discussed social problems in the light of Scripture.

Figueroa left the United Bible Society to work for Cardinal Bergoglio in Argentina, and then followed him to Rome when the cardinal was elected pope. Today, still a Protestant, he is director of the Argentine edition of the Vatican newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano*.

This year, 2017, is the 500th anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation when Martin Luther prepared 95 theses, or theological statements, and posted them on the door of a church in Wittenberg, Germany. Lutherans began the commemoration of that event on Oct. 31, 2016, in Lund, Sweden. Pope Francis was there for the commemoration. (So was Figueroa.)

It was not a celebration, but certainly the pope’s participation in this event

was historic. In his talk that day, he said, “As Catholics and Lutherans, we have undertaken a common journey of reconciliation.” He said that the event presented “the opportunity to mend a critical moment of our history by moving beyond the controversies and disagreements that have often prevented us from understanding one another.”

The meeting also marked the 50th anniversary of the start of the Catholic-Lutheran ecumenical dialogue that began in Lund in 1967. This dialogue, the pope said, “confirmed our desire to advance toward full communion.” That, however, seems to be a long way away.

Pope Francis has also met frequently with Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople. He obviously would love to heal the separation between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches that began in 1054.

This past Nov. 30, the feast of St. Andrew—who founded what became the Church in Constantinople—the pope sent a special “big embrace” to Patriarch Bartholomew and “this cousin Church.” In a letter to the patriarch, the pope praised the way Catholics and Orthodox have begun “to recognize one another as brothers and sisters and to value each other’s gifts, and together have proclaimed the Gospel, served humanity and the cause of peace, promoted the dignity of the human being and the inestimable value of the family, and cared for those most in need, as well as creation, our common home.”

Although the pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople have been close, there was always a problem with the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, the largest Orthodox Church. On Feb. 12, 2016, Pope Francis had a cordial meeting with Patriarch Kirill when they were both in Cuba. They met for two hours and issued a joint declaration pledging to “walk together.” We haven’t heard anything more about this relationship since then.

Pope Francis was with Patriarch Bartholomew last August in Assisi to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the First World Day of Prayer for Peace that St. John Paul II convened in 1986.

Our pope is widely admired by other religious leaders, who look to him for leadership. Let’s pray for greater religious unity.

—John F. Fink

Making Sense of Bioethics/Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Thinking through the temptation of cohabitation

Men and women clearly need each other and naturally gravitate toward arrangements of mutual support and lives of shared intimacy.

Because women are frequently the immediate guardians of the next generation, they have a particular need to ascertain if there will be steady support from a man prior to giving themselves sexually



to him.

The bond of marriage is ordered toward securing this critical element of ongoing commitment and support.

Cohabitation, where a man and woman decide to live together and engage in sexual relations without marriage, raises a host of issues and concerns. Sex, of course, has a certain power all its own, and both sides may be tempted to play with it in ways that are potentially damaging, all the more so when they decide to cohabit.

One concern is that cohabitation can often become a rehearsal for various selfish patterns of behavior. It perpetuates an arrangement of convenience, popularly phrased as, “Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?”

Even as many women try to tell themselves they are “preparing” for marriage by cohabiting with their partner, they may sense the trap of the “never-ending audition” to be his wife, and become intuitively aware of how they are being used. Cohabitation also invites the woman to focus on lesser concerns like saving on rent, or garnering transient emotional attention from her partner by moving in with him and becoming sexually available.

Even as a woman becomes attuned to the power of sex from an early age, she can eventually fall prey to an easy mistake. Aware that sexual intimacy is also about bonding, she may suppose that by surrendering this deeply personal part of herself through cohabitation, she now has a “hook” into a man and his heart.

While such an arrangement can trigger various platitudes, (that he “cares for her,” “loves her,” etc.), experience shows it doesn’t typically help him reach the commitment reflected in those all-important words, “Will you marry me?”

Cohabitation, in fact, is a relationship that is defined by a holding back of commitment. The notion that it somehow allows both parties to “try out” a marriage beforehand is conveniently make-believe, a kind of “playing house,” mostly because it’s impossible to try out something permanent and irrevocable through something temporary and revocable.

As Jennifer Roback Morse has described it, “Cohabiting couples are

likely to have one foot out the door, throughout the relationship. The members of a cohabiting couple practice holding back on one another. They rehearse not trusting.” They don’t develop the elements crucial to a successful marriage, but instead keep their options open so they can always beat a hasty retreat to the exit.

Or as Chuck Colson put it: “Cohabitation—it’s training for divorce.” Many studies confirm that the divorce rate among those who cohabit prior to marriage is nearly double the rate of those who marry without prior cohabitation.

Some researchers believe that individuals who cohabit are more unconventional to begin with, being less committed to the institution of marriage overall and more open to the possibility of divorce. Others suspect something more insidious—that living together slowly erodes people’s ability to make a commitment by setting them up into patterns of behavior that work against succeeding in a long-term relationship. Both may actually be true.

Various risks correlate strongly with cohabitation. Compared with a married woman, a cohabiting woman is roughly three times as likely to experience physical abuse, and about nine times more likely to be murdered. Children also tend to fare poorly when it comes to these live-in arrangements. Rates of serious child abuse have been found to be lowest in intact families; six times higher in step families; 20 times higher in cohabiting biological-parent families; and 33 times higher when the mother is cohabiting with a boyfriend who is not the biological father.

Cohabiting homes see significantly more drug and alcohol abuse, and bring in less income than their married peers.

Cohabitation is clearly bad for men, worse for women, and terrible for children.

“Marriage,” as Glenn Stanton notes, “is actually a very pro-woman institution.

“People don’t fully realize what a raw deal for women cohabitation is. Women tend to bring more goods to the relationship—more work, more effort in tending to the relationship—but they get less satisfaction in terms of relational commitment and security.”

While marriage doesn’t automatically solve every problem, it clearly offers a different and vastly better set of dynamics than cohabitation for all the parties involved.

(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.) †

Letters Policy

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

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

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary

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

Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org. †

In visit to Kurdistan, bishop hears priorities of Iraqi Christians

AMMAN, Jordan (CNS)—After meeting with Church leaders in northern Iraq, a U.S. bishop said he will advocate differently for Iraqi religious minorities.

Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, N.M., told Catholic News Service (CNS) by phone that the Iraqi Catholic clergy do not want to see a safe corridor set up for Christians, as some in Washington have suggested.

Although security is paramount, they prefer to see reconciliation take place, enabling Iraq's diverse mosaic of religions and ethnicities to live side by side. But that means trust would need to be rebuilt, and that could prove tricky given the regional and local players involved in Iraq's multilayered sectarian conflict.

"We don't want to live in a ghetto. That is counterproductive. That makes us a target for our enemies. We have to live in a secure but integrated community where Chaldean Catholics, Syriac Catholics, Sunni Muslims, etc., have relationships with each other," Bishop Cantu told CNS, recounting the remarks made by Syriac Catholic Archbishop B. Yohanna Moshe of Mosul, Iraq.

He said the archbishop told him: "We need an integrated reality, rather than a 'Gaza' where there's a wall and someone is guarding people going in and out."

Bishop Cantu chairs the U.S. bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace. In that capacity, he led a small delegation on Jan. 11-13 to see and hear Christian perspectives in the aftermath of the Islamic State assault in 2014 and the current U.S.-led coalition's battle to flush out the militants.

Catholic clergy "really want to establish some normalcy in the midst of displacement," Bishop Cantu said. He said he was amazed by the speed which Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil has started a Catholic university to provide education and direction to the youth. Archbishop Warda also has restored personal dignity by moving displaced Christians from

camp into homes with a rent assistance program.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Moshe has built a church, an elementary school and a new Catholic University of Qaraqosh, serving both Christians and Muslims, on land provided by the Kurdish authorities. All of these facilities were lost when Islamic State militants invaded Mosul and the surrounding villages in June and August 2014.

Still, "there is a reality of the wounds created by the neighbors who turned on neighbors," said Bishop Cantu. He was told that after Christians went back to check on their properties following the liberation from Islamic State, in some instances, "neighbors went in, looted and later burned their homes."

The terrifying escape from Mosul for a number of Dominican Sisters has left a profound "sadness in their eyes and voices that question what's the best for these Christians," Bishop Cantu said, "whether it is to stay in the midst of anguish and terror or seek safety and security elsewhere in the world." The displaced Dominicans have been helping other displaced Christians with shelter, provisions and most recently, by setting up and running a school.

"I was so taken by their commitment to stay as long as there are Christians in Iraq," Bishop Cantu said.

Both Bishop Cantu and Stephen Colecchi, director of the U.S. bishops' Office of International Justice and Peace, made a similar visit to northern Iraq two years ago. This time they were also joined by Bill O'Keefe, vice president for government relations and advocacy at Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

O'Keefe told CNS that, after speaking with internally displaced Christians in Iraq, he realizes the immense challenges they face.

"The physical damage to their traditional Christian villages is severe, and security and trust aren't present to make them comfortable in going back,"



Syriac Catholic Archbishop Yohanna B. Moshe of Mosul, Iraq, and Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, N.M., pose for a photo in Iraq. After meeting with Church leaders in northern Iraq, Bishop Cantu said he will advocate differently for Iraqi religious minorities. (CNS photo/Stephen Colecchi, USCCB)

O'Keefe said. "They need to have their security and their full human rights respected to be able to return."

He said it's not clear how that will be accomplished. However, O'Keefe said it was "the responsibility of the central Iraqi state, the Kurdish government [in the north], and other players involved to come up with a vision where minority rights are respected and adequate security is provided."

O'Keefe felt there was a "bit of a lost hope as the Christians have to grapple with the vulnerability they find themselves in."

Although he said CRS is looking very seriously at rebuilding in the next phase, the message the delegation got from Iraqi Christians is that "rebuilding needs to follow security."

"They weren't ready yet to talk about specific plans for rebuilding. Rather, they need to know how safety and security will be provided, which would allow them to stay," O'Keefe said. "That's the first problem which needs to be solved, and it's inherently a political one."

To that end, Colecchi said the U.S. bishops' Office of International Justice and Peace in Washington will

advocate for the U.S. government to do a "much better job of working with all the political entities in the region to come up with a political solution to create an inclusive Iraq."

"Rights are based on citizenship, the rule of law, equal protection, and where towns and villages have good degree of self-rule so they can shape their own destiny and have a real voice in decisions and more immediately impact their community," Colecchi said. "That's how you create protection."

Both Archbishops Moshe and Warda seek Washington's help to build local institutions, and train police forces and the judiciary, Colecchi said. But the primary need is to create the rule of law and citizen rights.

Archbishop Warda welcomed last year's resolution by the U.S. Congress declaring that Islamic State has committed genocide against minorities in Iraq and Syria, Colecchi said. He said the archbishop felt the resolution would focus the world's attention on the horror as well as force Iraqis to acknowledge that genocide has taken place and to make sure it will not happen again. †



'The physical damage to their traditional Christian villages is severe, and security and trust aren't present to make them comfortable in going back. They need to have their security and their full human rights respected to be able to return.'

—Bill O'Keefe, vice president for government relations and advocacy at Catholic Relief Services

Pope Francis names Boston cardinal, others to Vatican congregations

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis named Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston, who is president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, to be a member of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The Vatican announced his and other papal appointments on Jan. 14.

The 72-year-old archbishop of Boston is one of the eight members of the Council of Cardinals who has been assisting Pope Francis with the reform of the administration of the Roman Curia, and now he joins 26 other cardinal and bishop members, and 28 consulting theologians, in advising the doctrinal congregation.

The congregation deals with doctrinal questions as well as the application of Catholic moral teaching. But it also is charged with coordinating efforts to rid the church of sexual abuse and with monitoring or conducting cases against

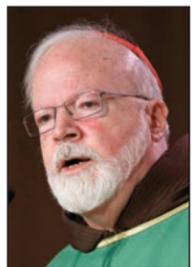
individual abusers.

While the congregation members offer their expertise on the many questions the office considers pressing, Cardinal O'Malley's experience leading three U.S. dioceses confronting the abuse of minors by clergy will be important, U.S. Msgr. Robert W. Oliver, secretary of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, told Catholic News Service on Jan. 17.

Msgr. Oliver, who once worked as the chief prosecutor of sex abuse crimes when he was promoter of justice at the doctrinal congregation, worked on the abuse crisis in his home Archdiocese of Boston with Cardinal O'Malley.

The cardinal will bring "the experience of local bishops who have been there" in terms of handling abuse accusations, and will help the congregation as it deals with new cases coming in from different parts of the world, the monsignor said.

The pope also named new consultants to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. The 17 new advisers include Donna Orsuto, a U.S. professor of spirituality at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. †



Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley

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Events Calendar

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

January 23

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Mass and Prayerful Witness for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children**, noon Mass followed by opportunity to participate in eucharistic adoration or procession along Meridian Street with Benediction to follow. Parking available at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St. Information: 317-236-1569, www.archindy.org/plfl/ or miemerg@archindy.org.

January 25

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Archdiocese of Indianapolis Vigil for Life**, sponsored by the Secretariat for Pastoral Ministries, 6:30-9 p.m., for youth, young adults and families. Ennie Hickman, president of Adore Ministries, presenting. No charge, donations for Birthline accepted. Registration: www.vigilforlife.eventbrite.com. Information: 317-236-1569 or miemerg@archindy.org.

