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It's All Good

You are in the hands of the master gardener, writes columnist Patti Lamb, page 12.

CriterionOnline.com

March 3, 2017

Vol. LVII, No. 20 75¢

Pro-life bills supported by ICC advance in General Assembly

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

Two pro-life bills supported by the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) have advanced at the midpoint, commonly called "crossover" in the Indiana



General Assembly. "Crossover" refers to the midpoint in the legislative session when House

bills "crossover" to the other chamber, the Senate, and Senate bills "crossover" to the House.

Senate Bill 404, authored by Sen. Erin Houchin, R-Salem, would require parents seeking to arrange for an abortion for a pregnant minor child to verify their parental status. The measure would prevent adults who are not a minor's parent from posing as the minor's parent. The bill also would prohibit a person from aiding or assisting a minor who is pregnant in obtaining an abortion without the consent of the minor's parent or guardian. If an adult did aid and assist a minor in obtaining an abortion without parental consent, it would allow parents to collect damages against an adult who either posed as the minor child's parent to obtain an abortion, or aided or assisted the minor in obtaining an abortion.

"Currently in Indiana, we have a parental consent law, but we don't have verification that that person is an actual parent," said Houchin. As a former Department of Children Services employee, Houchin said she has seen this happen. "We can clarify in our state law that someone must verify they are the parent of a child seeking an abortion."

Corrine Purvis, an attorney with Bopp Law Firm who serves as general counsel for Indiana Right to Life, testified in support of the bill. She said Senate Bill 404 would strengthen parental rights by protecting parents' ability to give consent for their minor child to obtain an abortion by ensuring that parental verification is required and enforced. Eight other states require parental verification.

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'It's about mercy and redemption'



As the chairperson of the archdiocese's task force on prison ministry, Lynne Weisenbach hopes that parishes and individuals will have an increased impact in making a difference in the lives of people in jails and prisons in central and southern Indiana. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Deeper commitment to prison ministry hopes to change lives of all involved

First in a continuing series

By John Shaughnessy

Lynne Weisenbach knows it sounds unusual to describe her time in a jail as "sacred."

After all, she acknowledges that it was disturbing for her to surrender her keys and her driver's license as she went through the jail's security clearance area.

And that uneasy feeling heightened when she heard the door close behind her as she entered the jail.

Still, there is one sound that is more memorable to her as she recalls those evenings when she visited the female inmates in that county jail, and prayed alongside them during a Mass that a priest celebrated there.

"There were 25 to 30 women in a crowded, stark room, and they'd start singing," she says with a smile. "So many of the women came from religious backgrounds, and they appreciated the opportunity to sing. Their eyes were closed, and their singing filled the room. At that moment, jail was a sacred place."

She pauses before she adds, "I wasn't prepared for the spirituality of the women. As we were leaving, they would say, 'Thank you for coming, thank you for not forgetting us.' You could see they wanted to hug us, but it wasn't allowed. We could shake hands—the grasp was unbelievable. And you could see how much it meant to them by the look in their eyes."

Weisenbach shares that perspective as the chairperson of the archdiocese's prison ministry task force—a group that met regularly for six months in 2016 to formulate a plan to help individuals, parishes and the broader archdiocese itself make an even deeper commitment to prison ministry.

While the task force has offered five major recommendations (see story, page 2), Weisenbach views prison ministry as "a magnetic force" that changes the lives of everyone involved in it.

'It's about mercy and redemption'

"A lot of the women were an inspiration to me," Weisenbach says. "They held onto their faith in really tough

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'Literally running for their lives:' director speaks on refugees and resettlement efforts

By Natalie Hoefer

On Jan. 27, President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order temporarily banning refugees from entering the United States for four months.

While the ban was blocked by a federal judge on Feb. 4, refugee resettlement agencies such as Catholic Charities Indianapolis' Refugee and Immigrant Services (RIS) in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis have been left uncertain of their future, especially with a revised ban expected soon, but not announced prior to the publication of *The Criterion*.

Heidi Smith, director of RIS, spoke to nearly 70 people on refugee resettlement at a meeting of the Catholic Business Exchange at the Northside Knights of Columbus facility in Indianapolis on Feb. 17.

"As we've heard so much about refugee resettlement in the news lately, it can be kind of hard to figure out what exactly is going on, especially when it's a topic that has only come

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Heidi Smith, director of Catholic Charities Indianapolis' Refugee and Immigrant Services, talks on Feb. 17 to nearly 70 members of the Catholic Business Exchange on the lives of refugees, the history of refugee resettlement in the United States, and the role of the Church in refugee resettlement in Indianapolis. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

PRISON

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circumstances. And it's a good challenge to do this. I see it as a way to grow in my faith, and to serve in a way that is underserved and not always understood.

"Some of the misunderstanding is that if you help in prisons, it devalues or undermines what happens to the victim. But this isn't about not respecting or not honoring the victims. We do. This is about God's mercy for these people. It's about mercy and redemption."

The desire for a deeper commitment to prison ministry is one of the legacies of Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, the former archbishop of Indianapolis, who viewed building relationships with people in prisons and jails as an opportunity for the archdiocese, its members and him personally to draw closer to God.

So with the help of the archdiocese's chancellor, Annette "Mickey" Lentz, Cardinal Tobin created a task force to develop ways to increase that commitment.

"I can see why Cardinal Tobin chose this ministry for greater focus," Lentz says. "This is social justice in the truest sense. The archdiocese respects and upholds the dignity of every human being."

"I learned so much from the task force, and became so impressed by the volunteers' service and dedication to those in our jails and prisons. I truly believe more of the laity will want to become more engaged in this."

That's the hope. And the need and the opportunity for prison ministry are significant, according to the task force—especially considering the pervasive presence of the prison system within the

boundaries of the archdiocese, and how it affects so many lives and families.

The impact on children

Consider some of the insights that the 18 members of the task force shared in their final report to Cardinal Tobin:

—There are nearly 27,000 people in state prisons and county jails in Indiana, according to 2016 statistics from the Indiana Department of Corrections.

—About half of those people are in prisons and jails within the boundaries of the archdiocese—many of them housed in large facilities in New Castle, Plainfield and Putnamville.

—“There are three separate federal facilities in one large Bureau of Prisons complex at Terre Haute. Together, the federal complex can house a maximum of 2,770 men, with [the] current population slightly lower.”

The insights take a more human quality when the task force considers the challenges faced by the 20,000 inmates who are released from Indiana prisons and jails every year.

“Without a job, it is nearly impossible to establish a new life and become productive citizens. However, nearly 75 percent of Hoosier employers are reluctant or simply refuse to hire ex-offenders,” the report noted. “When such individuals are unemployed, their chances of returning to prison are 60 percent.

“More than 70 percent of released inmates are parents. Children of these parents are most likely to be in the lowest 5 percent of income earners and generally obtain less education than their parents.”

‘I keep thinking about God’s mercy’

While the task force noted that many parishes in the archdiocese provide



‘I can see why Cardinal Tobin chose this ministry for greater focus. This is social justice in the truest sense. The archdiocese respects and upholds the dignity of every human being.’

—Annette “Mickey” Lentz, archdiocesan chancellor

“exemplary” outreach to people in prisons and jails, Weisenbach says there is a need for an organizational structure that will offer improved communication and coordination concerning prison ministry.

“I would personally love to see the deaneries and the parishes view this as a ministry of social justice that can add to the life of their parish and their individual spiritual lives—as well as the value it brings to the inmates and those who are in re-entry.

“There are so many opportunities to serve our brothers and sisters who are incarcerated. You don’t have to go into the prison to support prison ministry. Schools can get involved by sending Easter cards and Christmas cards. Parishes can provide Bibles and other spiritual reading material for them.”

She has seen the impact that spiritual material has had on the women she has visited in jail.

“We’d take Bibles in English and Spanish. When the women would bring their Bibles with them, we’d see that they were dog-eared. It mattered greatly to them.”

Prison guards have also told Weisenbach that the volunteers’ visits and interest help to lessen tensions among inmates, aid them in channeling their

emotions in a positive way, and lead them to learn to seek God’s help.

Weisenbach also knows the impact that her visits have had on her relationship with God.

“I keep thinking about God’s mercy—the idea of forgiveness and the need for redemption,” she says. “You know God forgives, and it makes you think about redemption in your own life.”

She hopes that opportunity to grow closer to God—and make a difference in the lives of people in jails and prisons—will lead potential volunteers to look beyond any fears they may have.

“Don’t be afraid,” Weisenbach says. “I keep going back to people’s eyes. You look someone in the eyes, and we’re all God’s children. At the end of the day, we are all created in God’s image.”

(For information about prison ministry in the archdiocese, check the website, www.archindy.org/prison. You can also contact Deacon Michael Braun, director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Pastoral Ministries, by e-mail at mbraun@archindy.org or by phone at 317-236-1531 or 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1531.) †

Task force recommendations aim to improve prison ministry outreach

By John Shaughnessy

As the archdiocese strives to help parishes, groups and individuals make an even deeper commitment to prison ministry, here are the five main recommendations that an archdiocesan task force has offered to achieve that goal:

• Foster education.

A key component of this recommendation will involve preparing a presentation on ministry in jails and prisons that will be shared with interested parishes and groups.

• Extend pastoral care to persons in prisons and jails.

The major emphasis here will be

on developing ways to recruit, educate and train volunteers to visit people in jails and prisons. Efforts will include developing a training program, putting together e-mail distribution lists for volunteers, and creating a website that provides educational resources, www.archindy.org/prison.

A main contact at the archdiocese is Deacon Michael Braun, director of the Secretariat for Pastoral Ministries. He can be reached by e-mail at mbraun@archindy.org or by phone at 317-236-1531 or 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1531.

• Assist people who are re-entering society after being in prison.

The focus here is on building relationships that will help people as

they return to society. Key elements of this goal include training potential mentors to help people during this transition, and establishing connections with parishes and the St. Vincent de Paul Society to provide material needs to assist people during this time.

Another emphasis involves working with employees and programs that provide support and job opportunities for people who have been in jail or prison.

• Engage parishioners in support ministries.

The task force encourages deaneries and cohorts of parishes to work together to provide support for inmates, victims of crime and the families of both.

Support would include sending cards and letters, becoming prayer partners, donating subscriptions to magazines that offer Scripture reflection, and joining advocacy networks for victim and prisoner rights.

• Build for success.

Support at the archdiocesan level will be an important part of a deeper commitment to prison ministry. In this regard, the task force has recommended appointing a commission on prison/jail ministry, hiring a coordinator to lead prison/jail ministry in the archdiocese, and organizing an annual event that will focus on education and support for prison/jail ministry. †

St. Michael Parish hosts session on pre-planning a funeral Mass on March 18

Criterion staff report

St. Michael the Archangel Parish will host a session on pre-planning a funeral Mass at its Parish Life Center, 3354 W. 30th St., in Indianapolis, from 9-11:30 a.m. on March 18.

The session will address the elements of the anointing of the sick; cremation; the funeral Mass and its Scripture

readings, hymns and symbols; and burial. Information will also be presented on planned giving.

Speakers include Father Michael Hoyt, the parish’s administrator; Ruth Buening, its funeral Mass coordinator; and Joanna Feltz, archdiocesan director of planned giving.

“Once a death occurs, if no pre-planning has been done, the burden of making arrangements and decisions in a

relatively short period of time while trying to deal with grief, sadness, and perhaps shock, financial and legal implications can leave those with the responsibilities completely overwhelmed,” says Buening.

“While many people do make arrangements for the initial care of the body with the funeral home, few people plan for their funeral Mass.”

She says the goal of the event is that,

by the end of the session, participants will have all the information needed to complete a simple, one-page form planning a funeral Mass, removing the responsibility from grieving family members.

There is no charge for the session, but due to limited space, registration is required.