January 26

Pregnancy Care Center

of Southeast Indiana, 62 Doughty Road, Suite 4 and 5, Lawrenceburg. **Open House**, 2-4 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Information: 812-537-4357 or www.helpimpregnant.org.

January 29

St. Matthew the Apostle School, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Open House for Prospective Families**, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Information: 317-251-3997 or rsobolweski@saintmatt.org.

Father Thomas Scecina Memorial High School, 5000 Nowland Ave., Indianapolis. **"A Sign of the Cross,"** screening of the documentary on the 165-year history of the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg, 3-4:30 p.m., free. Register: www.scecina.org/sistersmovie. Information: 317-352-3225 or rbranson@scecina.org.

February 1

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 p.m.

Information: 317-243-0777.

February 1-March 15

St. Patrick Parish, 1807 Poplar St., Terre Haute. **Catholics Returning Home**, 7-week program to welcome inactive Catholics back into the community led by returning Catholics, Wednesdays 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. beginning Feb. 1, free. Information, registration: Donna Wenstrup, 815-232-8518 or Donna.wenstrup@saintpat.org.

February 3

SS Peter and Paul Cathedral chapel, 1347 N. Meridian, Indianapolis. **Lumen Dei Catholic Business Group**, 6:30 a.m. Mass, 7:15-8:30 a.m. breakfast at Lincoln Square Pancake House, 2330 N. Meridian, Indianapolis. Information: 317-435-3447 or lumen.dei@comcast.net.

Most Holy Name of Jesus Church, 89 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **First Friday devotion**, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 5:30 p.m.; reconciliation, 5:45-6:45 p.m.; Mass, 7 p.m.; Litany of the Sacred Heart and prayers for the Holy Father, 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday** celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass, 5:45 p.m., exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 9:30 p.m., sacrament of Reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or info@olgreenwood.org.

St. Monica Church, 6161 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. **Serra Club, Mass for Vocations**, 8 a.m., with St. Monica students, coffee and donuts to follow. Information: 317-748-1478 or smclaughlin@holyspirit.cc.

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Movie Night**, 6:30-9 p.m., \$5 includes movie, popcorn and refreshments. Information: 317-545-7681 or www.archindy.org/fatima.

February 4

St. Michael Church, 145 St. Michael Blvd., Brookville. **First Saturday Marian Devotional Prayer Group**, Mass, prayers, rosary, confession, meditation, 8 a.m. Information: 765-647-5462.

Terre Haute Helpers of God's Precious Infants, 7:30 a.m. Mass at the Carmelite Monastery, 59 Allendale, Terre Haute; 8:45 a.m. car pool from St. Patrick Parish, 1807 Poplar St., Terre Haute, to Bloomington Planned Parenthood, 421 S. College Ave., arriving 10:15 a.m.; return to St. Patrick Parish around noon. Information: Tom McBroom, 812-841-0060, mcbroom.tom@gmail.com.

White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Chickens 101: Cluck-A-Palooza!**, learn the basics of keeping a flock of chickens, 1-4 p.m., \$25, registration deadline Jan. 30. Information: 812-535-2931, wvc@spsmw.org, or events.sistersofprovidence.org.

St. Jude School, 5375 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **All-School Alumni Celebration**, after 5 p.m. Mass, live music, refreshments, beer and wine, free. Information: 317-784-6828, ext. 233 or Mbuckel@sjsindy.org.

February 7

Mission 27 Resale, 132 Leota

St., Indianapolis. **Senior Discount Day**, every Tuesday, seniors get 30 percent off clothing, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., ministry supports Indianapolis St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry and Changing Lives Forever program. Information: 317-687-8260.

February 11

Intercultural Pastoral Institute, 4838 Fletcher Ave., Indianapolis. **National Black Catholic Congress Day of Reflection**, sponsored by the Archdiocesan Office of Intercultural Ministry, 9 a.m., a day of prayer for the Church, especially for the African and African-American communities, free-will offering. Registration and information: 317-236-1474 or pspringer@archindy.org.

February 11-18

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 5333 E. Washington St., Indianapolis. **Eight-Day Festival of Prayer**, spiritual events and activities celebrating the feast days of Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Bernadette. Information: 317-356-7291 or parishsecretary@ollindy.org. †

Catholic Distance University three-week online seminars are available for \$30

Two three-week online seminars through Catholic Distance University are now available for members of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for just \$30:

—Missionary Discipleship: Encounter Jesus and Spread the Good News—Explore the Holy Father's call and challenge to Catholics to live out our relationship with Jesus through the lens of a missionary in our everyday lives. Learn how each baptized Catholic can answer the call in his or her home, family, Church and ministry to better know Christ and make him known to

others. Jan. 23-Feb. 13.

—Making the Case for Christ—Strengthen your faith and prepare yourself to better perform spiritual works of mercy. Develop objective and persuasive reasons for belief that you can share with family and friends who may doubt the historical reality, divinity or resurrection of Jesus. Feb. 6-27.

To register and see a full list of continuing education courses and upcoming seminars, log onto cdu.catalog.instructure.com. Use Promo Code CDU16INDIANAPOL when registering to qualify for the \$30 rate. †

Movie about Medjugorje to be featured in Indianapolis on Jan. 26

All are invited to view a movie about Medjugorje called *Apparition Hill* at Glendale Theater, 6102 N. Rural St., in Indianapolis, at 7 p.m. on Jan. 26.

The movie features two atheists, one believer, a mother struggling with cancer, a man diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a struggling addict and a woman questioning her faith as they search for answers to life's big questions on Apparition Hill in Medjugorje, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where apparitions of the Blessed Mother have been reported to be seen by six visionaries sporadically since 1981. Ann Vucic, an English interpreter for the visionaries, will be in attendance to share her own experiences with Medjugorje and the visionaries.

The event is sponsored by the Carmel, Ind.-based Tekton Ministries, which organizes pilgrimages around the world and serves as the public relations and marketing arm of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, which operates holy sites in the region.

Tickets are a suggested \$10 donation each to cover theater rental and a licensing fee.

Ticket purchase in advance is recommended. To do so, or for more information, log onto www.tektonministries.org/apparition-hill or call 317-574-4191.

If the event sells out, another viewing of *Apparition Hill* will be scheduled—check back on the Tekton Ministries website or call them for updates. †



Continuing a tradition

First-grade students at St. Louis School in Batesville place "straw" in a manger as part of a project to prepare their hearts for Baby Jesus. The straw consists of yellow strips of paper on which students wrote a good deed they did for someone. The project was inspired by the same tradition practiced by retired second-grade teacher Laura Jo Tebbe at St. Mary School in Greensburg when St. Louis first-grade teacher Andi McKee attended school there as a child.

(Submitted photo)

Terre Haute Deanery will host Catholics Returning Home sessions starting Feb. 1

The Terre Haute Deanery invites all inactive Catholics to participate in a Catholics Returning Home program at the St. Patrick Parish rectory, 1807 Poplar St., in Terre Haute, on seven consecutive Wednesdays from 6:30-8:30 p.m. starting on Feb. 1.

Catholics Returning Home is a seven-week program that welcomes inactive Catholics to become integrated back into the Catholic community. The

sessions, which build on each other weekly, are led by Catholic who have been away from the Church and have returned. The informal format will invite questions and discussions about some of the most common concerns of those who have been away from the Church.

For more information or to register, contact Donna Wenstrup at 815-232-8518 or Donna.wenstrup@saintpat.org. †

Terre Haute's seventh Roe v. Wade Observance set for noon on Jan. 27

In solemn observance of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, all are invited to join in a peaceful, prayerful, pro-life gathering in front of the Vigo County Courthouse, 33 S. 3rd St., in Terre Haute, from noon to 1 p.m. on Jan. 27.

Signs will be provided. Parking may be available behind the Vigo County Court House. If you can only attend for five minutes, you are still welcome.

For more information, contact Tom McBroom at 812-841-0060 or e-mail mcbroom.tom@gmail.com. †



The Face of Mercy

(from Pope Francis' papal bull "Misericordiae Vultus")

By Daniel Conway

Follow pope's example, live the Gospel by words and actions

Pope Francis is full of surprises. We experienced this firsthand when Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin was elevated to the College of Cardinals in a move that even he found "shocking."

The pope from Argentina has a different way of doing things than his predecessors. That doesn't make him better or worse than recent popes, but it does align him somewhat with St. John XXIII who surprised the whole world when he called for the Second Vatican Council, and famously "opened the Church's windows" to the modern world.

St. John XXIII was a traditionalist at heart who had great love and respect for the Church's fundamental teaching and practice. But he was also a man of the people who recognized that change in how those teachings are expressed was needed—for the sake of the Gospel, and in the best interests of the Church's evangelizing mission.

The popes who followed John XXIII have affirmed the need for radical change, a new evangelization, but the way each pope has gone about affecting this change has been different. I would argue that these differences

have been in style, not substance.

Blessed Pope Paul VI could not bring himself to reject the Church's traditional teaching on human life and sexuality. St. John Paul II was an ardent defender of liberty who stood firm against the oppressive, totalitarian systems he grew up in. Benedict XVI argued passionately against the danger of relativism in politics and in Church governance. Pope Francis stands with the poor and against all efforts to marginalize individuals and peoples. He also exercises his ministry in a more open and personal way—sending handwritten notes, making late night phone calls and making unscheduled visits to hospitals, prisons and refugee camps.

All of these papal stances represent aspects of Church teaching that are critical to Christian discipleship in our contemporary world. All reflect the words and example of our Lord Jesus Christ who alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life. All are authentic to the human beings who occupy the Chair of St. Peter at given moments in human history.

At least in retrospect, the popes who preceded Pope Francis were more predictable. They were not as prone to

gestures or surprise moves as our current Holy Father is.

Jorge Mario Bergoglio, when he was the cardinal-archbishop of Buenos Aires, surprised people by riding the bus, cooking his own meals and doing his own laundry. That's what first attracted Marie Tobin, the mother of our former archbishop, to the cardinal from Argentina. She was surprised, but very pleased, to learn that he is a simple man not given to putting on airs. Years later, Mrs. Tobin was once again surprised—and very pleased—that the Holy Father had recognized the same qualities in her son, now Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin!

What are we to make of the surprises of Pope Francis? What are they intended to teach us? How can we learn from them—and apply them to our daily lives?

A recent issue of *Rome Reports*, a newsletter that follows the daily activities of the pope, offered a summary of the teaching of Pope Francis using his own words:

Teaching #1: "God does not want the condemnation of anyone, nobody. I once heard a very nice saying: 'There is no saint without a past and no sinner without a future.' How beautiful is this!"

Teaching #2: "What does it mean to ignore the suffering of man? It means to ignore God. If I do not approach that man, that woman, that child, that old man, that old woman who suffers, I do not get close to God."

Teaching #3: "The Christian does not exclude anyone; he offers a place for everyone; he has room for everyone. Allow them to come to you."

I believe that the gestures, symbols and surprises of Pope Francis are all intended to underscore this teaching: *God is close to us, but to touch him, we must walk with all our sisters and brothers—especially those who are on the margins of society. All are loved. No sin cannot be forgiven by God. All have a place in the one family of God.*

Let's follow the example of Pope Francis. Let's commit ourselves to living and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our words and our actions. Above all, let's be willing to move beyond our own comfort zones to touch others, to encounter Christ!

(Daniel Conway is a member of The Criterion's editorial committee.) †

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

Sigamos el ejemplo del papa: vivamos el Evangelio en palabras y obras

El papa Francisco es una caja de sorpresas. Esto lo vivimos de primera mano cuando el arzobispo Joseph W. Tobin fue elevado al Colegio de Cardenales, un acontecimiento que tomó por sorpresa incluso al propio arzobispo.

El papa argentino tiene una forma distinta de hacer las cosas con respecto a sus predecesores. Eso no lo hace ni mejor ni peor que los sumos pontífices de años recientes, pero de alguna forma se asemeja a las enseñanzas del papa San Juan XXIII que sorprendió al mundo entero cuando convocó al Concilio Vaticano II y causó conmoción al "abrir las ventanas de la Iglesia" al mundo moderno.

San Juan XXIII fue un tradicionalista de corazón que sentía un amor y un respeto profundos por las enseñanzas y las prácticas fundamentales de la Iglesia. Pero también era un hombre del pueblo que reconocía que era necesario un cambio, por el bien del Evangelio y para beneficio de la misión evangelizadora de la Iglesia.

Los papas que sucedieron a Juan XXIII reafirmaron la necesidad de un cambio radical, una nueva evangelización, pero cada papa en lo sucesivo ha materializado estos cambios de manera diferente. Yo sostengo que estas diferencias han sido en cuanto a forma y no a fondo.

El papa y beato Pablo VI no fue capaz

de rechazar la doctrina tradicional de la Iglesia en cuanto a la vida humana y la sexualidad. Juan Pablo II fue un ardiente defensor de la libertad quien se opuso firmemente a los sistemas opresores y totalitarista en los que creció. Benedicto XVI argumentó acaloradamente contra el peligro del "relativismo" en los ámbitos político y eclesiástico. El papa Francisco defiende a los pobres y se opone a todos los esfuerzos tendientes a marginalizar a las personas y los pueblos. También ejerce su ministerio de una forma más abierta y personal, enviando notas manuscritas, realizando llamadas telefónicas a altas horas de la noche y visitando hospitales, cárceles y campos de refugiados sin previo aviso.

Todas estas posturas papales representan aspectos de la doctrina de la Iglesia que resultan esenciales para el discipulado cristiano en nuestro mundo contemporáneo. Todas reflejan las palabras y el ejemplo de nuestro Señor Jesucristo que es la Verdad, el Camino y la Vida. Todas representan la autenticidad de los seres humanos que se sientan en la Silla de San Pedro en momentos específicos a lo largo de la historia humana.

Los sumos pontífices que antecedieron al papa Francisco fueron, al menos en retrospectiva, más predecibles. No fueron

tan dados a realizar gestos o movimientos sorpresivos como nuestro actual Santo Padre.

Jorge Mario Bergoglio, cuando era cardenal obispo de Buenos Aires, sorprendía al pueblo al subirse al autobús, cocinar sus propios alimentos y lavarse su propia ropa. Eso fue lo primero que atrajo a Marie Tobin, la madre de nuestro arzobispo anterior, hacia el cardenal argentino. La Sra. Tobin se sorprendió gratamente al descubrir que era un hombre sencillo que no se daba ningún postín. Años más tarde, la Sra. Tobin quedó nuevamente sorprendida—y muy contenta—de que el Santo Padre reconociera esas mismas cualidades en su hijo, ahora el cardenal Joseph W. Tobin.

¿Cómo debemos interpretar las sorpresas del papa Francisco? ¿Qué enseñanzas encierran para nosotros? ¿Cómo podemos aprender de ellas y aplicarlas en nuestra vida cotidiana?

Una edición reciente de *Rome Reports*, un boletín que sigue las actividades diarias del papa, presentó un resumen de las enseñanzas del papa Francisco con sus propias palabras:

Enseñanza #1: "Dios no desea la condena de nadie, de nadie. Una vez escuché un algo muy bello que decía: 'No hay santo sin pasado ni pecador sin

futuro.' ¡Qué hermoso es esto!"

Enseñanza #2: "¿Qué significa ignorar el sufrimiento del hombre? Significa ignorar a Dios. Si no me acerco a ese hombre, a esa mujer, a ese niño, a ese anciano o a esa anciana que sufre, no me acerco a Dios."

Enseñanza #3: "El cristiano no excluye a nadie; le ofrece un lugar a todos y tiene espacio para todos. Dejen que se acerquen a ustedes."

Considero que los gestos, los símbolos y las sorpresas que nos da el papa Francisco están destinados a destacar sus enseñanzas: *Dios está cerca de nosotros, pero para poder tocarlo, debemos caminar junto a nuestros hermanos, especialmente aquellos que se encuentran en los márgenes de la sociedad. Todos somos amados. No hay ningún pecado que Dios no pueda perdonar. Todos tienen un lugar en la gran familia de Dios.*

Sigamos el ejemplo del papa Francisco. Comprometámonos a vivir y a proclamar el Evangelio de Jesucristo a través de nuestras palabras y obras. Por encima de todo, debemos estar dispuestos a abandonar nuestra comodidad para llegar a los demás, para encontrarnos con Cristo.

(Daniel Conway es integrante del comité editorial de The Criterion.) †

'Stagnant' and selfish Christians are hopeless, unable to cope, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Christians who forge ahead with hope in God have the strength to endure life's dark moments, Pope Francis said in a morning homily.

However, Christians who refuse to fight for positive changes that benefit everyone are "stagnant" and selfish, he said on Jan. 17 during Mass in the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

Christians who are "lazy" or "lukewarm" in the faith "have found

in the Church a nice parking lot" for themselves where their lives are protected "with all possible guarantees," he said. It's like "living in a refrigerator" that preserves things to stay just as they are, he said.

"Lazy Christians," he said, are "Christians that have no desire to move forward, Christians who do not fight for things that bring change, new things, things that would be good for everyone if

these things were to change."

Such "stationary" Christians, he said, remind him of an old saying back home warning that stagnant water is the first to go bad.

"Lazy Christians" have no hope, he said. They are "in retirement," which is fine after decades of work, but "to spend your whole life in retirement is awful" with never anything to look forward to on the horizon.

Christians who are "parked" or stuck in one spot "are self-centered. They only look at themselves, they don't know how to lift their heads to look" at God, Pope Francis said.

A true Christian life, he said, is "a courageous life" built on hope.

This hope is like an anchor that has been thrown overboard, but "we are holding on the rope," fighting, enduring the storm and looking ahead upon an open horizon. †

Ministry celebrates decade of helping women transition from prison

SIoux CITY, Iowa (CNS)—Franciscan Sister Gwen Hennessey, director of Clare Guest House, puts a different spin on the “What would Jesus do?” slogan.

“I think what we provide is what Jesus would do,” said Sister Gwen, who directs the transitional home for women released from prison.

Clare Guest House began as an initiative of the Sioux City Multicultural Neighborhood Project, a ministry approved by the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa, in 1998. Its mission was to respond to the needs of poor women and children, collaborate in the development of neighborhood communities and serve as an outreach to Spanish-speaking immigrants.

“When we no longer had any Spanish-speaking sisters for the project, it evolved into this project of providing a safe, supportive environment for women coming out of prison,” explained Franciscan Sister Grace Ann Witte, who resides at Clare Guest House with Sister Gwen.

In 2005, Franciscan Sisters Shirley Waldschmitt, Mary Lee Cox and Grace Ann initiated planning for the halfway house. They developed a philosophy for the house, identified the type of women it would serve, and drafted rules and staffing plans before presenting their findings.

“A small group of women agreed to continue to meet as an advisory group, colloquially described as the ‘Wise Women,’ to further finalize plans,” Sister Grace Ann said. “It was at that time the name Clare Guest House developed, in honor of St. Clare of Assisi, who lived an active life among the poor, serving lepers, before being forced into an enclosed contemplative life.”

In July 2005, the project received a \$20,000 grant from the Sisters of St. Francis Ministry Fund to begin Clare Guest House.

They identified a two-story, five-bedroom house in a residential area north of downtown to locate the ministry. It had been a residential treatment facility for teenage girls, but it was vacant for about five years. Sister Gwen moved in on Sept. 27, 2005, to serve as live-in director.

“The first guest arrived on Dec. 12, 2005, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe,” she recalled. “I don’t think it was a coincidence that first guest was half-Hispanic.”

In 2006, Clare Guest House was incorporated as an independent organization, distinct from the neighborhood project and from the Sisters of St. Francis.

The home has had 106 admissions since opening. Most have been women released from the Iowa Women’s Correctional Institution in Mitchellville. Some have returned to the home more than once, Sister Gwen admitted.

“We’ve had some women who were not success stories,” she said, “but we’ve also had many who have, who have kept in touch with us, thanking us for getting their lives back.”

Sister Gwen could point to herself as a success story because she once “walked the walk.”

Sister Gwen and her sister, Franciscan Sister Dorothy Hennessey, were among 13 women arrested while participating in civil disobedience in 2000 during a nonviolent protest at the former U.S. Army School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Ga. Both received a six-month sentence, serving it at a federal prison in Illinois.

Clare Guest House is the only transitional home of its type in northwest Iowa and the only one under the auspices of the Dubuque Franciscans, who founded Briar Cliff University in Sioux City.

Sister Grace Ann, a former Briar Cliff sociology and criminology professor, explained that guests, who all are on parole, must commit to stay at least two months but no more than six months.

“During that time, women must look for work, meet with parole officers and help with chores, such as cooking and cleaning,” she said. “In some cases, especially for health reasons, we have allowed the stay to be longer.”



The Clare Guest House, a transitional home for women after serving jail time, is pictured in December 2016. The guest house in Sioux City, Iowa, recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. (CNS photo/Jerry L. Mennenga, The Catholic Globe)

There is no typical Clare House guest, Sister Grace Ann said.

“We have had women as young as 19 and as old as 64; however, the most frequently occurring ages were 25, 26,” she said. “We’ve had women who completed an eighth-grade education and ones who earned master’s degrees.”

What may be a common connection among the women is substance abuse. Almost 90 percent of the women on their application forms indicated a problem with substance abuse, and almost 80 percent have been in treatment for chemical dependency.

“It’s certainly one of our greatest challenges, mental health issues, because of the environment in which these women were raised with their addictions,” Sister Gwen said.

Funding for Clare Guest House comes primarily from private donations. Two significant contributions also have come from the agency that holds the state gaming license for Sioux City’s casino.

One of the needs Clare Guest House may face in the future is leadership. Sister Grace Ann is 79 and Sister Gwen is 84.



Franciscan Sister Gwen Hennessey talks in December 2016 about the 10 years that the Clare Guest House in Sioux City, Iowa, has served as a transitional home for women who served jail time. (CNS photo/Jerry L. Mennenga, The Catholic Globe)

“We have no plan,” Sister Grace Ann said with a smile, while Sister Gwen laughed aloud, adding, “We leave it all in God’s hands.” †

EMBASSY

continued from page 1

be taken that favor mutual trust and contribute to creating a climate that permits courageous decisions to be made in favor of peace,” the Vatican said.

The protection of holy sites “for believers of all three of the Abrahamic religions” was also discussed, the statement said.

After the pope and president spent more than 20 minutes speaking in private, Abbas introduced Pope Francis to the Palestinian officials traveling with him.

One member of the delegation joked with the pope about the pope’s favorite soccer team, San Lorenzo, before giving Pope Francis a soccer jersey with the colors of the Palestinian flag.

Abbas presented the pope with five gifts: a Byzantine-style icon of Jesus;

a stone from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, the site of Jesus’ crucifixion; documentation from the Presidential Committee for the Restoration of the Church of the Nativity; a book documenting Palestine’s diplomatic relations with the Holy See; and a gold-plated icon of the Holy Family.

The pope gave the president a gold commemorative medallion of the Holy Year of Mercy and Arabic translations of “*Amoris Laetitia*” (“The Joy of Love”) and “*Laudato Si*,” on Care for Our Common Home.”

Taking his leave, Abbas warmly embraced the pope and went to meet with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, and Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher, Vatican secretary for relations with states.

Issa Kassissieh, Palestinian ambassador to the Holy See, said the new embassy was “a significant achievement for the Palestinian people, considering that the

pope has taken a moral, legal and political stand through recognizing the state of Palestine.”

In an interview on Jan. 12 with Palestinian news agency, WAFA, Kassissieh said the new embassy “marks the outcome” of improved relations between Palestine and the Holy See after the signing in June 2015 of an agreement that supports a two-state solution to the ongoing conflict in the Holy Land.

Abbas’ visit came on the eve of an international peace conference in Paris on Jan. 15 aimed at restating the international community’s support for the peace process.

However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denounced the gathering as a “rigged conference” that seeks to adopt anti-Israeli policies.

“This pushes peace backward. It’s not going to obligate us. It’s a relic of the

past. It’s a last gasp of the past before the future sets in,” Netanyahu said on Jan. 12 following a meeting with Norway’s foreign minister, Borge Brende.

President-elect Donald Trump’s proposal to move the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is also a cause for concern for the Palestinian government as both states claim the city as their rightful capital.

The two-state solution would split the city and allow for Palestine to claim East Jerusalem as their capital. Israel, however, claims the entire city as its capital.

According to WAFA, Abbas wrote to Trump on Jan. 9 and said the move likely would have a “disastrous impact on the peace process, on the two-state solution and on the stability and security of the entire region.”

Following his meeting with Pope Francis, President Abbas told journalists he hoped President-elect Trump would not move forward with the proposal.

“We are waiting to see if it happens. If it does it will not help peace, and we hope it does not happen,” Abbas said.

Despite the looming threats to the peace process, President Abbas said he hoped that the example set by the Palestinians agreement with the Vatican will allow European countries to follow suit in order to achieve peace.

“I met his Holiness and [thanked him that] the Holy See has completely recognized Palestine as an independent state, and I hope that other states will follow the Vatican’s example and recognize the state of Palestine,” Abbas said. †

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Catholic panel seeks for common ground with Trump administration

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Catholic panelists gathered to discuss “Faithful Priorities in a Time of Trump” said it is difficult to get over some of the words the president-elect said during the campaign—and even before he was a candidate. But as his presidency neared,



Msgr. John Enzler

many of them said it was important to find ways to work with him for the common good.

“When Donald Trump says things about women ... I have a hard time stomaching those comments,” said

Msgr. John Enzler, president and CEO of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington. “We can still find a way, though, to listen and say, ‘How do we find common ground?’”

Msgr. Enzler was one of five panelists on Jan. 12 who addressed the role the Catholic faith can play as the country was in the final days of preparation for the incoming Trump administration. Some Catholics such as Rep. Francis Rooney, R-Florida, expressed great optimism.

“We can have a lot of hope that he will protect life the way we want him to do ... defunding Planned Parenthood, protecting life,” Rooney said. “Things like the insurance mandate can be brought into harmony of First Amendment rights.”

Yet others, such as panelist Jessica Chilin Hernandez, expressed uncertainty and apprehension of the days ahead. Chilin works at Georgetown University’s Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor, thanks to a work permit she has through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, known as DACA. President Barack Obama, through an executive action taken in 2012, created a policy that allows certain undocumented young people who came to the U.S. as children to have a work permit and be exempt from deportation.