To register or for more information, call 317-926-7359 or log onto www.saintmichaelindy.org. †



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Main office: 317-236-1570
Advertising: 317-236-1454
Toll free: 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1570
Circulation: 317-236-1454
Toll free: 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1454

Price: \$22.00 per year, 75 cents per copy

Postmaster:

Send address changes to *The Criterion*, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367

Web site: www.CriterionOnline.com

E-mail: criterion@archindy.org

Published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January. Mailing address: 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN. Copyright © 2017 Criterion Press Inc. ISSN 0574-4350.

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The Criterion (ISSN 0574-4350) is published weekly except the last week of December and the first week of January.

1400 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367
317-236-1570
800-382-9836 ext. 1570
criterion@archindy.org

Periodical postage paid at Indianapolis, IN.
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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Criterion Press Inc. 1400 N. Meridian St.



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Papal remarks on immigration apply to U.S., too

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—When Pope Francis affirms basic Christian principles, he is not singling out one person or nation, but he definitely is not excluding them either.

The ongoing global migration and refugee crisis is a case in point.

The United States is not the only country engaged in a heated political debate over immigration policy with often opposing voices focusing on: ensuring the country's security; regulating numbers based on the resources available to resettle them; or living up to an ethical obligation—and often a legal one, according to international treaties—to shelter people fleeing violence and persecution, and to welcome those seeking a more dignified life for themselves and their families.

While the pope's remarks on welcoming migrants and refugees cannot be read as focused on the U.S. debate, one also cannot pretend they have nothing to do with it.

The new Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development “regularly informs the Holy Father about events that touch on the issue of migration, including the current debate underway in the United States of America,” Scalabrinian Father Fabio Baggio, undersecretary of the office, told Catholic News Service (CNS) on Feb. 22.

Pope Francis, he said, supports the position expressed by the U.S. bishops, which emphasizes openness to newcomers and a comprehensive reform of U.S. immigration policy.

The bishops, like Pope Francis, have never denied the right and duty of governments to regulate immigration. But, in many cases, Pope Francis sees something much less noble—selfishness—behind much of the

anti-immigrant rhetoric.

“Faced with this kind of rejection, rooted ultimately in self-centeredness and amplified by populist rhetoric, what is needed is a change of attitude, to overcome indifference and to counter fears with a generous approach of welcoming those who knock at our doors,” the pope said on Feb. 21 in a speech.

Days before making that speech to participants in the International Forum on Migration and Peace, Pope Francis already had hit a nerve on the migration issue with his Twitter account.

“How often in the Bible the Lord asks us to welcome migrants and foreigners, reminding us that we too are foreigners!” he tweeted on Feb. 18.

For the first time in at least a year, more than 3,000 people commented on the pope's tweet in English, six times the normal comment rate. By Feb. 22, the tweet also had racked up more than 64,000 retweets and some 160,000 likes.

Many of the comments on his reminder of the Biblical obligation to welcome the stranger were not favorable, running the gamut from instructing the pope to “back off” and stay out of politics to asking him how many migrants and refugees the Vatican has welcomed.

The @Pontifex Twitter account does not reply to comments. But Pope Francis has responded to similar comments in the past, pointing out that living the Gospel in the real world often will have political or social consequences. And he has, in fact, taken in refugees.

While Pope Francis and the Vatican are providing food, shelter and support to some 30 refugees—mostly Syrians, but also a family from Eritrea—“you cannot calculate the Catholic Church's welcoming of migrants simply by counting how many asylum seekers are



Afghan women hold placards as they take part in a protest demanding better living conditions at the refugee camp of the former international Helliniko airport in Athens, Greece, on Feb. 18. Pope Francis' recent statements calling for a welcoming attitude to refugees and migrants hit a nerve on social media. (CNS photo/Yannis Kolesidis, EPA)

hosted by the Vatican, a state with 572 citizens, of whom only 444 are residents,” Father Baggio said. “The pope leads a Church that goes beyond every national boundary and works on behalf of millions of migrants and refugees around the world, in many cases filling the gaps left by the institutions charged with caring for them.”

While the pope's comments and actions have a political impact, he is not trying to dictate a country's immigration regulations, a Vatican official said.

“The pope gives a broad baseline of what should guide and animate immigration policy, then as he has said, every country must mold and articulate these indications for its own situation,” Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, told reporters on Feb. 21. “But, certainly, the basic

dimension must be that of welcoming. Welcoming is the only Christian attitude, an attitude that also is fundamentally the humane one.”

Nations, he said, must do everything possible to save human lives and protect human dignity, which means accepting asylum seekers and creating channels for legal immigration.

When talking about migration, Father Baggio said, Pope Francis knows countries must “evaluate, on the basis of real data, the impact welcoming migrants will have on the common good they must seek for their constituents.”

But, he pointed out, “historically when faced with serious human tragedies, great countries never turned their backs [on people fleeing], and their commitment to solidarity always abundantly repaid their small sacrifices.” †

Catholics may eat meat on St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day, March 17, falls this year on a Lenten Friday, a penitential day for Catholics when they do not eat meat or soups and sauces made from meat.

After due consideration of a number of requests and recognizing that this is a traditional day of celebration for many Catholics, Msgr. William F. Stumpf, administrator of the Archdiocese of

Indianapolis, has dispensed Catholics of the archdiocese from the obligation to abstain from meat on Friday, March 17.

Msgr. Stumpf said that those persons in the archdiocese who wish to eat meat on St. Patrick's Day are free to do so, but are highly encouraged to substitute some other act of penance, such as special prayer, acts of piety or works of charity on March 17. †

Pope Francis' prayer intention for March



• **Support for Persecuted Christians**—That persecuted Christians may be supported by the prayers and material help of the whole Church.

(To see Pope Francis' monthly intentions, go to www.apostleshipofprayer.org/2017-intentions.) †

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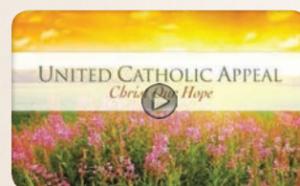
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The Criterion

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Editorial



A Syrian girl with an amputated leg sits outside a tent on Jan. 19 at Syria's Bab Al-Salam camp for displaced people in Azaz, near the Turkish border. When it comes to helping the poor, the marginalized and refugees, Pope Francis urged Catholics not to mimic the "Mannequin Challenge" by just looking on, frozen and immobile. (CNS photo/Khalil Ashawi, Reuters)

Serve Christ present in those in need

As we begin the season of Lent, let's see what we can do to really prepare for the celebration of the mysteries of our redemption on Good Friday and the Resurrection on Easter. Let's face it, many of us usually start out like a house on fire, but soon grow lackadaisical.

Pope Francis is trying to help us. On Feb. 7, he issued his Lenten message titled "The Word is a gift. Other persons are gift." He steered away from preaching about the usual Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Well, perhaps not almsgiving since his message was that we must "serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need."

The pope encouraged us to reflect on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus found in the Gospel of St. Luke (Lk 16:19-31). Lazarus is not anonymous in this parable, the pope points out. "His features are clearly delineated, and he appears as an individual with his own story."

By contrast, Jesus doesn't give the rich man a name. However, he describes his life as one of wealth, greed and vanity. The pope wrote, "For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door."

This is hardly a new message from Pope Francis. He has emphasized the importance of serving the poor since he was elected pope—and far beyond that while he was Archbishop of Buenos Aires. But it's a timely message for us this Lent.

Wealth or money isn't wrong in itself. As St. Paul wrote, "The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tm 6:10). And Pope Francis added in his Lenten message, "Instead of being an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity toward others, money can chain us and the entire world to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace."

Perhaps this Lent, we can find ways to help the Lazaruses in our communities. Perhaps they're the homeless, or immigrants trying to make a decent living for their families, or those who find it difficult to put enough food on the table for their families.

But the pope's message isn't just about recognizing other persons as gift. He also wrote that Lent should be a time "for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor." That's where prayer and fasting come in.

All of our parishes try to make it as easy as possible for us to improve our prayer lives during Lent. Whether it's the Stations of the Cross, or praying before a monstrance or tabernacle, or praying the rosary daily, we can try to find some new devotions this Lent.

Penance services in our parishes make it easy for us to get to the sacrament of reconciliation, and we certainly should do that during Lent. We should also try to do more spiritual reading.

As for fasting, there was a time when Catholics fasted every day during Lent except Sundays. Those days are past, but surely we can give up more than just meat on the Fridays of Lent. We can do better than that.

In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man doesn't learn to care for others, including Lazarus, until it's too late—after his death. Perhaps during this Lent, we could spend some time contemplating what will happen to us after our death. As the 25th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel spells out so well, we will be judged by how well we served others—if we fed the poor, gave drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, or visited the ill and those in prison.

As Pope Francis said, this Lent may we "rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need."

—John F. Fink

Reflection/John Mundell

What should I 'give up' for Lent?

"It cannot be emphasized enough how everything is interconnected."

—Pope Francis, "Laudato Si, on Care for Our Common Home," #138



Two weeks ago, my wife Julie and I were lucky enough to be standing in the Vatican at an audience with Pope Francis with 1,200 supporters of the Economy of Communion, an international movement dedicated to the eradication of poverty through the pooling and redistribution of business profits to support those in need.

Thinking the pope was going to give us some praise for the work that we do, his words came as a reassurance but also a strong challenge to go beyond what is expected: "An entrepreneur who is only a Good Samaritan," he said, "does half of his duty; he takes care of today's victims, but does not curtail those of tomorrow." It was a reminder to us of how easy it is to be satisfied with just maintaining the status quo.

And then the real challenge came in one brief sentence: "In the logic of the Gospel, if one does not give all of himself, he never gives enough of himself." These words found a place deep inside of me, especially as I returned to the United States after having spent 10 days with people from all over the world who do not have the things we Americans have in our lives, but who have, nonetheless, found happiness and meaning in simplicity, because of and not in spite of their lack of material possessions.

This pope has reminded us in his recent environmental encyclical "Laudato

Si', on Care for Our Common Home" just how connected our lives are with those people and living things around the world in an integral ecology.

What we do and how we live impacts others, for good or for bad, even if we cannot see it in our day-to-day choices. At the beginning of this Lent, in this year, at this time, an examination of conscience leaves me bare.

"What will I give up for Lent?" I recall a quote from the inspiring American saint Elizabeth Ann Seton: "Live simply, that others may simply live." With the pope's reminder, I know the answer. It won't be so much "giving up" as "giving." Everything.

Lord, please help me to strip away everything that keeps me from offering my "all" to you that I find in the person you place before me in each moment this Lent. You, Lord, are our only good.

(John Mundell is a member St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis and of the archdiocesan Commission for Creation Care Ministry, which is part of the Office of Pastoral Ministries. For more information, contact Deacon Mike Braun at 317-236-1531 or mbraun@archindy.org. Lent 4.2 is a seven-week faith formation program for parishes that uses the traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving to heed the call of Pope Francis to care for our common home. Through weekly bulletin inserts, participants learn about the significant issues facing our human family, what the Church is saying about them and how they can take practical steps to make a difference in our world. More ideas about living simply can be found at www.Lent42.org or TheEarthCube.org.) †

Be Our Guest/Cathy Lamperski Dearing

My journey into Lent

Journey is defined as "an act of traveling from one place to another." It comes from the Old French "journee," "a day's length, a day's work or travel," and from the Latin "diurnum," meaning "day."

Lent, for me, has always been just that, a journey. I am traveling through each of these 40 days of Lent, and it is the journey experience that becomes the underpinning of what Lent means to me, what it becomes for me.

As with any journey, I look forward to it with great anticipation. I plan and prepare for it. I always prepare for Lent with prayer.

My focused time for prayer is in the early morning. It is a time of quiet and peace. I read the Gospels about Jesus and meditate and reflect on what Jesus said and did.