Chilin is one of more than 750,000 people who signed up for DACA. During the campaign, Trump said he would end the program and threatened mass deportations, sending those like Chilin into panic.

“I felt a fear unlike any other fear I have had before,” she said about the moment she learned Trump won the election. “The fear

was visceral. ... one thought that occupied my mind was that homeland security knows exactly where I live. It was hard to imagine myself having a future in 2017.”

Joan Rosenhauer, executive vice president of U.S. Operations for Catholic Relief Services, said now is a good time to review the principles of Catholicism and social justice, explaining that they don’t divide people and don’t say refugees or immigrants are enemies or a burden on society.



Joan Rosenhauer

“What we have to do is lift up our principles,”

Rosenhauer said.

“The problem is deeper because our own Catholic people do not know those principles.”

Sister Simone Campbell, executive director of Network, a Catholic social justice lobbying organization, said the country is showing a high level of ambiguity, fear, dysfunction and chaos.



Sr. Simone Campbell, S.S.S.

“I think that challenges all of us as people of faith,” said Sister Simone, a member of the Sisters

of Social Service.

Now is the time to stand up for the stranger, the working poor, and anyone who needs of our kindness or help, and Catholic social teaching has a lot to say about it, Sister Simone said.

Msgr. Enzler noted that it is also important to understand that individuals can do much by performing kind actions toward others. People can start by asking: “What did I do today? It’s not an agency that can make things better but people,” he said.

Chilin said it’s important to keep in mind language that we use in daily conversation.

“Be conscientious of language,” she said. “‘Illegal’ is a racial slur. No human being is illegal and yet, in many circles, they use it to describe us.”

Panel moderator John Carr, director of Georgetown University’s Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life,



U.S. President-elect Donald Trump speaks on Jan. 11 during a news conference in the lobby of Trump Tower in New York City. (CNS photo/Lucas Jackson, Reuters)

which sponsored the event, asked how Catholics can build bridges in “an angry country, a divided country.” There are a lot of people who feel under attack, he said.

“It’s important to see what role [Catholics] can play in divisions that have been created over the past year,” Rosenhauer said. “I was really struck by Cardinal [Joseph W.] Tobin and his homily at his installation where one of his key points was that our kindness must be known to all.”

Cardinal Tobin, previously archbishop of Indianapolis, was installed on Jan. 6 as the new archbishop of Newark, N.J.

It’s important to stand up for beliefs even when others disagree with them, she said, “but we have to find a way to do it with kindness.”

“We want to protect children in the womb. That’s something we can work with this [the Trump] administration and Congress on. ... Senator [Jeff] Sessions said there would be no Muslim ban. That’s something we would support and work together on ... then let’s be clear about the areas for disagreements.”

Msgr. Enzler said Catholics, particularly the Church’s leaders, must also speak and raise their voices for

the vulnerable, and strongly speak the Church’s message.

Moderator Carr asked Sister Simone whether she could offer any lessons about building bridges that she learned during the Nuns on the Bus tour last summer, a 19-day trip that a group of women religious undertook from Wisconsin to the national political conventions in Cleveland and Philadelphia. Its aim was to learn what people around the country were thinking about just before the presidential election.

Sister Simone used the bus as a metaphor for the country. Some said the bus had made them feel as if they were welcomed back into a community, a feeling they had not had in a long time, because everyone was welcomed on the bus. She said she heard stories about poverty, lack of jobs and lack of access to health care that resulted in the deaths of loved ones.

“No one can be left out of our care,” Sister Simone said. “We are a nation of problem-solvers, but we have sunk into extreme individualism.”

As Pope Francis has said, it’s about the people, and when people feel loved, they flourish and when they flourish so does the country, she said. †

Europe’s Catholic, Orthodox leaders issue statement against terrorism

OXFORD, England (CNS)—Catholic and Orthodox leaders have pledged to stand together against fundamentalism and terrorism, as well as resisting forces working to erode and destroy religious belief in Europe.

“Terrorist violence against people considered unbelievers or infidels is the extreme degree of religious intolerance—we unreservedly condemn it and deplore that such acts have developed in the soil of a misguided religious culture,” the church representatives said in a joint message on Jan. 13.

“The constitutions of our states guarantee the fundamental rights of the human person. Nevertheless, in our

societies, forces are always at work to marginalize or even erase religions and their message from the public space. We believe Europe needs more than ever the breath of faith in Christ and the hope it provides.”

The 14-point message was published after a Jan. 9-12 meeting of the European Catholic-Orthodox Forum, co-chaired in Paris by Hungarian Cardinal Peter Erdo, former president of the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences, and Metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

It said Catholic and Orthodox bishops deplored “crimes that may

have been committed in the name of religion,” but believed their Churches should not be blamed “for attitudes of intolerance that are inadmissible nowadays, but used to be shared by societies in the past.”

“Our Catholic and Orthodox Churches proclaim the centrality of the human person and of its dignity created in the image of God. ... Human freedom is exercised to the utmost in the act of religious faith, which must always remain free,” said the statement from the forum, which was attended by Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk and bishops, archbishops and cardinals from 20 countries.

“Political power should not favor a particular religion but respect the supreme divinity which each religion names according to its convictions. ... The state guarantees religious freedom for all, but is itself subject to a natural ethical order from which it cannot escape.”

The four-day meeting, co-hosted by Cardinal Andre Vingt-Trois of Paris and Orthodox Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, was the first since East-West ties deteriorated over Russian involvement in Ukraine.

The message said the meeting’s aim was “to demonstrate the convergence of Catholics and Orthodox on major issues of social ethics” and the will of the Catholic and many Orthodox Churches to stand together in the face of “unprecedented challenges and threats against Christianity.”

It added that the Churches had no intention of “stigmatizing the religion

of Islam.” Noting that terrorists often were “socially disengaged young people,” it invited all youths to “commit themselves to building a fraternal world that excludes no one. We call on Muslim religious authorities to ensure there is no propagation of a systematically hostile image of the non-Muslim world.”

The forum message said that 80 percent of religious persecutions worldwide currently targeted Christians, adding that Catholic and Orthodox leaders shared solidarity with Christian targeted in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

However, it added that religious freedom also faced “restrictive interpretation” and people of faith faced “more subtle forms of discrimination” in European countries, such as when Christians were “excluded from certain roles or professions,” denied the right to conscientious objection and subjected to “the media’s denigration of what is most sacred to some.”

The message said children should be “properly educated in their own religion and at the same time educated to respect the religion of others,” adding that schools not be places “for experimentation with anthropological theses without scientific foundation, like gender theories or certain ecological ideologies that go as far as transhumanism.”

A press statement from the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences said the forum had not tackled theological or doctrinal matters or replaced a separate Catholic-Orthodox theological dialogue commission, which is finalizing an agreed document on papal primacy. †



People kneel during a 2015 Paris Mass for the 129 victims of coordinated terrorists attacks. Catholic and Orthodox leaders have pledged to stand together against fundamentalism and terrorism, and to resist forces working to erode and destroy religious belief in Europe. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Why the pope wants the Church to be a loving mother

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Mother's Day came early this year at the Vatican.

A number of feast days over the Advent and Christmas seasons gave Pope Francis a fresh opportunity to pay homage to the world's mothers, and insist further on how and why he wants the entire Church to become more maternal.

But who is this archetypal mother figure the pope upholds? Pope Francis pointed to a few of his favorite biblical heroines, praising the seemingly contradictory qualities of each:

Like Mary, she is silently compliant to God's will; like Rachel, she weeps inconsolably, drawing God's and the world's attention to a reality people would rather ignore; and like the persistent widow, she doesn't let being a nobody stop her from speaking up against injustice, making a fuss and pestering the one who does have power to make things right.

So how and why does the Church need to be this loving, humble, hard-as-nails champion? Let's count the ways:

- A cold, careless, selfish world thirsts for a tender warm home.

Speaking on the feast of Mary, Mother of God, on Jan. 1, Pope Francis said it's the maternal instinct to hold, hope and help that make up the "strongest antidote" to the selfishness, indifference and intolerance in the world today.

He went on to say that God chose to be "knit" inside and born of a woman, so that he could experience a mother's tenderness, hear the cries of and joys of his people, and make everyone his brother and sister in the faith who belong to a family.

- When times get tough, who are you going to call? Everyone, especially the lost, forgotten and marginalized, need a strong-willed, faithful advocate on their side.

The pope said on Jan. 1 that in his pastoral ministry, he has learned so much about the meaning of true unconditional commitment from the mothers he met whose kids were in jail, addicted to drugs or victims of war. Neither cold nor heat nor rain, he said, could stop these women from fighting for something better.

Much like the persistent widow, the mothers he met were the ones who were able to offer love and support to their suffering children "without wavering" through thick and thin.

Mary shows that humility and tenderness aren't virtues of the weak, he said, but of the strong, and that we don't have to mistreat others in order to feel important and make a difference.

- To change the world, it starts at home.

Speaking on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12, he again highlighted "those fighting mothers" he knew back in Latin America.

Often alone and with no help, they were able to raise their children right, he said. Mary is our "female fighter" facing off a mistrustful, lazy, distracted world—"a woman

who fights to strengthen the joy of the Gospel, give flesh to the Gospel" in the world.

- To help people, you must be in touch with a hard reality.

In a letter to the world's bishops marking the feast of the Holy Innocents on Dec. 28, the pope said they must listen for the sobbing of today's mothers because there are so many new Herods today, killing the young with their tyranny and "unbridled thirst for power."

Listen to where the cries are coming from, he said. They are not to be ignored or silenced. It's going to take courage to first acknowledge this difficult reality, and work to ensure "the bare minimum needed so that their dignity as God's children will not only be respected but, above all, defended."

- Sometimes the best answer is no answer.

Pope Francis again advocated the importance of using the heart over the head, and the Church's need to be more sensitive to another's pain in order to bring God's hope and compassion.

During his general audience on Jan. 4, he talked about Rachel's tears being seeds of hope and the futility of trite or insensitive speeches. Rachel's refusal to be consoled shows how delicately one must approach a person in pain, the pope said.

When people are hurting, "it is necessary to share in their desperation. In order to dry the tears from the face of those who suffer, we must join our weeping with theirs. This is the only way our words may truly be able to offer a bit of hope," he said.

Often it's only tears that can open one's eyes to the realities of life that need attention, he said.

When Pope Francis dedicated his audience talk to mothers on Jan. 7, 2015, the feast of the Nativity for the Orthodox Churches, he lamented how people had plenty of poems and "beautiful things" to say about moms, but at the end of the day "the mother is rarely listened to or



A statue of Mary and the Christ child is seen in 2015 inside Jesus the Good Shepherd Church in Dunkirk, Md. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

helped in daily life."

Not only are they "rarely considered central to society in her role," he said, "the mother is not always held in the right regard, she is barely heard" in the Church, too.

With his many reflections on motherhood, the pope is trying to bring that maternal warmth back to the Church.

But he has also called for the courage "to knock at the door" like the persistent widow because "the Lord himself says, 'Everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened'" (Mt 7:8; Lk 11:10). †

Global papal prayer network continues to evolve

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Last year, more than 13 million people around the world watched Pope Francis explain one of his specific prayer intentions each month.

The 90-second, personal explanations in "The Pope Video," first launched in January 2016, encouraged people to join an estimated 50 million Catholics who already had a more formal relationship with The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network—better known by its former title, the Apostleship of Prayer.

The prayer network, which is more than 170 years old, continues to evolve.

After the debut in 2016 of the monthly video on www.thepopevideo.org, the new year began with Pope Francis adding a second monthly intention—an urgent prayer appeal. For January, the appeal was for the homeless struggling with cold temperatures and indifference.

For decades, the Apostleship of Prayer distributed two intentions for each month: one focused on needs in mission territories and the other on a matter considered more universal.

The lists were published a full year in advance after going through a long process of collecting suggestions, getting input from Vatican offices and being translated.

Pope Francis has decided now that the prepared list of prayer intentions will alternate each month between a missionary concern and a universal one. The second prayer for the month will be announced at the beginning of the month by the pope during his Sunday Angelus address.

The urgent intention will then be shared with members of the prayer network through its websites, social media and e-mail.

Jesuit Father James Kubicki, U.S. director of the network, said the international director believes the urgent

prayer request is a way for Pope Francis "to confront 'the culture of indifference' by focusing our prayerful attention on situations that are 'more concrete, precise, current, [and] related to actual circumstances.'"

Jesuit Father Luis Ramirez, assistant international director of the prayer network, told Catholic News Service (CNS) on Jan. 11 that the urgent prayer request does two things. First, it strengthens the spiritual experience of those who are joining in prayer, letting them know they do not pray alone. And, more importantly, it lets those suffering know that the pope sees their pain and is trying to rally assistance.

Of course, Father Ramirez said, the pope hopes people are "not just watching the video and receiving the appeal, but taking action and offering help."

Justiniano Vila, a manager at La Machi, the Barcelona-based company that produces "The Pope Video," told CNS more than 13 million people clicked on and watched at least one of the videos in 2016. Those that garnered the most views were January's video on interreligious dialogue, February's on care for creation and June's on solidarity in cities.