Then I wait. And I listen. Often, some very specific word or phrase from the passage impresses me, grabs my attention, and that becomes my prayer.

I believe God is guiding me to focus on the deeper meaning of that word or phrase so that I might understand Jesus in a deeper and more significant way. And so the fruit of my prayer becomes the provisions I take on my journey.

My prayer time and Scripture reading guides and affects the thoughts, words, decisions and actions I have throughout each day. I bridge and connect what happens in my morning prayer with the unfolding of my day so that I can encounter Christ in it.

Since I want to encounter Christ during my Lenten journey, I want to have some specific overarching guiding theme or principle that allows me to do this. This typically comes to me in prayer

and Scripture, and that is exactly what occurred at an early morning Mass on Feb. 19.

The theme of "going the extra mile" was presented during the Gospel reading of Jesus' words in Mt 5:38-48 and my pastor's homily. Those words struck a chord in me and stayed with me throughout the Mass and even after I had returned home. It was clear to me that "going the extra mile" would become my guiding principle and spiritual practice for Lent 2017. This is the Lent I believe I am being called to so that I can encounter Christ on the journey.

What does going the extra mile look like?

What does it mean to go over and beyond what is asked for or required?

Do I go the extra mile even if it is not asked or required of me?

Who has gone the extra mile for me in my life?

Has there ever been a time when I chose not to go the extra mile?

How did Jesus go the extra mile during his life of Earth?

How does Jesus go the extra mile for me today?

These are the questions I will ask myself, reflect upon, and respond to in my prayer, Scripture reading, and daily encounters during the season of Lent.

As I journey through each of these 40 days of Lent, I pray and ask for the guidance and strength to go the extra mile in prayer, in generosity, in forgiveness, in patience, in mercy—in whatever God is asking of me. May I also rediscover and delve more deeply into all the ways Jesus went the extra mile and goes the extra mile for me.

May my journey into Lent and yours be a journey of encountering Christ.

(Cathy Lamperski Dearing is a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Indianapolis parish to host annual Lenten speaker series

By Sean Gallagher

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., in Indianapolis, will host its 17th annual Lenten speaker series titled “Spaghetti and Spirituality,” on Wednesday evenings in Lent, starting on March 15 and ending on April 5.

Prior to dinner and each week’s presentation, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed in the parish’s church for adoration following the conclusion of an Anglican Use Mass celebrated at noon. An ordinary form Mass, celebrated in English, will start at 5:45 p.m.

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

Holy Rosary parishioner Julie Lehner helps organize the series, and is looking forward to it this year.

“When we learn more about our Catholic beliefs, we can better live out our lives with faith and with joy,” she said. “This year, we have some amazing individuals whose thoughts and ideas will sink in and inspire you day to day.

“Maybe it will feed your prayer life,

help you approach that person at the office or pique your curiosity about something and make you hungry to learn more.”

Patty Schneier will begin the series on March 15 with a presentation titled “One Step Away,” in which the Catholic author and former radio show host will reflect on her journey of faith through suffering, pain and in facing her own mortality.



Patty Schneier

On March 22, Father Joseph Newton, archdiocesan vicar judicial, will speak on the topic, “Is There Catholic Divorce? The Current Canonical Status of Marriage.”

As leader of the archdiocesan Metropolitan Tribunal, Father Newton and his co-workers strive to further the salvation of souls by offering pastoral care and guidance to people across central and southern Indiana seeking a declaration of nullity (commonly called an “annulment”) of a previous marriage.



Fr. Joseph Newton

Dr. Scott Sullivan will give a presentation on March 29 titled, “Did Jesus Really Rise from The Dead? How to Use Reason and Evidence to Make a Case for the Resurrection of Jesus.”



Scott Sullivan

Reason and Evidence to Make a Case for the Resurrection of Jesus.”

Sullivan earned a doctorate in philosophy at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. Through his production company, Classical Theist, Sullivan seeks to strengthen the faith of Catholics by introducing them to the Church’s intellectual tradition.

A convert to Catholicism and a native of southern Indiana who now lives with his wife and eight children in Texas, Sullivan was previously a competitor in international kickboxing and holds a black belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

The last presentation in this year’s “Spaghetti and Spirituality” will feature a concert by the St. Ambrose Schola Cantorum sacred music choir from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington on April 5.

The concert, titled “A Bullet Train through Western Music” will help attendees learn about the role the Church has played over the centuries in the development of music in western culture.

The concert will take place in Holy Rosary Church after the evening’s supper in the parish’s Priori Hall.



The addition of a sacred music concert is new to “Spaghetti and Spirituality,” which has focused on speakers in the past. “Music points us to heaven, what we’re striving for,” Lehner said. “This is a narrated concert. It takes us on a jaunt through the rich musical legacy of holy mother Church, and gives commentary that connects the dots. So we’ll get to think about how the Church has influenced art and culture from the beginning, and how that continues into today.”

(People interested in attending any of the presentations are asked to call Holy Rosary Parish at 317-636-4478 by no later than 5 p.m. on the Monday prior to each seminar. A \$7 freewill offering is suggested. For more information about “Spaghetti and Spirituality” or to register for sessions in the series, visit www.holyrosaryindy.org.) †

USCCB committee chairmen applaud decision on transgender directive

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The chairmen of two U.S. bishops’ committees on Feb. 24 praised President Donald J. Trump’s repeal of the Obama administration’s directive on transgender access to school and university bathrooms.

The guidance, issued last May by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education, “indicated that public pre-K through 12 schools, as well as all colleges and universities, should treat ‘a student’s gender identity as the student’s sex,’” said the bishops’ joint statement.

The document “sought to impose a one-size-fits-all approach to dealing with sensitive issues involving individual students,” said Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia,

chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, and Bishop George V. Murry of Youngstown, Ohio, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Catholic Education.

“Such issues are best handled with care and compassion at the local level, respecting the privacy and safety concerns of all students,” they said.

In rescinding the directive, the Trump administration said that addressing of transgender access to bathrooms is best left to the states and local school districts, not the federal government.

The Obama administration said it applied to all public schools as well as colleges and universities that received federal funding. The directive “summarizes a school’s

Title IX obligations regarding transgender students,” administration officials said, and that it also explained how the Education and Justice departments will “evaluate a school’s compliance with these obligations.”

The federal Title IX statute prohibits sex discrimination in educational

programs and activities, like sports. Some months before issuing the directive, the Obama administration had warned schools that denying transgender students access to the facilities and activities of their choice was illegal under its interpretation of federal sex discrimination laws. †

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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.

March 5-6

St. Maurice and Immaculate Conception parishes' Lenten Mission. Father Daniel Bedel presenting. Sun., St. Maurice Church, 8874 Harrison St., Napoleon: "Finding God Within Us," 7 p.m.; Mon., Immaculate Conception Church, 2081 E. County Road 820 S., Greensburg: "Finding God Outside of Us." Information: Laurie Husted, 812-498-7512, hustedlaurie@gmail.com.

March 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.

March 8

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish cafeteria, 7575 Holiday Drive, E., Indianapolis. **Lenten Soup Suppers and Speaker Series**, week one of five, (March 15, 22, 29 and April 5), author Beth Leonard speaking on

"Got Mercy? Don't Leave Lent Without it!" 5:30 p.m. Mass, 6 p.m. soup supper, 7 p.m. speaker. Information: dcarollo@stluke.org, 317-259-4373.

March 10

St. Matthew the Apostle Parish gym, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Lenten Fish Fry**, all-you-can-eat fish, shrimp, pizza, chowder, pasta, mac and cheese, prices vary, 5-8 p.m. Information: 317-257-4297 or tjjerger@sbcglobal.net.

American Legion, 412 Eastern Ave., Sunman. **St. Nicholas Parish Annual Fish Fry, Baked Potato and Salad Bar and Cakewalk**, 4:30-7:30 p.m., free-will offering, carry out available. Information: marileeq@yahoo.com.

St. Rita Parish, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **Lenten Fish Fry**, dinners, sandwiches and sides, dine-in, carry out or delivery, assorted prices, noon-6 p.m. Information: 317-536-1047 or stritchsecretary71@yahoo.com.

March 10-12

Carmel High School, Dale E. Graham Auditorium, 520 E. Main St., Carmel, Ind. **"The Cross and the Light,"** performance of Christ's Passion, Resurrection and Pentecost, 7 p.m. Fri., Sat., Sun.; 2 p.m. Sat., Sun., \$20. Tickets: www.crossandlight.com/tickets. Information: 317-407-1281 or tcl2017@gmail.com.

March 11

St. Monica Parish, St. Augustine Room., 6131 N. Michigan Road, Indianapolis. **"Marriage in Focus" Marriage Enrichment**, for engaged and married couples, Tom and Marcy Renken presenting, 5 p.m. Mass (optional), 6:30-9 p.m. pitch-in dinner and speakers, free-will offering. Register at marriageinfocus@gmail.com (include dish you will bring). Information: 317-293-2193.

Knights of Columbus Council 3443, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. **Bishop Chatard High School 2017 Tropical Tribute Fundraiser**, benefiting the Joe and Barb Krier Memorial Grant, 7:30-11:30

p.m., beer, wine, appetizers, live music, \$30 per person, 10 and younger free. Purchase tickets: alumni.bishopchatard.org/tropical-tribute. Information: sherrymp@comcast.net or 317-872-5088.

St. Mark the Evangelist Church, 535 E. Edgewood Ave., Indianapolis. **Disability Awareness Mass and Reception**, 5:30 p.m. Mass followed by reception in Schafer Hall. Information: Dan O'Brien, dobrien@obrieninservices.com.

All Saints Parish, St. Joseph Campus, 7536 Church Lane, West Harrison. **Spring Craft Show and Lunch**, artisans, soup and sandwich lunch and bake sale, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 812-576-4302 or www.allsaintscatholic.net.

March 11-15

Mary, Queen of Peace Church, 1005 W. Main St., Danville. **Parish Mission of Mercy: "Explore, Explain and Experience,"** Mercy Father Wade Menezes presenting; Sun. 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. noon Mass and 7 p.m. presentation.

Information: 317-627-0752 or www.mqpdanville.org.

March 12

St. Michael the Archangel Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. **Mass in French**, 1 p.m. Information: acfadi2014@gmail.com.

St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Class of '63 monthly gathering**, 6 p.m. Mass, optional dinner afterward. Information: 317-408-6396.

St. Philip Neri Parish and Holy Cross Chapel, Holy Cross gym, 125 N. Oriental, Indianapolis. **St. Patrick's Day Celebration**, 3-7 p.m., corned beef and cabbage dinners, soda, beer, wine and mixed drinks. \$5 per person. Information: 317-435-2853 or dianar@stphilipneri-indy.org.

March 12-14

St. Rita Church, 1733 Dr. Andrew J. Brown Ave., Indianapolis. **2017 Parish Revival: "Just a Close Walk with Thee,"** Father Jerome Raymond

Robinson presenting, 7 p.m. each evening, no charge. Information: 317-632-9349 or stritchsecretary71@yahoo.com.

March 13

Monastery Immaculate Conception, 802 E. 10th Street, Ferdinand, Ind. **College of Saint Scholastica Choir and Bella Voce Sacred Music Concert**, 7 p.m., free-will offering accepted. Information: Greg Eckerle, 812-367-1411 or geckerle@thedome.org.

March 14

St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. **Ave Maria Guild**, 11 a.m. Mass for deceased members of the Guild, 12:30 p.m. meeting. Information: 317-223-3687, vlgmimi@aol.com.

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Monthly Taizé Prayer Service**, theme "Praying for Peace in the World and in Our Hearts," 7-8 p.m. Information: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

Right to Life of Indianapolis sponsors youth contests, deadlines April 1 and 15

Registration is open for Right to Life of Indianapolis' annual essay, speech and art contests for middle and high school students in Marion County and the seven surrounding counties.

The deadline for submissions for the essay contests—with separate contests for students in grades 7-8, 9-10 and 11-12—is April 1.

The deadline for applications for the speech contest, which is open to students in grades 9-12, is April 1. The

contest will be held on April 22. The winner will deliver his or her speech at the annual Celebrate Life Dinner in Indianapolis on Oct. 3.

The deadline for submissions for the art contest, which is for students in grades 9-12, is April 15. The winning work will be featured on the cover of the Celebrate Life Dinner program.

For more information, log on to rtlindy.org.

Providence Sisters host 'Come and See' weekend on March 31-April 2

All single Catholic women ages 18-42 are invited to learn more about becoming a Sister of Providence during a "Come and See" weekend retreat at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods from 7 p.m. on March 31 to 2 p.m. on April 2.

There is no charge for the event, and meals will be provided. Register online at ComeandSee.SistersofProvidence.org.

For more information, call or text Providence Sister Editha Ben at 812-230-4771, or e-mail eben@spsmw.org.



Celebrating St. Meinrad

Benedictine Archabbot Kurt Stasiak, leader of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, celebrates a Mass at St. Meinrad Parish in St. Meinrad on Jan. 22 to mark the feast of the parish's patron saint. The recent custom for the annual feast is to have the archabbot of Saint Meinrad Archabbey celebrate Mass, followed by a breakfast social. (Submitted photo)

Retreats and Programs

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

March 16-April 6

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Lenten Series on Matthew's Gospel**, four Thursdays, Franciscan Sister Barbara Leonhard presenting, 6:30-8 p.m., \$15 per session; \$55 for all. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, center@oldenburgosf.com.

March 17-18

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **"Mining the Dark for Healing Gold: Writing about Difficult Relationships,"**

Providence Associate Liza Hyatt and Norbert Krapf presenting, Fri. 6 p.m. through Sat. 4 p.m., \$200 includes meals and housing, \$150 commuters. Registration deadline March 2 for housing, March 10 for commuters. Information, registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or spsmw.org/providence-center/events.

March 17-19

Archabbey Guest House and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Drive, St. Meinrad, **"Contemplative Living,"** Benedictine Father Adrian Burke, presenter, \$255 single, \$425 double.

Information: 812-357-6585 or mzoeller@saintmeinrad.edu.

March 18

Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Lenten Program: Contemplative Prayer by Thomas Merton**, Providence Associate Disciple of Christ Rev. Rebecca Zelensky and Dr. Will Hine presenting, 9:30-11 a.m., \$45 includes book. Registration deadline Feb. 27. Information and registration: 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org or spsmw.org/providence-center/events.

Couples may announce engagement or marriage in *The Criterion*

Engagement announcements for couples associated with the Archdiocese of Indianapolis who are planning to be married at a Catholic church between July 2017 and January 2018 will be published in a July 2017 issue of *The Criterion*.

Couples who were married at a Catholic church in recent months may announce their marriage if an engagement announcement was not published before the wedding date.

The wedding announcement form is available online at CriterionOnline.com by clicking on the "Send Us Information" link, then the "Wedding Announcements" link.

An engagement or wedding photo may be submitted by e-mail to cclark@archindy.org. Digital photos must be clear, high-resolution color images.

There is no charge for the engagement or marriage announcements.

Panel discussion on Indiana bishops' letter on poverty is set for March 8

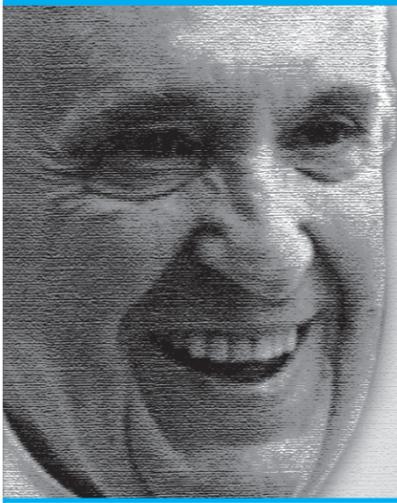
A panel discussion titled "Catholics and the Crisis of Poverty: How Indiana Catholics Can Act on Our Bishops' Pastoral Letter" will take place at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 4625 N. Kenwood Ave., in Indianapolis, at 7 p.m. on March 8.

Participating on the panel are representatives of the Indiana Institute for Working Families and Indianapolis Congregation Action Network (IndyCAN), and other community

members.

The Catholic bishops of Indiana issued "Poverty at the Crossroads: The Church's Response to Poverty in Indiana" in March 2015. The panelists will address how Catholics can meaningfully act upon the bishops' charge to respond to the needs of those who struggle with poverty in Indiana.

To access the report, log on to www.archindy.org/archbishop/poverty-2015.html.



The Face of Mercy

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

By Daniel Conway

Memory is a grace that makes hope possible

"Hope: Looking to the future. Just as one cannot live a Christian life without memory of the steps taken, one cannot live a Christian life without looking to the future with hope." (Pope Francis, homily on Jan. 27, 2017)

Continuing one of his favorite themes—on the importance of “going forward in the faith,” and not letting ourselves get stuck in the here and now—Pope Francis tells us that “memory,” our ability to remember, is essential to moving forward on the journey of life. Memory is motivation. It is what compels us to keep going, and to be people who honor the past even as we look to the future with hope.

When we remember God’s goodness, his abundant gifts, we can be grateful. The pope says this is especially true when we recall “the memory of troubles in my life,” and “how the Lord has saved me from these troubles.” We cannot really understand the saving power of God unless we acknowledge the power of sin, and “the anguished trials” that men and women of faith have endured throughout past generations.

“Memory is a grace,” Pope Francis tells us. “Lord, may I not forget your presence in my life, may I not forget the good moments, also the ugly; the joys and the crosses.”

Even the memory of bad times is necessary if we are to avoid being paralyzed by inaction. Moments of suffering remind us not to settle for less than perfection—in our own lives and in the lives of others. We are called to search and strive for what is good and true without letting ourselves become satisfied with the minimum requirements of Christian life.

Pope Francis believes that a minimalist approach to Christian discipleship—keeping the commandments but not taking risks, not going the extra mile out of love for Christ and his people in need, can paralyze us. “It makes you forget so many graces received,” the pope says. “It takes away memory, it takes away hope, because it doesn’t allow you to go forward.”

“This is faintheartedness: this is the sin against memory, courage, patience, and hope,” the pope says. “May the Lord make us grow in memory, make us grow in hope,

give us courage and patience each and free us from that which is faintheartedness, being afraid of everything.”

From the beginning of his pontificate, the pope from Argentina has urged us to “move beyond our comfort zones,” to go forward in faith and not hesitate to proclaim the Gospel in words and in action.

He has made a special point of challenging us to go to the “peripheries,” the margins of civil and Church society, where the saving action of Jesus Christ is needed most. The Holy Father has previously spoken out against “lazy Christians,” those of us who are too comfortable or set in our ways to be courageous in our words or actions on behalf of others.

“Hope: Looking to the future,” is what Pope Francis calls us to remember as we pray for the gift of memory to help us resist faintheartedness and apathy. “Just as one cannot live a Christian life without memory of the steps taken, one cannot live a Christian life without looking to the future with hope ... of the encounter with the Lord,” the pope says. “He who wills to save his life will lose it,” Pope Francis reminds us.

The effort to save our lives—to be protected, comfortable and unconcerned with the trouble of others—will destroy us in the end. It will cause us to forget all the hopes and joys that come from living full, productive lives in imitation of Christ who gave everything to save us from our sins.

Memory is a gift from God. Remembering all that God has done for us—in good times and in bad—allows us to accept Christ’s invitation to follow him and to proclaim his Good News to the ends of the Earth.

“Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19, 1 Cor 11:24), the Lord commands us. Are we willing to listen and obey? Or have we become too comfortable, too frightened or too faint-hearted?

Memory is a grace that makes hope possible. Let’s pray for the grace to never forget the Lord’s goodness to us—or his great commission to proclaim the Gospel in our words and our actions throughout the whole world!

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

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

La gracia de la memoria hace posible la esperanza

“La esperanza: Mirar al futuro. Así como no se puede vivir una vida cristiana sin la memoria de los pasos dados, no se puede vivir una vida cristiana sin mirar al futuro con la esperanza del encuentro con el Señor.” (Papa Francisco, homilía del 27 de enero de 2017).

Continuando con uno de sus temas predilectos, el de la importancia de “ir adelante en la fe” y no quedarnos atascados en el aquí y ahora, el papa Francisco nos dice que la “memoria,” nuestra capacidad para recordar, es esencial para avanzar en el camino de la vida. La memoria es motivación; es lo que nos impulsa a seguir adelante y a ser un pueblo que honra el pasado aunque miremos hacia el futuro con esperanza.

Al recordar la bondad y los abundantes obsequios de Dios, nos sentimos agradecidos. El Santo Padre afirma que esto es especialmente cierto cuando evocamos “la memoria de los problemas de mi vida” y “cómo me ha salvado el Señor de estos líos.” En realidad no podemos comprender el poder salvador de Dios a menos que reconozcamos el poder del pecado, “las pruebas sufridas” por los hombres y mujeres de fe que las han resistido a lo largo de muchas generaciones.

El papa Francisco nos dice que “la memoria es una gracia. Señor, que yo no olvide tu paso en mi vida, que yo no olvide los buenos momentos, también los feos; las alegrías y las cruces.”

Inclusive el recuerdo de los malos momentos es algo necesario para evitar quedar paralizados por la inacción. Los momentos de sufrimiento nos recuerdan que no debemos conformarnos con nada menos que la perfección, tanto con respecto a nuestras propias vidas como a las vidas de los demás. Estamos llamados a ir en pos y a esforzarnos por aquello que es bueno y verdadero, sin dejarnos caer en el conformismo de cumplir con los requisitos mínimos de la vida cristiana.

El papa Francisco cree que un enfoque minimalista al discipulado cristiano, es decir, cumplir con los mandamientos pero no arriesgarnos, no ir más allá por amor a Cristo y a su pueblo necesitado, puede llegar a paralizarnos. “Te hace olvidar las tantas gracias recibidas,” destaca el papa. “Te quita la memoria, te quita la esperanza porque no te deja ir.”

“Ésta es la pusilanimidad: éste es el pecado contra la memoria, el coraje, la paciencia y la esperanza,” afirma. “Que el Señor nos haga crecer en la memoria, nos haga crecer en la esperanza, nos dé cada

día coraje y paciencia y nos libere de esa cosa que es la pusilanimidad, tener miedo de todo.”

Desde el inicio de su pontificado, el papa argentino nos ha exhortado a “abandonar nuestra comodidad,” a avanzar en la fe y a no dudar en proclamar el Evangelio con palabras y obras.

Ha hecho especial énfasis en desafiarlos a ir hacia la periferia, a los márgenes de la sociedad civil y eclesial donde más se requiere la acción salvadora de Jesucristo. El Santo Padre se ha pronunciado anteriormente contra los “cristianos perezosos”: aquellos de nosotros que estamos demasiado cómodos o acostumbrados a ciertas cosas como para ser valientes en palabras o acciones en nombre de los demás.

“La esperanza: Mirar al futuro” es lo que el papa Francisco nos invita a recordar mientras pedimos por el don de la memoria que nos ayudará a combatir la pusilanimidad y la apatía. El Santo Padre nos dice que “así como no se puede vivir una vida cristiana sin la memoria de los pasos dados, no se puede vivir una vida cristiana sin mirar al futuro con la esperanza del encuentro con el Señor. El que quiera conservar su propia vida, la

pierde,” nos recuerda el papa Francisco.