The most popular platform for viewing the video is Facebook, he said. The Pope Video Facebook page has a reach of 25 million people. The video also can be watched on the official website—www.thepopevideo.org—and on YouTube.

In the videos, which last less than 90 seconds, Pope Francis speaks in Spanish. Subtitles are then added for English, French, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese and Arabic.

Of the more than 13 million views in 2016, Vila said, 45 percent were in the original Spanish, 29 percent were with the Portuguese subtitles and 13 percent were with English subtitles. †

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Grandparents can help orient children to the future

By David Gibson

“A plant without roots does not grow.” Pope Francis was thinking of grandparents when he made that statement recently in Tbilisi, capital of the country of Georgia.

In the pope’s lofty, inspiring view, grandparents fulfill a necessary role in families by linking generations and making grandchildren aware—through “their words, their affection or simply their presence”—that “history did not begin with them” (#192). He spoke of this in “The Joy of Love,” his 2016 apostolic exhortation on the family.

Grandparents represent a family’s memory, while helping orient the family toward its future. That is the view of Pope Francis, who may be today’s leading proponent on the world stage of the virtues of grandparenthood.

I suspect most grandparents want to fulfill the role described to them by the pope. They willingly would serve their family as a font of memories that matter. Their question, though, is how and when to do this.

I confess I am no grandparenthood expert. But I am an experienced grandfather, with grandchildren ranging in age from 2 to nearly 15.

That age range itself reveals one of grandparenthood’s complexities. Many grandparents find themselves called, in virtually one and the same moment, to devote caring attention to children whose delight it is to play in the age-old ways of toddlers, and to teens who want little more than to immerse themselves in iPods and electronic games.

Some grandchildren love school; others, not so much. Some might spend every waking moment outdoors if they could; others much prefer the indoors.

What are grandparents to do? Planning a family activity involving a number of grandchildren can tax the imagination.

But I am amazed, I confess, by how many children’s movies I have seen over the past decade! I should also confess that like millions of 21st-century grandparents, I am grateful when an older grandchild comes to my rescue after my smartphone or laptop misbehaves.

If no two grandchildren are alike, neither are any two grandparents. There really is no grandparenthood rulebook or checklist to follow.

Upon first becoming grandparents, I am certain that many follow the example set long ago by their own parents.

Many, I also am certain, are astonished to discover how much they love their grandchildren. Exactly where this love should lead is a grandparent’s dilemma.

It is not uncommon in our highly mobile culture for grandparents to live far away from grandchildren. I knew of one new grandmother who for months resolved this situation by driving several hundred miles each way almost every weekend to spend time with her newborn grandchild.

Other grandparents are thankful in the Internet age for Skype, which allows them at least to “see” children and grandchildren via long-distance video visits.

The fabric of grandparenthood is woven of numerous diverse strands. Some become grandparents at a quite young age. Others, with children marrying at later ages nowadays, may not feel particularly young when their first grandchildren arrive.

Some grandparents are employed full time. Others are limited in their activities by health or income issues.

Countless grandparents in varying walks of life share in rearing grandchildren by taking care of them one or two days a week, or even daily while a parent goes to work. Could society get along without them?

Yes, grandparents come in all sizes and shapes, so to speak.

The untold story about grandparents involves their large role as sources of stability within their larger family, even financial stability. As the final report of the October 2015 assembly in Rome of the meeting of the Synod of Bishops on the vocation and mission of the family observed:

“Grandparents frequently collaborate with their sons and daughters in economic matters, the upbringing of their children and the transmission of the faith to their grandchildren” (#18).

Among the best-known grandparents of our time, though she was not actually



Palestinian Catholic Susan Abu Qubei, 46, lights a candle on Dec. 20, 2016, with her 3-year-old grandson, Luciano Barham, in the grotto of the Church of Nativity, where tradition holds Christ was born in Bethlehem, West Bank. Grandparents frequently collaborate with their sons and daughters in economic matters, the upbringing of their children and the transmission of the faith to their grandchildren. (CNS photo/Debbie Hill)

“of our time,” is Pope Francis’ paternal grandmother, Rosa. He recalled her on Pentecost eve in 2013 as “a woman who explained to us, who talked to us about Jesus, who taught us the catechism.” She “loved me so much,” he has said.

The story of his family involved growing up in a setting where “faith was lived in a simple, practical way,” Pope Francis said.

Our era is “the time of grandparents,” he believes. He said when addressing participants in the Diocese of Rome’s 2016 pastoral conference, “Let our grandparents share and tell us their dreams so that we can have prophecies for the future.”

Raising children always is a work in progress. So grandparents, like parents, sometimes struggle along when it comes to knowing how to serve as good models

of adulthood and faith for a family’s newest generation.

Grandparents, of course, are not their grandchildren’s parents. Usually this is good news, suggesting to grandparents that they have entered a rewarding, new and different stage in life. It should be noted, though, that because of various unfortunate circumstances more grandparents are being called upon to be the guardians of their grandchildren.

One hears frequently that children know on some inner and deep level whether they truly are loved by those around them. I confess that I only hope and pray, like other grandparents, that this is true.

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

Church teaching on respect for elders flows from the Scriptures

By Paul Senz

It is widely recognized that the Ten Commandments are organized into two groups.

The first through the third commandments can be broadly summarized as “You shall love the Lord, your God, with your whole heart” and the fourth through 10th commandments are reflected in “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

While it would be somewhat inaccurate to think of the commandments as “ranked” by importance, it is certainly noteworthy that the first of those that deal with love of neighbor is “Honor your father and your mother.”

First, love God—then, honor your father and your mother. The first three deal with our relationship with God, and the first of the rest is this.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* emphasizes this in its section on the fourth commandment—and the fact that it applies not only to parents. In #2199, it points out that the commandment concerns kinship between not just children and parents, but also members of the extended family. “It requires honor, affection, and gratitude toward elders and ancestors.”

We can take a cue from the Book of Sirach: “Do not dismiss what the old people have to say; ... from them you will learn how to think, and the art of the timely answer” (Sir 8:9). Another translation renders this as, “Do not reject the tradition of the elders which they have heard from their ancestors; for from it you will learn how to answer when the need arises.”

As we age and mature, a funny thing happens: Not only do we grow in wisdom, but we suddenly realize that our elders may have been wiser than us all along.

Mark Twain is credited (perhaps apocryphally) with the following sardonic insight: “When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years.”

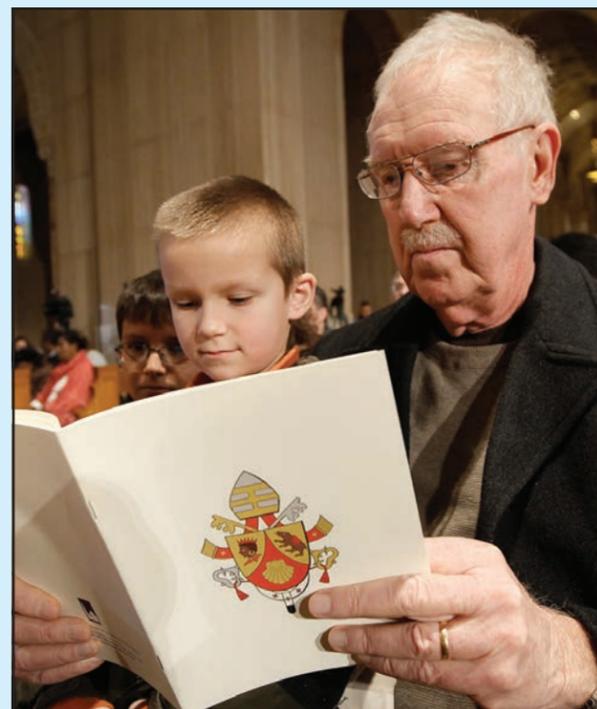
While this is certainly rife with sarcasm, the point is well-made. The wisdom of our elders is something we too often disregard or deny in our younger days, but as we age, we come to recognize their wisdom, and realize the honor that is their due.

In Scripture, we encounter many examples of the elderly being lifted up, venerated and respected. Just think of Noah, patriarch of his family, spawning the rejuvenation of human civilization following the flood.

We are reminded of Abraham, father of God’s people; Jacob; Methuselah; Simeon; Naomi, mother-in-law to Ruth; and countless other examples come to mind.

Each of these examples brings us back to the fourth commandment. The honor due to our elders is of such importance that God included it among “You shall not kill,” and “You shall not have other gods beside me.” As Scripture shows us, we would do well to acknowledge and fully live up to this ideal.

(Paul Senz is a freelance writer living in Oregon with his family.) †



Al Bolt of Burke, Va., and his grandson, Marek Ferko, 6, look over a booklet during a Feb. 24, 2013, Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. In Scripture, we encounter many examples of the elderly being lifted up, venerated and respected. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

A couple more of my press visits with Pope John Paul II

The 1980 World Congress of the Catholic Press was held in Rome. My wife Marie and I and another couple from the United States found a hotel called the Valadier between the Spanish Steps and the Piazza del Popolo. We stayed there mainly because it was cheaper than the congress hotel.



We found the hotel charming, but quite small. It was decorated with a lot of red, and the location of the rooms seemed unusual. It finally dawned on us that we were staying at a former brothel.

At the end of the Rome congress, we had what was supposed to be a private audience with Pope John Paul II. Those who attended the congress were given tickets and told to report to the bronze doors that lead to the Apostolic Palace. We walked up all the wide marble stairs to the audience

room but, when we got there, we found it full of Italians. The Romans who organized the congress simply printed enough tickets for all their friends. The audience turned out to be not as private as we had expected.

In 1985, as I was finishing my time as president of the International Federation of Catholic Press Associations and after I became editor of *The Criterion*, my federation had a symposium in Rome. At its end, we had a private audience with Pope John Paul II that turned out better than the one we had had in 1980.

Here's part of what I wrote in my diary about this audience: "The pope arrived right on the dot at 12:45. He appeared thinner than he was last year when I last saw him [when he came to the United States in 1984]. Others remarked that he looked older, but I didn't notice that. He seemed his usual self, just thinner."

I continued in my diary: "His talk to us was in English, probably written by John Foley [that's Archbishop John P. Foley, president of the Pontifical Council for

Social Communication, who had been my close friend for decades], although John didn't tell us that; the speech just seemed to be in John's style. He praised the Catholic press for the way it informs, forms and instructs the faithful and said that lives can be changed by the printed word (the same thing Archbishop Foley said in his Catholic Press Month message that year). He said we should search for ways to tell the story of God's servants serving God's people—the poor, the sick, the hungry.

"After his talk, he greeted each of us personally and then posed for a group picture. I happened to be standing right where he came for the group photo, so I ended up right behind him. The whole audience went very well and was not the mob scene that there was five years ago when we had an audience during the World Congress—but there were many more people then, and the Italians had all their friends and relatives in the front seats. There was none of that this time. We were with the pope for a half hour." †

Cornucopia/Cynthia Dewes

Life goes on ... and so should we, as hard as that may be

January is the time when we look backward and forward, assessing our hopes, strengths and dreams for a better future. That's why we make New Year's resolutions to improve our physical and behavioral habits in order to resolve our cravings with the reality of health and happiness.



Unfortunately, few of us continue working through our resolution although we may lose a few pounds or make up with someone we've angered. So life goes on much as it did before. Maybe we should work on that.

First, we must be honest about what we can and will do. Is it really possible for us to lose 40 pounds within a few months without alienating our entire family? Can we or will we keep still about our hunger pains and not irritate the others by withholding gravy, whipped cream and cookies from their diets? If not, I say we should give up that resolution.

After all, this is our problem, not theirs, and we shouldn't make it theirs. And that's the hard part, not being able to share our burden without whining or depriving others. In this case, being sensitive to others' feelings is a large part of the effort.

Next, we should examine our motives in resolving to do certain things. Or not. Is it health or just plain vanity that's driving our desire to lose weight? When we confide in someone, are we passing on information, or just trying to improve our image in another's eyes? Is it us or them at the center of the universe?

Relationships need evaluation, too. Is our marriage at a standstill, or toxic for us or our children? Is it possible to salvage the loving feelings we had in our courting days? Or is it even desirable? Can we forgive infidelity or stop our own bad behavior for a greater good? Are we being selfish or blind?

And our dealings with friends should stand the scrutiny. Are we going along with behaviors we don't approve of in order to please someone, or are we standing up for what we know is right?

Are there alternatives to confrontation or major conflict?

Are we being parents to our kids, or just caretakers? Do we really listen when they talk to us, or just wait impatiently for them to finish? Do we offer helpful suggestions or advice, or insist they get results our way, without question? Do we demand impossible things of them in order to show what great parents we are, how smart and clever our kids are?

At work, do we seek out ways to compromise or demand our own way? Do we spend time helping out the new guy, or flattering the boss? Do we do the best work we can without adding up the costs of the effort? Do we seek praise from others, or from our own conscience?

Wow. If we actually do all this assessing, it might take until next January! But if we just think about the parts that really need fixing, we can give up making New Year's resolutions. Instead, we can live for a satisfying day and a genuinely Happy New Year ahead. Let's drink to that. †

Coming of Age/Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Accept help, let others become instruments of mercy

Last year, I saw a youth group doing an interesting exercise in trust. A few teenagers were using their jackets as blindfolds as their group partner guided their walk around the church's garden back to their meeting room.