El esfuerzo de salvar nuestras vidas, de mantenernos a salvo, cómodos y despreocupados con respecto al sufrimiento de los demás, al final nos destruirá; hará que olvidemos todas las esperanzas y las alegrías que provienen de vivir vidas plenas y productivas imitando a Cristo quien lo dio todo para salvarnos del pecado.

La memoria es una gracia de Dios. Recordar todo lo que Dios ha hecho por nosotros, en las buenas y en las malas, nos ayuda a aceptar la invitación de Cristo a seguirlo y a proclamar la Buena Nueva hasta los confines de la Tierra.

“Hagan esto en conmemoración mía” (Lc 22:19, 1 Cor 11:24), nos ordena el Señor. ¿Estamos dispuestos a escuchar y a obedecer? ¿O acaso nos hemos vuelto demasiado cómodos, demasiado temerosos o cobardes?

La gracia de la memoria hace posible la esperanza. Recemos para recibir la gracia de jamás olvidar la bondad del Señor para con nosotros, o la gran tarea que nos encomendó: ¡proclamar el Evangelio a todo el mundo con nuestras palabras y nuestras acciones!

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

Bravely tackle hardship knowing God will never let you down, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—When life gets difficult, trust in God and don’t worry unnecessarily about tomorrow, Pope Francis said.

“Trusting in him doesn’t magically solve problems, but it allows for facing them with the right spirit—courageously,” he said before praying the *Angelus* with those gathered in St. Peter’s Square on Feb. 26.

“I am brave because I trust in my Father who cares for everything and loves me very much.”

The pope’s reflection looked at the day’s Gospel reading (Mt 6:24-34) in which Jesus tells his disciples to “not worry about your life” (Mt 6:25), what to wear and what to eat. Instead, look at how God provides for the wild flowers and animals,

and learn from them that worrying will not “add a single moment to your life-span” (Mt 6:27), the passage reads.

Too much worrying “risks taking serenity and balance away” from one’s life, the pope said. “Often, this anxiety is pointless because it is unable to change the course of events.”

God “is our shelter, the source of our serenity and our peace. He is the rock of

our salvation,” he said.

“Whoever holds onto God never falls. He is our defense against evil that always lies in ambush,” the pope added.

Many people do not realize or they deny that God is a “great friend, ally, Father,” making this a world of “orphans” who would rather seek security in or show “an excessive love” for earthly goods and wealth, he said. †

REFUGEES

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up in the news in the last few years,” Smith said.

‘They’re literally running for their lives’

Refugees are not people simply seeking a better life in America, Smith explained. “Refugees are pushed from their homes because they have nowhere to go,” she said. “When I ask them how they knew it was time to leave, ... for most of them it was when the war was literally at their doorstep. Their village was lost, or they had homes destroyed, or they had family members who were brutally killed in front of their eyes.

“They’re literally running for their lives. ... It’s really a different kind of faith journey, because they literally have absolutely nothing else—they’ve left their homes, their jobs, they’ve left everything that they’ve ever known.”

She explained that refugees have three lives: the life they knew in their homeland, their life waiting to be resettled, and their life once they are resettled.

“In that second phase, it’s a life of waiting,” said Smith. “Sometimes that can be [in] a refugee camp in a neighboring country. Sometimes that can be [in] a city in a neighboring country where they’re under the radar ... as illegal residents.

“They find themselves in limbo because they can’t stay where they are. They don’t know what will come next. Their dream would be for peace to come and for them to go to their homeland, but for so many that opportunity doesn’t come. Some people live in refugee camps for decades.”

‘“Refugee” is a very specific status’

Smith explained that the concept of refugee resettlement began after World War II. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) was founded in December 1950 in response to the number of displaced people in Europe after World War II.

“The goal was repatriation,” said Smith. “That remains the top priority today, and that’s why only less than 1 percent of the around 21 million refugees are resettled in a foreign country.”

Refugee and Immigrant Services started in 1975, the same year that refugee resettlement in the United States began as result of the Vietnam War, she said. As boats with Vietnamese people fleeing their country showed up on beaches of other nations, said Smith, “The UNHCR said, ‘They’re coming into countries that don’t really have stable enough economies to accommodate them. ... Maybe they can be taken to countries where they can get jobs and contribute.’”

Refugee resettlement was originally intended to be a short-term solution, with the hope of refugees returning to their homes when peace allowed, Smith said.

“But refugees, because they have had so little control of their lives for so long,

the moment they’re able to get a job and raise a family, they run with it,” she said. “They don’t want to be dependent on anyone else.”

The U.S. is now one of 28 countries that accept refugees. But the designation as “refugee” is difficult to obtain, Smith explained.

“I know a lot of times in the news ‘refugees’ and ‘immigrants’ can be used interchangeably,” she said. “But ‘refugee’ is a very specific immigration status.

“A person given that status has to prove that they were direct targets in their homeland based on their race, ethnicity, political background, religion or membership in a particular social group.”

Once that designation is established, the next step is to determine the country a refugee will be placed in for resettlement.

“It’s not easy to get resettled anywhere, and it’s particularly not easy to get resettled into the United States as a refugee,” Smith said. “That is because security is a priority to all of us, and to [the refugees] as well. [The government] wants to make sure that anybody who is coming in is exactly who they say they are.

“So the security screening for the refugees, while they say that takes 18-24 months, typically lasts well past that. The Department of Defense, Homeland Security, the Department of State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Center for Counterterrorism are all checking out these people. That is a very difficult process.”

Smith pointed out that the refugees being admitted into the U.S. “aren’t people who decided to come—these are people who are handpicked out of 21 million refugees. If there is any question about an individual, they will not get the opportunity to resettle in the United States.”

‘So excited for the opportunity to be here’

Once cases are approved by the State Department, Smith explained, that agency contracts with nine national resettlement agencies, most of which are religiously affiliated, the largest of which is the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“Each of the nine national agencies has hundreds of local affiliates [like RIS] where they designate cases to,” she said.

Refugee and Immigrant Services staff members or volunteers go to the airport to pick up refugees assigned to be resettled in Indianapolis, and drive them to a temporary apartment furnished with donated items.

The refugees then begin the busy matter of assimilating into American society. They attend classes offered by RIS on learning English, job search skills, cultural orientation classes, how to set up a bank account, balance a checkbook and more, plus receive job placement assistance.

“Most refugees are able to get a job within one to three months after arriving, which is good, because the financial assistance that’s provided to them to cover rent and utilities and basic needs is very

notification to the proper authorities. It allows minors to be protected against sexual predators and abuse by persons who may pose as a parent of a minor so the minor can get an abortion.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 6-4 to advance the bill on Feb. 22, and the full Senate approved the bill. The bill crosses over from the Senate to the House for further consideration.

A bill to add information on the abortion reversal process for chemical abortions to Indiana’s informed consent law also advanced. House Bill 1128, authored by

Rep. Ron Bacon, R-Chandler, passed the House Public Policy panel 7-5 on Feb. 21, and later passed the full House 53-41 on Feb. 27.

The bill would add to Indiana’s informed consent law information and



Heidi Smith, director of Catholic Charities Indianapolis' Refugee and Immigrant Services, left, listens to Charles Williams of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis after she delivered a talk on Feb. 17 to members of the Catholic Business Exchange. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

short term, just for a couple of months,” said Smith.

“So it’s not only good for the refugees, it’s good for our economy, because refugees are hardworking, resilient people. We want people to understand the goodness of who these people are and what they bring. They’re so excited for the opportunity to be here, to learn English, become American and start their new lives.”

Last year, RIS resettled 676 refugees from six countries, about 500 of whom were joining family members already resettled in Indianapolis.

“So when we hear executive orders that are even doing a temporary block, it puts these families in such a state of worry, not knowing if they’re ever going to be reunited with their families again,” Smith explained.

Another cause for concern she cited was that the 110,000 refugees that Congress allowed for the federal budget year that began last October has been decreased to 50,000.

“[Refugee and Immigrant Services] operates on per capita federal funding,” Smith explained. “And if we’re getting less refugees coming in—and also a four-month period where we’re not having any come in—that leaves the future of our program in question, wondering how we’ll sustain ourselves, particularly not knowing what will happen past those four months.”

While those working for RIS anxiously await the text of the new executive order, Smith said the agency is not seeking the in-kind donations of furniture and household goods it usually requests.

“We’re asking for financial contributions, so that we can sustain ourselves throughout this time of uncertainty,” she said. “When refugees do start coming again, we want to have the same talented staff available to serve them. And we ask you to contact your representatives to let them know the goodness that refugees bring into our community.”

‘So touched by their faith’

Jim Liston, founder of the Catholic Business Exchange and a member of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Indianapolis, found the talk to be “timely and very interesting.”

“As most people, we don’t have a clue as to what the reality of the refugees’ plight is,” he said. “All we get are the soundbites at the 6 o’clock news.

“It would be wonderful if every person in every parish could hear [Smith’s] message.”

One person present at the talk who is aware of the plight of the refugees was Alice Steppe, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Indianapolis.

“All of my grandparents were immigrants, so I know some of that story,” she said.

Steppe has been involved in helping the refugees from Myanmar (formerly Burma) in her parish.

“As a business woman and realtor, I’ve gotten to know the families. ... One man looked at four houses, and he said, ‘I want this one, because this is where my Marian shrine will go.’ I have been so touched by their faith.”

Hearing of the refugees’ experiences has impacted Steppe as well.

“When I hear the stories from their mouths, I just can’t believe what they’ve been through,” she said. “What a privilege it is to be involved in some small way in their lives. ...

“And they’re so motivated. I love the energy they bring to our liturgy. Now they’re involved in the Mass, they’re readers. I see them being integrated into our lives, and they’re so excited to be American.

“[The Church’s] social teaching is huge. It forms us. It’s a part of that hospitality as Catholic Americans.”

(To hear Smith’s talk, log on to goo.gl/LnvhYk. For more information on Refugee and Immigrant Services or to donate, log onto www.archindy.org/refugee.) †

ICC

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Purvis said the bill also would strengthen parental rights in a judicial bypass process by raising the judicial standard to “clear and convincing evidence” if a minor seeks a judicial bypass to go around parental consent to get permission from a judge to obtain an abortion. The attorney said 15 other states have the clear and convincing evidence, the highest judicial standard, for minors seeking a judicial bypass to obtain an abortion without parental consent.

Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the ICC, who serves as the public policy spokesperson for the bishops in Indiana, testified in support of the bill. He said Senate Bill 404 provides a clarification regarding parental notification and protection of a minor seeking an abortion, and assures



Sen. Erin Houchin



Rep. Ron Bacon

Rep. Ron Bacon, R-Chandler, passed the House Public Policy panel 7-5 on Feb. 21, and later passed the full House 53-41 on Feb. 27.

The bill would add to Indiana’s informed consent law information and

referral services for a procedure to reverse a chemical abortion if a woman changed her mind. Reversing a chemical abortion drew disagreement from various local obstetricians and gynecologists. Some physicians who testified cited actual instances of them successfully treating patients with this process to save an unborn child. Other physicians said the process was not based on vetted science.

Bacon said the bill would give women who regret trying to end their pregnancy by taking abortion-inducing drugs a chance to reverse the process and potentially save their unborn child. House Bill 1128 crosses over from the House to the Senate for further consideration.

A third pro-life proposal was introduced this year, but it failed to move. House Bill 1134, authored by Rep. Curt Nisly, R-Goshen, would define that human life begins at conception and the state has a compelling interest to protect

it. The bill would ban abortion. If passed, the state law would be challenged in federal court based on the long-standing constitutional right to abortion established in the 1973 landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Roe v. Wade*.

While the bill didn’t advance this year, Tebbe said it might be “a good thing.” Tebbe explained that the goal of the bill was laudable. However, the timing of the bill was not prudent.

“If the protection at conception bill passed now, it would be challenged in federal court and struck down,” said Tebbe. “There is no guarantee the U.S. Supreme Court would uphold the state of Indiana’s law to define protection of a human life at conception. If that happened, it could cause the reverse effect of the intent of the bill.”

The ICC offers several public policy and legislative resources on its Web page at www.indianacc.org.

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

Priests' pilgrimage of faith connects local Church to France

By John Shaughnessy

As he looked around the historic room in France, Father Eric Augenstein couldn't stop thinking about the 14-year-old youth who once witnessed the horror and the courage that unfolded there.



Fr. Eric Augenstein

He also couldn't stop thinking about how people's choices of faith can have a great impact on the faith of others, sometimes even creating influences that extend for generations and across centuries.

Standing in the room, Father

Augenstein learned that it had once been used as a chapel during the French Revolution of the late 18th century—a chapel that later became a courtroom where priests and other people were condemned to death by guillotine during a period known as the Reign of Terror.

Letting all that horror and history soak into him, Father Augenstein thought of the 14-year-old boy who watched as the priests were sentenced to death. The vocations director for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis also marveled at how that defining experience would eventually lead the youth to leave France, travel to Indiana and become the archdiocese's first bishop.

"Fourteen-year-old Simon Bruté would sit in the back of the chapel-turned-courtroom during the trials of priests, all the while knowing that his mother was hiding priests in their apartment one floor below," Father Augenstein says. "He would also secretly take the Eucharist to prisoners."

"Over the years, I had heard a lot about Bishop Bruté's ministry in the United States, but I didn't know about his firsthand experiences of the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror. To be in the same room where the young Simon Bruté saw all these events unfold was quite moving."

"Then to think that the courageous witness of these condemned priests inspired Simon to answer God's call to the priesthood himself—that's a vocation story worth much reflection and admiration."

Discovering the roots of faith

That story of the ripple effects of faith is just one of the memorable moments from the journey that Father Augenstein, Father Anthony Hollowell and Father Kyle Rodden made to France in January.

Indeed, that moment is just one part of the extraordinary story that connects the archdiocese to a certain section of France—a connection that Father Augenstein described in a blog post he wrote about the journey:

—The first four bishops of the Diocese of Vincennes (now the Archdiocese of

Indianapolis) were born in France.

—Two of the major religious and educational institutions in Indiana—the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College—were founded by religious orders that were started in France.

—The only canonized saint who lived and ministered in Indiana—St. Theodora Guérin—was born and raised in France.

—The first Catholics in Indiana were French.

"Even more remarkably, the three most prominent Catholic pioneers of Indiana were not only all French, they were from a small region of northwestern France," Father Augenstein notes. "And all were formed in the years during and immediately following the French Revolution."

"Bishop Bruté was from Rennes. St. Theodora, foundress of the Sisters of Providence and St. Mary-of-the-Woods, was born in Etables-sur-Mer, just 70 miles north of Rennes. About a hundred miles east of Rennes is Le Mans, where Blessed Basil Moreau founded the Congregation of Holy Cross and sent a group of priests and brothers, including Father Edward Sorin—who had been born halfway between Rennes and Le Mans—to Indiana, where they founded the University of Notre Dame."

"And all of this happened in more or less a 50-year period after the French Revolution, from 1800-1850."

Packed with that history, the three priests set off to discover the roots of the Catholic faith in the archdiocese—and the roots of faith in their own lives.

Moments to treasure

One of the most moving stops on their journey occurred in the village of Ruille, home to the motherhouse of the Sisters of Providence—the order that had a hand in the education of all three priests as they grew up in Indiana.

"On this property, we went to a small house, not much bigger than a barn, and it contained two bedrooms, a common room, two closets and a small chapel," recalls Father Hollowell, who is finishing graduate studies in Rome after being ordained in June of 2016.

"This was the building in which the first Sisters of Providence began their work and ministry. As I looked at that shabby building and its decrepit surroundings, it was a stark reminder that God can build great things from very little, and God's greatest works are often begun far away from the spotlight of the world."

Father Rodden described visiting the motherhouse as one of "these moments I will treasure."

"In particular, I remember stumbling into the chapel where St. Theodora had prayed with her community," says the associate pastor of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis. "Each moment of prayer for me was a celebration of gratitude and nourishment for my own ministry."



Father Anthony Hollowell, left, and Father Kyle Rodden of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis listen as a member of the Sisters of Providence shares details about the birthplace of St. Theodora Guérin—Indiana's only saint—in Etables-sur-Mer, France. (Photos by Father Eric Augenstein)

On that same January day, the three priests were in Le Mans to visit the shrine of Blessed Basil Moreau, the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross—the order that would send Father Sorin from France to Indiana where he would start the University of Notre Dame.

That connection has special meaning to Father Hollowell, who graduated with baccalaureate and master's degrees from the Catholic university in northern Indiana.

"I had the great joy of celebrating Mass at the tomb of Father Moreau," Father Hollowell says.

"I thanked him for the countless graces I received from the university—from the many Holy Cross priests who served me and helped nurture my vocation, to the great classes I attended and the great people that I met. The time I spent at Notre Dame was indispensable for preparing me to be a priest."

Walking the paths shared by a saint

Their journey also led them to the birthplace of St. Theodora in Etables-sur-Mer, a village overlooking the sea.

"The young Anne-Therese Guérin could easily walk to the cliff overlooking the bay and then climb down the rocky hill to walk along the shell-filled beach," Father Augenstein notes in his blog post. "From there, she could have walked back up the cliff, past the family home and just a few blocks to the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption at the very center of the village. It was in that church that she had been baptized, made her first Communion and prayed countless times."

They also visited her birthplace. "The foundations of the house have been preserved through the last 200 years," Father Augenstein says. "Significant renovations around the time of her canonization have resulted in the creation of a shrine and place of prayer. Our overall impression of the place was one of peace—with birds singing in the background and the faraway sound of the waves of the seas."

Celebrating Mass in the same village church where Indiana's only saint often prayed had a great impact on the three priests.

So did the renewed, meaningful appreciation that she left France in 1840 to travel to the wilderness of Indiana to begin a religious community of women who would help shape the minds and hearts of children throughout the state for generations to come.

So did the fact that a band of men from the Congregation of Holy Cross



A miter of Bishop Simon Bruté, the first bishop of the Vincennes Diocese (now the Archdiocese of Indianapolis), is kept in the sacristy of his home parish of St. Germain in Rennes, France.

that Father Moreau founded would leave France in 1841, and a year later establish the University of Notre Dame.

So did the new knowledge about the French Revolution's influence on the life of Bishop Bruté.

"The testimonies of their devotion and zeal came to life before our eyes as we touched the humble beginnings of our Indiana French Catholic ancestry," Father Rodden says.

A fire of faith, flamed by ashes

Father Hollowell sees something poetic in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis being "founded on the ashes of the French Revolution."

"Our diocesan founders lived at a time when being a priest or even participating in the sacraments was immediately punished by death," he says. "Yet they lived through these times with a deep sense of Christian joy and trust in the providence of God."

"Neither Bruté, nor Guérin, nor Moreau could have possibly foreseen how their small acts of trust would grow into a gushing fountain of grace: how many people have been baptized in our archdiocese over the years, how many first Communion, how many happy Catholic weddings, how many lives enriched and souls saved by the seeds they planted. But they did trust, and they did act. And the result is astonishing."

It's also a lesson in faith for our times, he says.

"This trip gave me a deep appreciation for the grandeur of God's plan and the beauty of his providence as it unfolds over time," Father Hollowell says. "Pope Francis encourages us to 'go out to the margins.' I understand more deeply just how such an effort can bring forth abundant fruit, because 200 years ago the untamed lands of central and southern Indiana were definitely in the margins." †



As part of their pilgrimage to France in January, Fathers Eric Augenstein, Anthony Hollowell and Kyle Rodden of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis traveled to Le Mans to visit the shrine of Blessed Basil Moreau, the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross—the order that would send Father Edward Sorin from France to Indiana where he would start the University of Notre Dame in 1842.

Lahr Scholarship recipients

Recipients of this year's Brooke Nichole Lahr Scholarship for international mission trips pose on Feb. 27 at the Archbishop Edward T. O'Meara Catholic Center in Indianapolis with the founders of the fund, which is managed by the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation. The scholarship was created in memory of Lahr, a lay missionary from St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, who was struck and killed by a car in Mexico in 2013 at the age of 25 while doing what she loved—international missionary work. Distributions from the fund are used to provide scholarships for youth of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis who are preparing for their first experience with international mission work. Posing in the photo are, bottom row: Gretchen Bowers, left, Bridget Nash, Rachel Doyle, Ashley Chamberlain and Emily Wysocki; and back row: Collen Lahr, left, Sean Driscoll, Bridget McCarty, Valarie Hummer, Tyler White, Katie Nickelson and Mark Lahr. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

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

Batesville Deanery

- March 8, 15, 22, 29 and April 5, 6 p.m. confession at St. Joseph, Shelbyville
- March 15, 7 p.m. at St. Maurice, Napoleon
- March 16, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
- March 18, 6:30 p.m. confession at Holy Family, Oldenburg
- March 19, confession following 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses at Holy Family, Oldenburg
- March 22, 7 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
- March 28, 7 p.m. for St. Catherine of Siena, Decatur County, at St. John the Evangelist Church, Enochsburg
- March 30, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg
- April 12, 7 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County

Bloomington Deanery

- March 9, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
- March 16, 7 p.m. at Our Lord Jesus Christ the King, Paoli
- March 21, 7 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville
- March 23, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Springs, French Lick
- March 28, 7 p.m. for St. Mary, Mitchell, and St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, at St. Vincent de Paul
- April 5, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer
- April 6, 6 p.m. at St. John the Apostle, Bloomington
- April 12, 4-9 p.m. confession for St. Charles Borromeo, Bloomington, and St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center

Connersville Deanery

- March 9, 7 p.m. at St. Mary (Immaculate Conception), Rushville
- March 21, 7 p.m. confession for St. Anne, New Castle, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cambridge City, at St. Elizabeth of Hungary
- March 22, confession for St. Gabriel, Connersville, and St. Bridget of Ireland, Liberty, at St. Bridget after 6 p.m. Mass
- April 4, confession for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton at St. Mary Church, Richmond, after 5:15 p.m. Mass

Indianapolis East Deanery

- March 7-Apr. 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m. confession every Tuesday at St. Mary
- March 8, 7:30 p.m. at Holy Spirit

- March 13, 7 p.m. for St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) and Our Lady of Lourdes, at Our Lady of Lourdes
- March 27, 7 p.m. for Holy Angels and St. Rita, at St. Rita
- March 31, 6-8 p.m. confession at St. Michael, Greenfield
- April 1, 10 a.m.-noon confession at St. Michael, Greenfield
- April 6, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville

Indianapolis North Deanery

- March 19, 2-3:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence
- March 20, 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence
- March 21, 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence

Indianapolis South Deanery

- March 4, 9 a.m. SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
- March 8, 6:30 p.m. for St. Ann and St. Joseph, at St. Joseph
- March 14, 7 p.m. at St. Jude
- March 15, 7 p.m. at Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove
- March 19, 2 p.m. at Good Shepherd
- March 20, 7 p.m. at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
- April 4, 7 p.m. for St. Barnabas, St. Mark the Evangelist and St. Roch, at St. Barnabas
- April 10, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

Indianapolis West Deanery

- March 8, 6:30 p.m. at St. Joseph
- March 9, 7 p.m. at St. Malachy, Brownsburg
- March 14, 7 p.m. at St. Monica
- March 22, 7 p.m. at St. Michael the Archangel
- March 27, 7 p.m. for Holy Angels and St. Rita, at St. Rita
- March 29, 7 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel
- April 4, 7 p.m. at St. Susanna, Plainfield
- April 5, 7 p.m. for St. Anthony and St. Christopher, at St. Christopher
- April 7, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas More, Mooresville