The idea was for some of the teenagers to learn to guide others, while the other party learned to trust and accept help from their peers. It ultimately showed how accepting God's loving help, even when we can't see the path we are supposed to follow, will lead us to where we are supposed to be.

This reminded me of what Helen Alvaré, law professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., had said during her keynote speech at the September 2015 World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. She said that even when a "gospel of me" seems to be encouraged in today's world, "the way of happiness, of freedom is the way of interdependent love."

"We are made to open ourselves to God first and then to every single other neighbor, who like the injured traveler in

the good Samaritan story, we happen to find across our particular path," she said. "You really do find yourself when you lose yourself in the love of other people, beginning with family and moving out into the world."

She also emphasized that human beings need to first be receivers of love to be givers of love. This made me realize that we learn to support others because we have first received help.

Yet, as we grow older, accepting others' help is scary because it requires showing our vulnerabilities to other people. Many of us have been raised to believe that we need to solve our own problems; otherwise, we appear weak. We are happy to help others, but have a hard time asking for or accepting help.

But this can prevent us from growing or, in some cases, from getting the help we truly need.

In a catechesis during the 2016 World Youth Day in Poland, Manila Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle talked about how in modern culture, one's self worth is measured by success, and that it seems like "the greatest sin of our time is to say, 'I have failed.'"

The cardinal told a crowd of 15,000 young pilgrims about the importance of opening ourselves to mercy, which means accepting when we need help.

He added that the rise of the modern "self-made" human being makes it harder for many people to open up themselves to others, including God. This is because of the idea that "if you allow others to help you, to guide you, you do not qualify as successful," he said.

In trying to be self-reliant or self-made to an extreme, a person can confuse accepting others' help with losing dignity. But, he continued, "that person will not allow anyone—even God—to touch his heart or her heart for it is an insult."

The teenagers in the youth group received a valuable lesson about their spiritual journey through that exercise: their dependence on others and on God.

By accepting help, we recognize that we cannot do it alone, that we need God to guide us, to help us when we most need it. We open ourselves to receiving mercy.

Divine help comes through human hands and hearts. Accepting others' help is a way to gracefully accept God's help and to let others become instruments of his mercy.

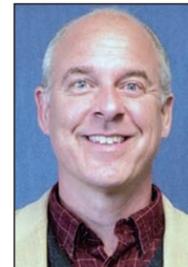
(Maria-Pia Negro Chin is bilingual associate editor at Maryknoll Magazine.) †

Worship and Evangelization

Outreach/Ken Ogorek

Want to be a better disciple? This workshop is for you!

Most Catholics know that evangelization is something we're supposed to do. But what in the heck is it?



disciples? (Mt 28:19)

The word evangelization has negative connotations for some; it calls to mind a confrontational approach—yelling on street corners, maybe. So how can a modern Catholic fulfill the command of Jesus to go and make

A non-confrontational approach

An apostolate called St Paul Street Evangelization was featured in the Aug. 19, 2016, issue of *The Criterion*. This ministry, in collaboration with a grass-roots group of local Catholics, is offering a Basic Evangelization Training workshop from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 11, at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., in Indianapolis. The cost is approximately \$20 and includes lunch. You must be at least 18 to attend the workshop, and plenty of free parking is available for it at the parish.

A lot of Catholics just don't know where to start when it comes to evangelization. What do you say? How can I talk about my faith without sounding judgmental or holier-than-thou?

If you have butterflies in your stomach when you think of yourself evangelizing, you'll be very glad that you attended this workshop. With simple, practical tips and advice—plus an opportunity to role-play and practice a bit—a non-confrontational approach to evangelization is laid out for you to learn and use going forward in your family, neighborhood and community.

Are you sure Catholics are supposed to evangelize?

Easy. Engaging. Fun. These are words that St. Paul Street Evangelization uses to describe its approach to disciple-making.

A peaceful presence. A friendly greeting. A response to the question "Why are you Catholic?" Your toolbox for evangelization will include these and more when you attend this workshop.

Once we set negative stereotypes about evangelization aside, we're relieved to learn proven techniques for fulfilling the great commission of Jesus. As mentioned above, Jesus had some specific instructions for his followers as he ascended to our heavenly Father. In the Gospel of Matthew, we hear, "All power in heaven and on Earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28:18-20).

Jesus is with you as you fulfill his command

Yes, as Blessed Pope Paul VI observed in his exhortation "On Evangelization in the Modern World," the Church "exists in order to evangelize" (#14). Whenever you strengthen your own discipleship by reaching out to others with evangelizing efforts, Jesus is there to strengthen and support you.

Please attend the Basic Evangelization Training workshop on Feb. 11. For more information, call 317-224-6820, e-mail SPindyevents@gmail.com or simply visit streetevangelization.com and look under upcoming workshops.

(Ken Ogorek is catechetical director within the Secretariat for Worship and Evangelization in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. He can be reached at kogorek@archindy.org.) †

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, January 22, 2017

- Isaiah 8:23-9:3
- 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17
- Matthew 4:12-23

The Book of Isaiah supplies this weekend's first reading. It offers us a powerful lesson.



Isaiah lived in time when God's people were skating on thin ice. They still had their independence, at least after a fashion. Hebrew kings still reigned in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The religious, social and

political structures all still gave lip service to the ancient religion and to the holy covenant between God and his chosen people.

Everything, however, was at risk because devotion to the covenant and obedience to God's law were at a low ebb, and covetous neighbors were nearby.

Isaiah loudly warned that disaster was just around the corner. He said that the people could rescue themselves by returning to religious faithfulness and by obeying God, as the prophets had taught. He thereby implied a certain potential within the people.

They were weak because they ignored God. If they were determined, they could be virtuous and resist all enemies.

For its second reading, the Church has selected a section from St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians.

Paul obviously loved the Corinthian Christians. He yearned to see them holy and eternally with the Lord, but just as obviously they troubled him because they seemed so attracted to the many vices of their great, worldly and wealthy city, and they seemed so vulnerable to the feelings of competitiveness and insecurity that vex all humans if not checked.

Never willing to be passive or indifferent, Paul loudly called the Christians in this community to be true to their identity with Christ.

He taught a basic message. Earthly reward will pass, more quickly than many might realize. Earthly wisdom is only folly, disproven so often. True wisdom is to understand the meaning of the cross, and this understanding requires grace,

which comes to life only in those who earnestly follow the Lord.

St. Matthew's Gospel supplies the last reading. It is situated in Capernaum, the fishing village located at the northern tip of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was there after leaving Nazareth. His public ministry had begun.

As a center of commerce, albeit very modest commerce, Capernaum saw many people come and go. Jesus used this coincidence as an opportunity to encounter many people. He called them to fidelity to God. He repeated for them the admonitions of the Hebrew prophets.

It was here where Jesus met Andrew, and later his brother Simon, whom Jesus renamed Peter. These brothers became the first of the Apostles in the sequence of calling. In time, Christianity was to grow from and build upon the Apostles.

It is interesting that the Gospels, such as the case in this reading, refer to these Apostles so specifically by giving their names. The Gospel leaves no doubt whatsoever about their identity. It was vital in the early Church that the teachings of the genuine Apostles be known and be kept intact.

Reflection

These readings remind us of how blind we humans can be, and also of how powerful humans can be.

In the first reading, Isaiah criticized the people for their religious listlessness, but he also presumed that, if they wished, they could reverse their wayward hearts and turn again to God.

In essence, the same message was in the second reading, from Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. He boldly denounced the Corinthians' sins and quarrels. By calling them to conversion, he insisted that they had God's grace within themselves to be holy.

We are sinners, but we need not be sinners. Sin binds us. We truly can be free by seizing the power of our wills, allowing divine grace to empower us even more, and disdaining sin to be one with Christ.

The teachings of the Apostles guide us and draw us to the Lord. †

Daily Readings

Monday, January 23

Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children
St. Vincent, deacon and martyr
St. Marianne Cope, virgin
Hebrews 9:15, 24-28
Psalm 98:1-6
Mark 3:22-30

Tuesday, January 24

St. Francis de Sales, bishop and doctor of the Church
Hebrews 10:1-10
Psalm 40:2, 4ab, 7-8a, 10-11
Mark 3:31-35

Wednesday, January 25

The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle
Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22
Psalm 117:1-2
Mark 16:15-18

Thursday, January 26

St. Timothy, bishop
St. Titus, bishop
2 Timothy 1:1-8 or Titus 1:1-5
Psalm 96:1-3, 7-8, 10
Mark 4:21-25

Friday, January 27

St. Angela Merici, virgin
Hebrews 10:32-39
Psalm 37:3-6, 23-24, 39-40
Mark 4:26-34

Saturday, January 28

St. Thomas Aquinas, priest and doctor of the Church
Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19
(Response) Luke 1:69-75
Mark 4:35-41

Sunday, January 29

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13
Psalm 146:6-10
1 Corinthians 1:26-31
Matthew 5:1-12a

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Church allows for burial of cremated remains under certain circumstances

Q I am a lifelong Catholic and served 28 years in the Navy. As a junior officer, I saw the ashes or bodies of deceased



sailors buried at sea; I decided at the time that this is what I want done with my body after I die, and I have not changed my mind. I have heard that the Church may not allow such a practice, but am not sure about this. Could you please

clarify this for me? And if the Church prefers for bodily burial, why would this be the case? (Virginia)

A Many Catholics and people in society in general have a continuing fascination with the disposition of bodily remains. That interest was heightened in October 2016 when the Vatican issued an instruction regarding burial practices for Catholics.

That document was issued at the request of bishops in several nations in response to the growing practice of cremation, and the lack of specific Church guidelines on the disposition of cremated remains. The instruction reiterates that the Church, while not opposed to the practice of cremation, continues to recommend a traditional burial.

The document specifies that either the body or the ashes of the deceased should be buried in sacred ground, and that remains should not be kept in private homes or scattered on land or at sea, nor "preserved in mementoes, pieces of jewelry or other objects."

Burial in sacred ground, said the Vatican, prevents the deceased from being forgotten and encourages family members and the wider Christian community to remember the deceased and to pray for them.

Historically, cremation was linked to the burial practices of various non-Christian religions, whose beliefs did not include the expectation of eventual resurrection and viewed death as the definitive obliteration of the human person. The Catholic Church began to allow cremation only in 1963, as it became more commonplace for both economic and sanitary reasons.

But the Church's *Code of Canon Law* has continued to express the preference

for burial over cremation because the burial of human remains, in the Church's mind, reflects a greater esteem for the deceased, and more clearly expresses the Christian belief in an eventual resurrection, when the person's body and soul will be reunited.

As the Vatican's 2016 instruction says, "Burial is above all the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body," and shows "the great dignity of the human body as an integral part of the human person, whose body forms part of their identity."

That same instruction does note, though, that "cremation of the deceased's body does not affect his or her soul, nor does it prevent God in his omnipotence from raising up the deceased body to new life."

The new Vatican guidelines do not prohibit burial at sea, so long as the body or cremated remains are placed in a dignified and well-protected container. (Catholics should consult with their diocese for further instructions, since standards can vary from diocese to diocese.)

The Church's *Order of Christian Funerals* has a specific prayer for such a burial, asking that the Lord who calmed the sea in Galilee may grant peace and tranquility to the person deceased (#406).

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

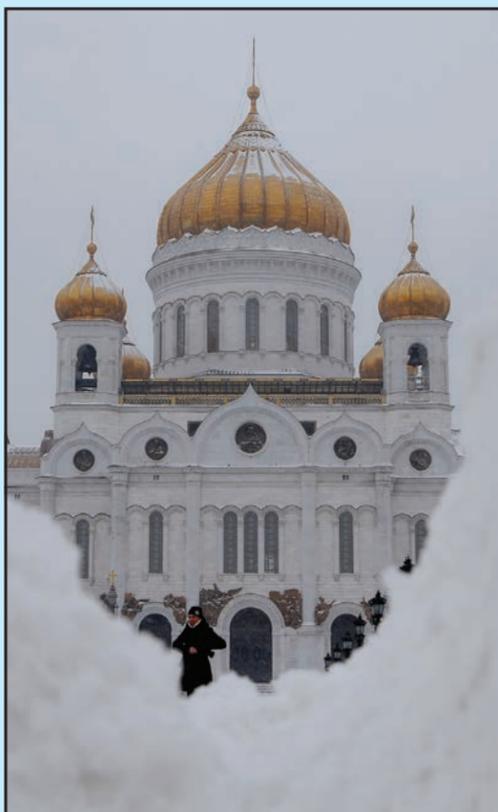
My Journey to God

He Reigns

By C. S. Likins

Water coming down in winter pounding, flowing, dripping blowing cold.

Wet sheets of rain reminding us that God is in charge.



(C. S. Likins is a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg. Christ the Savior Orthodox Cathedral in Moscow is seen covered in snow on Dec. 8, 2016.) (CNS photo/Maxim Shipenkov, EPA)

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 46202-2367 or e-mail to critterion@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.

ABBOTT, Dolores A. (Jacobi), 83, Holy Family, New Albany, Jan. 7. Mother of Diana Huber and John Lozon. Sister of Maureen Rue and Kenneth Jacobi. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of five.

BARNHORST, Irene M., 99, St. Maurice, Napoleon, Jan. 3. Mother of Gerald, Paul, Raymond and Robert Barnhorst. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 15. Great-great-grandmother of 5.