New Albany Deanery

- March 15, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Navilleton
- March 16, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
- March 21, 6:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford
- April 6, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany ("12 Hours of Grace")
- April 9, 1 p.m. at St. John, Starlight

The following additional confession times are part of the

New Albany Deanery's "The Light is on for You:"

- 6-7 p.m. each Tuesday in Lent at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville
- 5:45-7:30 p.m. with adoration each Wednesday in Lent at St. Michael, Charlestown
- 6:30-7:30 p.m. each Wednesday in Lent for St. John Paul II, Clark County at St. Paul Church, Sellersburg
- 6:30-7:30 p.m. each Wednesday in Lent (except Ash Wednesday) at St. Mary-of-the Knobs, Floyd County
- 7-8:30 p.m. each Wednesday in Lent at Holy Family, New Albany
- 5:45-7:30 p.m. with adoration each Thursday in Lent at St. Francis Xavier, Henryville
- 4-6 p.m. each Friday in Lent at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville
- 8-10 a.m. each Saturday in Lent at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville

Seymour Deanery

- March 14, 7 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace
- March 15, 7 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour
- March 19, 2 p.m. for St. Rose of Lima, Franklin
- March 28, 6:30 p.m. for St. Ann, Jennings County; St. Mary, North Vernon; and St. Joseph, Jennings County, at St. Mary
- March 30, 7 p.m. at St. Bartholomew, Columbus

Tell City Deanery

- March 15, 6:30 p.m. for St. Boniface, Fulda, and St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, at St. Meinrad

Terre Haute Deanery

- March 16, 1:30 p.m. for St. Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods; Sacred Heart of Jesus; St. Benedict; St. Patrick; St. Joseph University; St. Margaret Mary, all of Terre Haute, at St. Margaret Mary, Terre Haute
- April 3, 7 p.m. for St. Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods; Sacred Heart of Jesus; St. Benedict; St. Patrick; St. Joseph University; and St. Margaret Mary, all of Terre Haute, at St. Joseph University
- April 10, 7 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle
- April 11, 7 p.m. at Annunciation, Brazil †

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

- Courses on the Catechism of the Catholic Church from CDU
- All 12 classes for a Certificate in Lay Ministry available online
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners
- Employees also receive reimbursement upon course completion

For more information, please log on to www.archindy.org/layministry



Report sexual misconduct now

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

Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis,
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
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Build a relationship with God through prayer during Lent

By Effie Caldarola

“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening” (1 Sm 3:10).

These are the words that a young Samuel, the future prophet, spoke to the Lord, who called him while he slept. At first, Samuel thinks the aged priest Eli whom he served has called him. But Eli recognizes that it is God calling Samuel. When it happens again, Eli says, tell the Lord you are listening.

In a very real sense, these are words we are all called to speak during Lent. During this season when we come close to the suffering Jesus, we desire to let the Lord know we are listening. This listening is called prayer.

During Lent, Catholics are challenged to embrace the season’s three “pillars”—prayer, fasting and almsgiving. A pillar supports something, and in this case, the three pillars, taken together, support a strong Lent, worthy of our call to renewal, repentance and growth.

Keep in mind that just as a three-legged stool collapses if one leg is taken away, so our Lent is not sturdy without an integration of these three principles of growth. Prayer is integral to a good Lent.

Sometimes, we mistakenly think of prayer as recitation, as somehow scripted for us. It can include this. But, more broadly understood, prayer is a relationship. Like Samuel, we are called into dialogue with God. It is, in the words of the poet Mary Oliver, “a silence in which another voice may speak.”

Most of us yearn for a deepening prayer life, and Lent, with its focused 40 days, provides a great opportunity for this.

There are many forms of prayer, and no one is the “best” way to pray. People often pray in different ways at different times in their lives.

But a good first step is a commitment to a time and place. Prayer may seem ethereal and other-worldly, but the reality is we need a practical, down-to-Earth commitment, a real space, an actual time. We all have moments when we are moved to prayer. It’s how we bring that movement into our busy lives that counts.

Choose a time and stick to it. For busy parents, it may have to be early morning before others arise or the half-hour after kids are in bed. Maybe it’s a few minutes at lunchtime, or a few minutes of quiet meditation after early morning Mass.

Place is also important. Find a peaceful, quiet place with no distractions. Perhaps consecrate your special place with a medal, rosary or holy card, or light a special candle.

Don’t set yourself up for failure by overcommitting to time. Choose a realistic time period that’s doable for you.

But how to pray? How to find God’s voice inside our noisy minds and busy schedules? How to quiet down and listen?

“*Lectio divina*” (“Holy reading”) is an ancient form of prayer that’s accessible to all. The Church provides daily Scripture readings for Mass that can be the gateway to prayer.

Choose a daily reading and go through it slowly. Pause and recall a word or phrase that particularly speaks to you. Spend time reflecting on what moves you. Then slowly read the entire text again to put the phrase into context and explore its deeper meaning.

A third reading of it may bring you into dialogue with God about how the passage touches you. Listening to Scripture reflectively gives the Holy Spirit a chance to speak.

Another helpful use of Scripture is sometimes called “Gospel contemplation.” St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, urged praying with the imagination by selecting a Gospel passage, reading it carefully and then putting yourself into the experience of it.

Perhaps you can imagine yourself as the Samaritan who stops to help the wounded victim, or perhaps you are the Levite passing by, a bystander, or the half-dead person in the ditch. Use your imagination to re-create the entire scene—the weather, the scents filling the air, the sense of fear in the wounded man. See what Jesus might teach you as you enter into a Gospel passage.

During Lent, many find the Stations of the Cross a helpful prayer that can lead one into a deep experience of Christ’s passion and a deeper love for him. Or perhaps committing to a time of eucharistic adoration will help you find the intimacy and silence that bring one to prayer.



A woman prays at the Cathedral of St. Paul in Minnesota on July 8, 2016. During Lent, Catholics are challenged to embrace the season’s three “pillars” -- prayer, fasting and almsgiving. (CNS photo/Dave Hrbacek, The Catholic Spirit)

Others may find that with spring riding the coattails of Lent into April, a daily prayer walk is helpful. Nature can inspire prayer in many, while for others a walk through the neighborhood may be too distracting.

An examination of conscience, also known as the “*examen*,” is a powerful daily prayer. It allows you to review the preceding 24 hours with gratitude, focusing on how Christ helped you in doing good deeds and where you fell short of his glory by sinning. The examination of conscience helps you examine where you felt the hand of God, and how you responded or failed to respond to God’s will. More detailed directions for the “*examen*” can be found online or in books.

No matter the prayer method you choose, a prayer journal helps. After you have prayed, write down what you have felt and heard during prayer.

Choose the method that is best for you. The important thing to remember is that God is in control, and is infinitely merciful and gracious toward our failings and our efforts.

(Effie Caldarola is a freelance writer and a columnist for Catholic News Service.) †

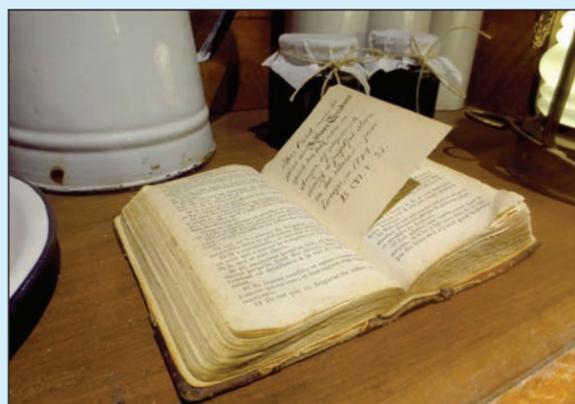
Praying the penitential psalms can nurture conversion of heart and mind

By Nancy de Flon

The cross of ashes traced on our forehead on Ash Wednesday invites us to “repent, and believe in the Gospel.” These are one of the two options given by the Church to be said as the ashes are imposed.

Lent calls us to examine our lives, assess our relationship with God and discover where we need to set things right.

Our Lenten prayer might include growing in sorrow for sin, and requests to God to help us to the change of our mind and heart that we call conversion. Our tradition offers prayers whose words can help us along—the seven penitential psalms (Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143).



A Book of Psalms used by St. Mother Theodore Guérin is on display at her shrine on Oct. 6, 2016, at the motherhouse of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Praying with the seven penitential psalms during Lent can help bring about conversion of heart and mind. (CNS photo/Katie Breidenbach)

The Book of Psalms originated not as a single book, but as something like the hymnal you use at Mass: a compilation of several smaller collections assembled over a long period of time. That the penitential psalms are spread throughout the Book of Psalms, not grouped together within a subcollection, suggests that sorrow for sin is a part of the human condition that can assert itself in different contexts in an individual’s life.

Tradition associates the psalms with King David, who is thought to have initiated the process of compilation that eventually produced the Book of Psalms. He is also believed to have composed some of the psalms, including one of the penitential psalms, Psalm 51, traditionally known by its first words in Latin “*Miserere mei*” (“Have mercy on me”).

Composed after David had sinned by seducing Bathsheba, Psalm 51 has all the elements of an act of contrition: It appeals to God’s mercy; acknowledges one’s sin; pleads to God for wisdom; and recognizes that he prefers a humble, contrite heart to adherence to outward ritual. Psalm 51 appears frequently in our Lenten liturgy, beginning with the responsorial psalm at Ash Wednesday Mass.

Human life is complex and varied, and these psalms reflect this in the way each emphasizes a different context for expressing penitence. Yet, certain themes are common to a few or most of these psalms.

Psalms 6, 32, 38 and 102 emphasize an important psychological truth: the effects of guilt on our physical health and other unresolved spiritual issues. Psalm 32 expresses the relief that comes from honestly acknowledging one’s sin to God; I like to use this psalm as a prayer of thanksgiving after confession. Other psalms describe how one’s strength (Psalms 6, 102) and health (Psalm 38) are sapped by guilt.

The effects of sin can include alienation from

other people and from God. The psalmist is avoided by friends (Psalm 38), and reviled (Psalm 102) and persecuted (Psalm 143) by enemies.

Psalm 143 serves as a good introduction to praying with imagery to apply the text to our own life. Are the “enemies” actual persons, or are they out of the physical realm? The line “the enemy has pursued my soul” suggests the latter (Ps 143:3).

We may ask ourselves: Who is the enemy? A crippling sense of guilt that prevents us from fully embracing God’s mercy? Destructive inner voices that insist we’re unworthy of God’s deep love? Psalm 143 is especially rich as a way of entering into several levels of meaning of a prayer text.

Penitence would be incomplete without confidence in God’s mercy. Despite the guilt that plagues him, the psalmist trusts in God’s merciful love (Psalm 6). Though beset by ill health and the taunts of friend and foe, the psalmist has unshakeable confidence in the mercy of God who knows him through and through.

Psalm 130 is traditionally known by its first words in Latin, “*De profundis*” (“Out of the depths”) and is used by the Church as a prayer for the deceased, emphasizing unwavering trust in the Lord’s mercy and forgiveness.

Described here are just a hint of the treasures to be found in the penitential psalms. Explore them for yourselves to see what else you can discover.

Lenten practices, in order to bring about true conversion, ought to have elements that continue in our lives beyond Lent. Perhaps making the acquaintance of these psalms will provide material to deepen your spiritual life for every season of the year.

(Nancy de Flon is an editor at Paulist Press and the author of *The Joy of Praying the Psalms*.) †

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Meetings with Israeli leaders in Jerusalem in 1982

(Third in a series)

I'm writing about a trip I took back in 1982 when I led a group of 26 American Catholic journalists on a fact-finding trip to Jordan, Israel and Egypt. Last week, I wrote about meetings with the top religious leaders in Jerusalem and the Christian mayor of Bethlehem. This week, I'll write about the Israeli leaders.