BAYT, Santa, 94, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Jan. 11. Mother of Gina Battiston, Concetta DeFabis, Mary Anne Hawkins, Hazel Lorah, Theresa Mascari, Betty McColgan, Toni Short, Antonia Zunarelli, Jack Hawkins, Mary, Demetrio, Hank, Jack, Mike, Phillip and Tony Bayt. Grandmother of 22. Great-grandmother of three.

BOZYMSKI, Valentine W., 86, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Jan. 4. Husband of Barbara Bozyski.

Father of Carolyn Kelly, Lisa, Michele and Michael Bozyski. Step-father of Orrin and Ronald Bowman. Brother of Genevieve Wala, Eileen, Edward and Eugene Bozyski. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of three.

CAMPBELL, Jacob D., 20, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, Dec. 17. Father of Hunter Campbell. Son of Joseph Campbell and Amy Davis.

CISSELL, Charles, 61, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Jan. 10. Husband of Mary Cissell. Father of Leah Kelly and David Cissell. Step-son of Lola Cissell. Brother of Janice Isaacs, Janet James, Kipp and Kevin Downing and Mike Hagan. Grandfather of two.

COCKRELL, Robert, 70, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Dec. 30. Husband of Brenda Cockrell. Father of Laura Hubbard, Christopher and Kenneth Henry and Jason Cockrell. Brother of Glenn and Neal Cockrell. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of one.

CRAIG, Helen, 103, Christ the King, Indianapolis,

Dec. 25. Mother of Carolyn, Jan and Bob Craig. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of 13. Great-great-grandmother of three.

DENNY, George R., 86, St. Monica, Indianapolis, Dec. 29. Father of Shannon Thompson, Christopher, Sean and Timothy Denny. Brother of William Denny. Grandfather of 10.

DEVILLEZ, Viola E., 91, St. Paul, Tell City, Dec. 27. Mother of Becky Cronin. Sister of Grace Talbert and Ray Schaefer. Grandmother of one. Great-grandmother of two.

FIXMER, John R., 87, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Dec. 25. Father of Dorothy Lynam, Karen Mathes, Mary Jane Nunlist, John, Mark and Robert Fixmer. Brother of Margie Duke and Betty Hines. Grandfather of 17. Great-grandfather of 34. Great-great-grandfather of one.

FORTMAN, Raymond E., 68, St. Mary, Greensburg, Jan. 9. Husband of Sue Fortman. Father of Michael Fortman. Brother of Richard Fortman. Grandfather of one.

FREY, Alma, 88, St. Michael, Brookville, Jan. 7. Mother of Jane Robertson, Dave, Dick and Jim Frey. Grandmother of 11. Great-grandmother of 15. Great-great-grandmother of two.

GIESTING, Gordon J., 73, Holy Family, Oldenburg, Jan. 1. Husband of Nina Giesting. Father of Dena Waller, Chad and Todd Giesting. Brother of Mary Kay Hacker and Gary Giesting. Grandfather of three.

HASKAMP, Virgil M., 85, St. Catherine of Seina, Decatur County, Dec. 21. Husband of Bertha Haskamp. Father of Theresa Dury, Karen Poplawski, Doug and Edward Haskamp. Grandfather of 11.

HILLMAN, Sandra P., 75, St. Mark the Evangelist, Jan. 7. Mother of Anjanette Richhart and Jim Hillman. Sister of Alice Bunte and Jack Cortner. Grandmother of five.

KEMPER, James R., 82, Christ the King, Indianapolis, Dec. 30. Husband of Pam Kemper. Father of John and William Kemper. Brother of Anne Bickel and Marnie Inman.

KENNEL, Lillian V., 77, St. Louis, Batesville, Jan. 4. Sister of Rosemary Ball, Jean Kruthaupt, Marianne Schepel, Elton and George Kennel. Aunt of several.

KUNKLER, Dr. Arnold W., 95, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Dec. 25.



Praying in Hong Kong

Cardinal John Tong Hon of Hong Kong, left, participates in a Jan. 9 ecumenical prayer service alongside Anglican Archbishop Paul Kwong at St. John's Anglican Cathedral in Hong Kong. (CNS photo/Francis Wong)

Husband of Barbara Kunkler. Father of Christine Hull, Lisa McClure, Carolyn, Arnold, Jr., Dr. Kevin and Dr. Phillip Kunkler. Brother of Mary Elizabeth Gross, Ann Laughlin, Edward and Kenneth Kunkler. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of three.

LAKE, Alice J., 76, St. Louis, Batesville, Jan. 9. Wife of Jerry Lake. Sister of Sylvia Lunsford, Floyd and Robert Gesell. Aunt of several.

LAUDICK, John H., 80, St. Mary, Greensburg, Jan. 5. Father of Jane Eckert, Julie Himes, Linda Humpert and Denny Laudick. Brother of Joann Lecher and James Laudick. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of nine.

LYONS, Howard R., 86, Good Shepherd, Indianapolis, Dec. 19. Husband of Marie Lyons. Father of Kelly Schoettle, Mitzi, Bo and Mitchell Lyons. Brother of George Lyons. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of one.

MEINERS, Margaret C., 89, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville, Dec. 22. Wife of Joseph Meiners. Mother of Catherine Bremmer, Teresa Weber, Charles and William Meiners. Sister of Helen Cleary. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of several.

MEYER, Angela J., 51, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Jan. 1. Wife of Kenneth

Meyer. Mother of Kendall and Nathan Meyer. Sister of Lisa Nordhoff, Karen Riley, Mary Schmidt, Kathy Uebelhor, Brian, Jay and Mike Hopf.

NICODEMUS, Charles F., 82, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Jan. 6. Husband of Laura Nicodemus. Father of Susan Brown, Marlene Wilson, Carl, David and Wayne Nicodemus. Brother of Deloris, Judy, Murial, Don and Paul Nicodemus. Grandfather of 10. Great-grandfather of two.

OBERTING, Kenneth W., 98, St. Mark the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Jan. 7. Father of Mary Ellen Nelson, Kenneth and Thomas Oberting. Grandfather of eight. Great-grandfather of four.

O'CONNOR, Eleanor, 86, St. Jude, Indianapolis, Dec. 28. Mother of Charlie and John O'Connor. Grandmother and great-grandmother of several.

PFLUM, Dale E., 75, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City, Dec. 8. Father of Mary Peterson and Anthony Pflum. Brother of Sue Ann Pflum-Walker, June and Mary Jo Pflum. Grandfather of eight.

RATZ, William D., 87, St. Michael, Brookville, Jan. 7. Husband of Anita Ratz. Father of Pam DeVillie, Karen Hountz, Janie Phillips and Rick Ratz. Brother of Alice Gesell, Bonnie Hornbach, Patricia Moody

and Tom Ratz. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of five.

RAY, Brian E., 50, St. Bartholomew, Columbus, Dec. 22. Husband of Sara Ray. Father of Nicole and Christopher Smith. Brother of Dennis, Jeffrey and Joseph Ray. Grandfather of two.

ROBERTS, Robert L., 86, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Jan. 5. Father of Regina Sublette and Bill Roberts. Brother of James Roberts. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of four.

SEARING, Garry E., 78, Sacred Heart, Clinton, Dec. 24. Father of Marla Kay Searing. Brother of Billie Jo Anderson, Margaret Benefield and Janice Uselman.

SIEFERT, Clara, 79, St. Mary, Rushville, Jan. 6. Mother of Cindy Amos, Jennifer Ripberger and Joseph Siefert. Sister of David Morgan. Grandmother of six.

STOLLE, Anna, 91, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Dec. 28. Mother of Ron Stolle. Sister of Patricia Panzer. Grandmother of two.

STUCKWISCH, Jane F., 72, St. Ambrose, Seymour, Dec. 25. Wife of Max Stuckwisch. Mother of Stephanie Mazzon, Shannon McGahren, Michelle

Spence and Tricia Stuart. Grandmother of 15.

TOSCHLOG, Rhea, 93, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Jan. 4. Mother of Jane Thompson, Jeff Carpenter, Mark and Robert Toschlog. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 13.

VOLZ, Rosie C., 105, St. Charles Borromeo, Milan, Jan. 1. Mother of George and Henry Volz. Grandmother of one. Great-grandmother of two.

WALTER, Mary, 90, St. Mary, Lanesville, Jan. 4. Wife of Vincent Walter. Mother of Sandy Hess, Theresa Kissel, Barbara Schindler, Judy Zipp, Gary Walter, Elmer, Steven and Terry Gurtz. Sister of Marjorie Garmon and Christine Saunders. Grandmother of 10. Great-grandmother of 13.

WEINMANN, Kathleen, 99, St. Mary, New Albany, Dec. 20. Sister of Everett Day. Aunt of several.

WEINTRAUT, Mary Lee, 80, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Dec. 29. Wife of Mark Weintraut. Mother of Julie Burroughs. Grandmother of one.

WILLS, Larry L., 83, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Jan. 7. Father of Karen Kinder, Mary Schaler, Patricia and Larry Wills II. Grandfather of two. Great-grandfather of five. †

McDonald's restaurant near Vatican to give free meals to the poor

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—While the controversial opening of a McDonald's near the Vatican may not have all local residents singing, "I'm lovin' it," the popular fast food chain is trying to do its part in the neighborhood by helping the poor and the hungry.

"*Medicina Solidale*" ("Solidarity Medicine") announced on Jan. 12 that it is joining forces with McDonald's and the papal almoner's office, which gives the pope's charitable aid to the homeless around the Vatican, to distribute 1,000

meals to poor men and women who often find shelter in and around St. Peter's Basilica.

Starting on Jan. 16, volunteers from the charitable organization were to distribute a specially prepared menu for the poor. It includes a double cheeseburger, fresh apple slices and a bottle of water.

Lucia Ercoli, director of "*Medicina Solidale*," said that the organization plans to distribute 100 meals a week for 10 consecutive Mondays. The program, she added, is "the beginning of a

dialogue" with McDonald's to expand in the future.

"It is truly a small drop in an ocean of things being done by so many other associations, by so many people who spend their time helping others," Ercoli said on Jan. 12 in an interview with Vatican Radio.

In a statement announcing the deal, Ercoli noted that the fast food chain "quickly responded" to the proposal "to donate meals to those who live on the streets in the area of St. Peter's."

Noting her organization's longtime collaboration with the papal almoner in providing medical care for the homeless, Ercoli said the new agreement will ensure that the poor also are provided with some much-needed nutrition.

"With these meals, we'll make a significant leap in providing so many women and men who live on the street in this neighborhood the possibility of a meal that will guarantee a suitable intake of proteins and vitamins for them," she said. †

Investing with Faith/Joanna Feltz

Planned Giving 101: Planning for the New Year

Welcome to 2017! The end of the year is always a good time to take stock. Now that we're officially in the New Year, I



Joanna Feltz

know I am thinking of how to put my 2016 reflections into action.

As stewards of our Catholic faith, we celebrate the sacraments, share the word of God and fulfill the ministry of charity by helping the Church through

its parishes, schools and agencies.

We can act out our faith regularly through these channels or volunteering, but sometimes, financial support is the best way to provide for the present and advocate for the future. As we kick off 2017, consider where planned giving may fit into your plans.

Planned giving provides a unique

opportunity to both the donor and the ministry receiving the support. Donors are offered a variety of ways to give, and are able to designate where and how their gift is to be used. Ministries receive the financial support they need for their mission today, while securing their future, thanks to the faith of donors. With planned giving, the Church will continue to be able to guide and meet the spiritual needs of humanity for generations.

As part of my job, I get a lot of questions about planned giving, especially, "What is it?"

Planned giving lays the groundwork for a donor's personal legacy of faith by enabling them to support a Catholic parish, school or ministry they are passionate about.

A planned gift can be made over the course of a donor's lifetime, or at time of death by utilizing some or all of the following strategies: the permanent

charitable IRA rollover, charitable gift annuities, life insurance, retirement accounts, bequest through a will or revocable trust, charitable gift annuities, gifts of stock, and gifts of real estate. I will explore these strategies more in upcoming columns.

The best part of planned giving is that a contribution of any amount, over any length of time, will make a difference.

Through the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation (CCF), you can discover gifting options and find Catholic ministries to support.

The ministry of charity takes many forms, and we encourage you to consider planned giving as part of your 2017 charitable goals. From supporting an endowment that provides scholarships to Catholic schools, to giving much-needed financial aid to local or international missionary groups, your gift will positively impact a person's life and the

future of the Church.

Interested? Have questions? The Catholic Community Foundation is here to help! Reach me by e-mail at jfeltz@archindy.org or by phone at 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1482, or 317-236-1482.

Consider investing in your faith through planned giving.

(Joanna Feltz is director of planning giving for the Catholic Community Foundation in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. For more information about planned giving, log on to www.archindy.org/plannedgiving. Tax information or legal information provided herein is not intended as tax or legal advice and cannot be relied on to avoid statutory penalties. Always check with your legal, tax and financial advisors before implementing any gift plan.) †

Paralyzed NYPD officer who spoke of forgiveness dies at 59

NEW YORK (CNS)—Detective Steven McDonald, the New York City police officer who was paralyzed after being shot in the line of duty 30 years ago, famously forgave his teenage assailant and went on to become a prophetic voice for forgiveness and reconciliation, died on Jan. 10. He was 59.

A New York police spokesman confirmed that McDonald, who was Catholic, had died at a Long Island hospital four days after suffering a heart attack.

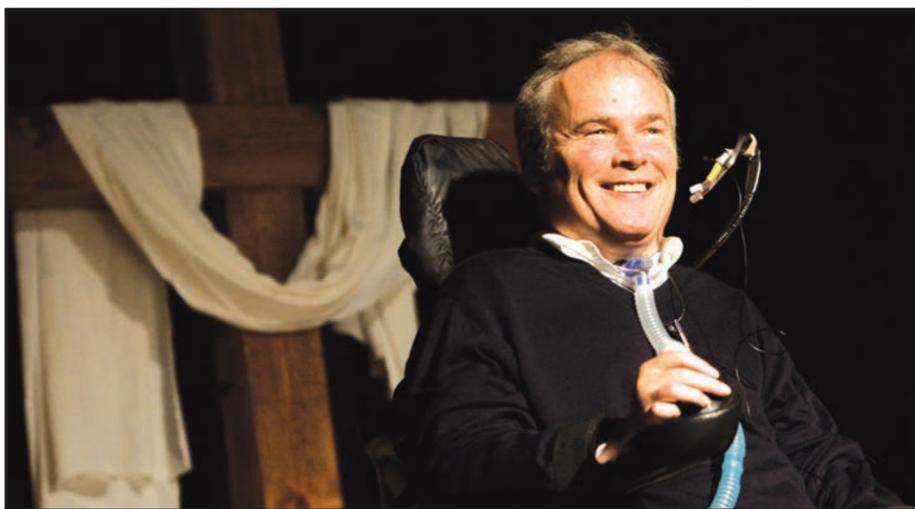
Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York called McDonald "a prophet, without speaking, of the pro-life cause.

"He showed us," the cardinal said, "that the value of life doesn't depend on physical ability, but on one's heart and soul, both of which he had in abundance."

The cardinal told *Catholic New York*, newspaper of the New York Archdiocese, that he had visited McDonald in the hospital's intensive care unit and said that the many rosaries and religious statues there represented outward signs of a Catholic faith the detective dearly practiced.

"You could see that he was such a fervent Catholic," Cardinal Dolan said.

McDonald often discussed his Catholic faith and the reason he forgave the teenage shooter, explaining that he believed what happened to him was God's will and that he was meant to become a messenger for God's message of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation in the world.



Detective Steven McDonald of the New York Police Department, who was shot and paralyzed in the line of duty in 1986, smiles as he addresses the audience during a Catholic men's conference at Holy Trinity Diocesan High School in Hicksville, N.Y., in 2009. McDonald died on Jan. 10 at a Long Island hospital at age 59. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz, Long Island Catholic)

While on patrol on July 12, 1986, McDonald came upon three teenagers in Central Park and stopped to frisk them because he thought one of them had a weapon in his sock. One of the youths, then-15-year-old Shavod Jones, pulled out a weapon of his own and shot McDonald, leaving him for dead as the trio fled.

Three bullets struck McDonald, including one that pierced his spinal cord, leaving him paralyzed.

Doctors initially told McDonald's wife, Patti, who was three months pregnant

with the couple's son, that the officer would not survive. However, McDonald pulled through. At the baptism of their son, Conor, on March 1, 1987, McDonald asked his wife to read a statement about his feeling toward the shooter, saying "I forgive him and hope he can find a purpose in his life."

McDonald remained on the police department payroll after being shot and later was named a detective.

McDonald long hoped that he and Jones could team up to speak about

reconciliation. They corresponded while Jones served a 10-year sentence for attempted murder, but the correspondence ended when McDonald declined a request from Jones' family for help in seeking parole, saying he was not knowledgeable enough or capable to intervene. Jones died in a 1995 motorcycle accident shortly after being released from prison on parole.

For years after the shooting, McDonald drew widespread attention and media coverage. He met with St. John Paul II in 1995 and with South African anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela. Although he was able to breathe only with the help of a respirator, McDonald crossed the country speaking at schools and other venues about the importance of forgiveness and peace. He also became an advocate for peace in troubled lands, visiting Northern Ireland, Israel and Bosnia to take his message to communities in conflict.

Conor McDonald eventually joined the NYPD and became a sergeant in 2016. He is the fourth generation of the family to serve in the department.

Steven McDonald was born on March 1, 1957, in Queens Village, N.Y., and grew up in Rockville Centre on Long Island. He was one of eight children of David and Anita McDonald.

A funeral Mass was celebrated on Jan. 13 at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City with Cardinal Dolan presiding. †

Success, well-being at any cost will deceive, disappoint, Pope Francis says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Watch out for the tempting promises and easy rewards of false gods and idols because they always lead to confusion, disappointment and even death, Pope Francis said.



Pope Francis

"We are tempted to seek even fleeting comfort, which seems to fill the emptiness of solitude and ease the exertion of believing" in God, especially in times of trouble, he said on Jan. 11 during his weekly general audience.

But the hope and security that come from God "never ever disappoint," he said. "Idols always let you down" because they are figments of the imagination and not "alive and real" like God.

The pope continued his series of talks on Christian hope by reflecting on Psalm 115, which warns of the false hopes and securities offered by man-made idols.

While the psalmist speaks of statues made of "silver and gold," the pope said idols also include anything people hold up as the ultimate answer to their happiness and security like money, power, success and false ideologies—all of which carry "illusions of eternity and omnipotence."

Even things like physical beauty and health become idols when a person is willing "to sacrifice everything" in order to obtain or maintain them, he said.

"They are all things that confuse the heart and mind and instead of promoting life, they lead to death," he said. As an example of this, he said he once heard a woman speak very nonchalantly about procuring an abortion

because the pregnancy would have ruined her figure.

"These are idols and they take you down the wrong path. They do not give you happiness," he said.

The pope marveled at the huge number of fortunetellers he used to see sitting in a city park in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the lines of people waiting their turn to consult them.

The shtick "is always the same, 'There is a woman in your life,' 'Something dark is coming,'" he said ominously. But the people would pay to hear such things, and this was supposed to make them feel better even though they were putting their trust in a bunch of nonsense, he said.

"We buy false hope," which shows how much people cling to it, he said. True hope, the kind Jesus brought freely by "giving his life for us, that kind we don't trust in so much sometimes."

Faith in God takes strength and perseverance, and when bad things happen in life, he said, sometimes that faith wavers and people feel they need a different kind of certainty, something easier or more "tangible and concrete."

"Sometimes we seek a god that can bend to our wishes and magically intervene to change reality and make it be the way we want," he said. This is what people love and seek—a god "that looks like us, understandable, predictable," even though "it can do nothing—impotent and deceitful."

The psalmist says that those who worship or trust in things that cannot speak, see, feel, move or hear, will become like them with nothing to say, "incapable of helping, changing things, smiling, giving oneself and incapable of loving."

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SEEK 2017 inspires college students to evangelize

SAN ANTONIO (CNS)—In need of reigniting the fire for his Catholic faith, Jeremy Martins found the flame he needed during SEEK 2017.

“SEEK is the log I was waiting for,” said Martins, a junior at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kan. “It has been two years since a real encounter with Christ.”

He told Catholic News Service (CNS) that the conference, sponsored on Jan. 3-7 by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, known as FOCUS, generated a new excitement even though he previously had committed two years of his life to mission work that involved evangelizing young people, and helping them overcome “the poverty of spirit” in their lives.

Martins was not alone. About 13,000 people, almost exclusively young adults, attended the biennial SEEK conference at San Antonio’s Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. The five-day event focused on the theme “What Moves You.”

Young adults from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis attended the conference, including students from DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis and the University of Indianapolis.

“I know that if they are from my university and attended SEEK, we can now bring this experience that we have had together back to campus with us. We can talk about it and show what we learned on our university campus,” Martins told CNS.

Speakers at SEEK included Father Mike Schmitz, director of youth and young adult ministry for the Diocese of Duluth, Minn.; theologian Edward Sri; Sister Bethany Madonna, a member of the Sisters of Life; and Sarah Swafford, founder of Emotional Virtue Ministries.

Father Schmitz, echoing St. Paul’s letter

to the Romans, reminded his listeners to “not be conformed by this age. But be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Our call is to live like Jesus.”

Austin Palen, a junior at Kansas State University, came away with “pages and pages of notes” from the talk.

Kylee Mernagh, a freshman at the school, also appreciated how Father Schmitz urged participants to “strap our boots on” in order to live their faith in the world. She attended the conference with several of her sorority sisters from Pi Beta Phi.

“It was helpful knowing we’d see these people at everyday events,” she said afterward. “Knowing when it seems that everyone is thinking differently, you’re not the only person with morality. You know others have similar values.”

Mernagh said her sorority sister brainstormed about encouraging Catholic members from other fraternities and sororities to not be afraid of living their faith. “If each house took one hour of adoration, how cool would it be?” she said.

It’s such reactions that conference organizers hoped would resonate in the future among the college-age participants.

Craig Miller, FOCUS president, told CNS that he hoped that the most important thing participants take from the conference is “the knowledge that Jesus Christ loves them, and that they all have a Father who loves them and will be with them through everything.”

“Knowing what you are made for gives you purpose and knowing that you are born as son or daughter of God brings you in relationship with your Creator,” he added.

As a team director for FOCUS at Ave Maria University in Florida, Nick Smith described FOCUS as important to university



Young adults pray during a Mass during the Jan. 3-7 biennial SEEK conference at San Antonio’s Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. The event was designed to bring evangelization efforts to college campuses. (CNS photo/courtesy FOCUS)

campuses because the organization “counteracts the things that distract us in a way that really allows Jesus to enter into this culture of death and change it.”

Martins said he was struck by Sri’s comments about the importance of people changing their actions to reflect their beliefs in an effort to overcome relativism in the world.

“This stuck with me because I realized that although I was surrounded by Catholics in Benedictine College, I found myself going to Mass less and less,” he explained. “I now realize I was changing my actions and justifying them by other Catholic’s actions. This conference has helped me realize that I really need to take the faith taking it upon myself to change, so my actions reflect my beliefs.”

In another presentation, John H. Carmichael, author of *Drunks and Monks*, discussed the freedom of drunkenness and worldliness. “If you build your house on sand, it will wash away,” he said. “Young people, you should build it on rock. Go deep into the heart of the Catholic Church.”

With such encouragement, SEEK participants could head back to their homes or colleges with what Miller described as a strong relationship with God so that “this relationship allows us to live life at its fullest.”

Among those in attendance were more than 200 college students from the Diocese of Salina, Kan. Adam Urban, a senior at Fort Hays State University in Kansas, coordinated a bus from the school.

“[Adoration and reconciliation] were very well done,” he said. “They have great music to draw you into prayer and incense—they engage all of the senses. For our group and myself, the adoration experience is really powerful.”

The lines were long for reconciliation the evening of Jan. 5 as thousands of students took advantage of the opportunity to grow a bit closer to God. The experience impressed Tracie Thibault, a junior from Kansas State University.

“I think the moment I knew it was worth all the planning and fundraising was seeing more than 12,000 people on their knees at adoration,” said Thibault, who helped coordinate the school’s three charter buses. “Sitting in the back watching student after student go to confession, seeing 200-plus priests and knowing God’s mercy was present, that’s when I knew it was all worth it.” †



Featured speaker Mark Hart, vice president of Life Team, tries to inspire an audience of young adults on Jan. 3 during the biennial SEEK conference at San Antonio’s Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. (CNS photo/courtesy FOCUS)

Marriage ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of our Spring Marriage Edition
Feb. 24, 2017, issue of *The Criterion*

If you are planning your wedding between Jan. 30 and July 1, or if you were married between July 1, 2016 and Jan. 30, 2017 and did not have your engagement announced in *The Criterion*, we invite you to submit the information for an announcement using the form below or electronically at www.archindy.org/criterion/local/forms3/wedding-form.html.

E-mailed photos

Photos should be saved in jpg format and be at least 500 kb. Color photos are preferred. We recommend to have a photo where the couple’s faces are close to each other. Please send your photo as an attachment to the following e-mail: cclark@archindy.org. Subject line: Spring Marriage (Last name). In the e-mail, please include the information in the form located below.

If you are unable to e-mail a photo, you may mail us a photo to scan with the bottom form. Please, no photocopied photos. If you want the photo returned, please include a return addressed envelope with a postage stamp on it.

Deadline

All announcements and photos must be received by 10 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 10, 2017. (No announcements or photos will be accepted after this date.)

— Use this form to furnish information —

Clip and mail to: BRIDES, *The Criterion*, ATTN: Cindy Clark, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

Deadline with photos: Friday, February 10, 2017, at 10 a.m.

Please print or type:

Name of Bride (first, middle, last)		Daytime Phone	
Mailing Address	City	State	Zip Code
Name of Bride’s Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Name of Bridegroom (first, middle, last)			
Name of Bridegroom’s Parents (first, last)			
City		State	
Wedding Date	Church	City	State
<input type="checkbox"/> Photo Enclosed			
<input type="checkbox"/> Return photo			
<input type="checkbox"/> No Picture	Signature of person furnishing information	Relationship	Daytime Phone

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