The first of those was Teddy Kollek, then the mayor of Jerusalem. He stressed the "absolute free worship" in Jerusalem for all religions, something that he said was not true under previous rulers. He listed a number of things that his administration had done to help Christians rebuild their shrines and to encourage Christians to remain in the Holy Land.

Kollek really was a great mayor who sought to help all the people of Jerusalem, and it's too bad that he was later defeated in an election.

Then we had meetings with members of the ruling Likud government in the

Knesset, mainly Eliahu Ben-Allissar. He gave us the hardline position of the Menachem Begin administration, which was in power in 1982, especially emphasizing that Israel would never negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) because it was a terrorist organization. He also defended Israel's right to build settlements in the West Bank.

That afternoon, when we returned to the Notre Dame Center, where we were staying, we learned that Mother Teresa of Calcutta was there and would be glad to meet with our group. She spent a half-hour with us, posing for pictures, talking briefly to each of us, and then giving a little talk.

She said: "God has brought you to the Holy Land for you to learn the truth and then to write it. We must share the sufferings of the people. Your work is a work of love to bring peace to the world. Be the carriers of God's love. Be close to Jesus so that he will write with your hand."

The next morning, we met with Dr. Yousef Bourg, one of the most influential members of the Israeli government at the time. He was a member of the National Religious Party, which

has influence all out of proportion to its numbers because it can throw its support to any candidate it wants and that support goes only as a result of special favors.

In the afternoon, we met with Semcha Dinitz, the former Israeli ambassador to the United States when the Israeli Liberal Party was in power. When we met with him, he was vice president of Hebrew University and adviser to the Labor Party. We met with him for two hours and came away impressed with what he had to say.

For example, when we asked about the possible annexation of the West Bank, Dinitz said, "If Israel were to annex the West Bank, what would we do with all those Arabs? Do we keep them as second-class citizens or make them citizens and lose the Jewish character of the state?" He also expressed the wish that King Hussein of Jordan would negotiate for the Palestinians. That, of course, never happened.

Next week: On to Egypt.

(John Fink's recent series of columns on Church history is now available in book form from Amazon. It is titled *How Could This Church Survive?* with the subtitle, *It must be more than a human institution.*) †

It's All Good/Patti Lamb

Remember, you are in the hands of the master gardener

For various reasons, the past months have been a bit rocky for my family. While



life is good, and I'm grateful that these recent bumps weren't anything of grave consequence, it's just felt a bit heavy.

I told some friends of mine that I felt like I've been in a valley. I described it as a sort of eternal winter,

wherein life felt cold and skies were stuck on a gray hue. It was like I was wading through molasses while others glided past me effortlessly, laughing and enjoying an easy life.

I hope you don't misunderstand me. I am very blessed, and I know that God is always good, but heaviness lingered, and I just wanted to shake the doldrums.

One evening, I encountered a passage in "God Calling," my favorite devotional book. Although I've read the passage many times, the words resonated with me that night.

It said, "Think of my trees—stripped of their beauty, pruned, cut, disfigured, bare ... but through the dark, seemingly-dead branches flows silently, secretly, the spirit-life sap ... with the sun of Spring comes new life, leaves, buds, blossoms,

fruit. ... But, Oh! Fruit a thousand times better for the pruning."

The next two sentences of the passage have stayed with me. They have become a sort of mantra I silently repeat to myself in times of trouble.

Following are those sentences: "Remember that you are in the hands of the Master Gardener. He makes no mistakes about His pruning."

My heart felt lighter when I paused to remember that I am in God's hands, the hands of the "Master Gardener," the cultivator of all creation. Although life felt trying and completely out of my control, it gave me a sense of peace to know that God is at work, even though he felt far away.

This past week, we entered the season of Lent, which calls us to stretch our spiritual muscles beyond their comfort zones. Lent is a time of sacrifice, examining our faults, increasing our prayers and acknowledging that we can do better. Simply put, it's a time to recognize that we do, truly, need some pruning.

I know that it is necessary, but it is not necessarily enjoyable.

I'm learning that when spiritual shaping feels especially rough, it's good to remind ourselves that we are in the hands of the master gardener. Growth, in any form, comes with a sense of

discomfort from time to time. I suppose it's inevitable. Maybe we're simply experiencing "growing pains."

I remind myself to think of the end result—the glory of Easter, which is victory over shame, pain and utter brokenness. I'm comforted to know that ultimately there is an everlasting peace that no person, no illness, no mistake and absolutely no circumstance can take from us.

In Scripture, St. Peter reminds us to keep the faith during life's trials and spiritual pruning.

"In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pt 1: 6-7).

Before I went to bed last night, I went to get a glass of water. My daughter had moved the refrigerator magnets around again. Right at eye level, I spotted a magnet which said, "Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly."

We must cling to our faith.

(Patti Lamb, a member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, is a regular columnist for The Criterion.) †

Coming of Age/Maria-Pia Negro Chin

Holy Father asks young people to let their voices be heard

When I worked as a reporter covering young people in the Diocese of Brooklyn for *The Tablet* newspaper, my favorite feature was "Youth Views." I would visit schools and ask a handful of teenagers three questions and give them time to reflect and answer on paper.



The only thing I asked was for them to be honest. Their

answers were always insightful, faith-filled and creative. Reading their answers was a chance to learn more about their actual experiences instead of relying on generalizations made about young people.

That is why I was excited to read Pope Francis' letter asking youth to let their voices resonate in their communities and "be heard by your shepherds of souls."

Teens and young adults from around the world will have a chance to share their authentic and diverse experiences with

Church leaders.

And young people will be the center of discussion at the next world Synod of Bishops, which will focus on how the Church can accompany young people today as they discover their life's vocation. This vocational discernment refers to the vocations of marriage, ordained ministry, consecrated life, etc.—and how to fulfill it joyfully.

To aid in the process, young people ages 16 to 29 can submit reflections on their expectations and their life experiences using the website www.sinodogiovani.va. This website was launched on March 1. The synod will take place in October 2018.

When I shared this news with friends who are not involved in the life of the Church, most agreed that this consultation step in the synod process shows a willingness to listen, understand and work alongside young people.

A preparatory document for the synod released early this year focused on some of the difficulties young people around the globe face today, such as unemployment,

poverty, lack of education, violence, exploitation, as well as the refugee crisis. The document also assures people that the Church wants to "encounter, accompany and care for every young person, without exception."

After hearing about different studies on how the religiously unaffiliated, or "nones," are growing as a demographic and how many young people feel left behind by the Church, this synod process gives me hope. It can enlighten both youth and the Church to move forward, while recognizing the vibrancy and gifts young people can contribute to the Church.

Starting with the opportunity of making their voices heard, this process leading to the Synod of Bishops can make young people feel more involved in the Church and more empowered and energized to participate in a Church that cares for them. As the pope said, it is a chance to have our views resonate in our communities.

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

Your Family/Bill Dodds

Changing and changeless on our life journey

For one year, long ago, my four siblings and I were all in grade school at the same time.



Once, we were all teenagers together.

Now, we're all in our 60s. When we get together, which is always fun, we spend a bit of time playing "remember when?" and "can you believe how much [fill in the

blank] has changed?"

Remember the house in Des Moines and St. Augustin's (yes, spelled that way) Grade School? The neighborhood in Omaha and St. Cecilia's Grade School? Seattle when we all arrived in 1964?

And can you believe how much the city has changed in recent years because of high-tech corporations now making their headquarters here?

I suppose it's human nature to get locked into a certain time period, or cost or way of doing things. To think "this is the way it was and so this is the way it's supposed to be."

This is the way it will always be.

It can seem the only thing that never changes is there's always change.

But, that's not true.

If the five of us trace a line through our own lives and the journey we've taken as a family, one thing hasn't changed. One thing will never change. Not in this world. Not in the next.

God doesn't change. God's love for us doesn't change.

Eternal is always eternal. All-knowing is always all-knowing. All-loving is always all-loving. Forever and ever. (Can I get an "Amen!"?)

As grade schoolers, teens and young adults, we knew that. We believed that. It was just the way it was.

What we didn't know, what we've come to realize at this point in our lives and are so grateful to discover, is through all of life's ups and down, greatest joys and deepest sorrows, God is with us. Right here, right now.

And God is with me.

All his love, all his mercy, all Jesus did through his passion and death, is for me. Singular. For us, as siblings. For our children and grandchildren. For every single person who has ever lived or will live.

It's a comforting thought even now, during a year that, no doubt, will bring its share of changes. Even as, thanks be to God, the One remains the same.

On the other hand, fortunately, we can and do change. Heart, mind and soul. In the words of Blessed John Henry Newman, "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."

What we say and do that's hurting and harmful, sinful and stupid, can—by our efforts through the grace of God—decrease. We can become better; we can, throughout our lives, move toward best.

How? Two tips.

The first, from Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, focuses on joy:

"You will never be happy if your happiness depends on getting solely what you want. Change the focus. Get a new center. Will what God wills, and your joy no man shall take from you."

And the second, from St. Faustina, shows how to invite the unchangeable into our lives so that we can change:

"You, my Lord God, cannot change. You are always the same. Heaven can change, as well as everything that is created; but you, Lord, are ever the same and will endure forever. So come as you like and when you like."

(Bill Dodds and his late wife, Monica, were the founders of the Friends of St. John the Caregiver, www.FSJC.org. He can be contacted at BillDodds@YourAgingParent.com.) †

First Sunday of Lent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 5, 2017

- Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7
- Romans 5:12-19
- Matthew 4:1-11

The first reading for Mass on this first weekend of Lent 2017 is from the Book of Genesis.



Few passages in the Scriptures are as abundant in literary technique and in theological message as is this reading from Genesis. Bluntly confronting paganism and the tendency of all humans to avoid accusing themselves of

fault, it goes to the heart of sin.

The heart of sin is that it is the result of a freely chosen act by humans. While in this reading the role of the tempting devil is clear, it also is clear that the devil only tempts. The devil did not force the first man and woman to sin. They sinned of their own will.

The temptation in itself has a lesson. Rebellious against God, the perfect and the perfectly just, was foolhardy. Yet, imperfect even in their pristine state of holiness, the first man and woman listened to bad advice and trusted not God but another.

It is a process that has been repeated untold number of times in the lives of us all.

The second reading is from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

In this reading, the Apostle looks back to the incident described in Genesis. It reminds us that the first humans introduced sin, and resulting chaos and trouble, into earthly existence by their original sin.

Thus, death and hardship are not God's design for us. They were not curses sent upon the human race by an angry God. Believe it or not, the first humans chose them when they sinned. Sin, voluntary and deliberate, brought such devastatingly bad results into the world.

God is the center and source of everlasting love and mercy. He did not

leave humanity in the whirlpool of death and despair created by human sin. Instead he sent Jesus, the Redeemer, his Son.

St. Matthew's Gospel provides the last reading. It recalls the temptation of Jesus in an account similar to those found in Mark and Luke.

As was the case with Genesis, this reading is heavy in its symbolism. For example, bread in the time of Jesus much more obviously represented survival than bread would today.

Modern refrigeration and quick transportation of food products have given us in our day a great selection as to what we will eat. In the time of Jesus, the selection was considerably less. There was no refrigeration. Few foodstuffs could be transported at any distance without spoiling, but grain and flour could be stored. Bread was a principal food. So, the devil tries to convince Jesus that he can give true life.

In another example, the devil takes Jesus to the top of the temple. Even the Earth, created by God, can be contaminated by evil.

The final and most powerful message is that Jesus can command even the devil. Jesus is God.

Reflection

This is the first weekend of Lent. The Church uses this weekend to teach us one of the most basic facts of spiritual life. Sin removes us from God. Sin is not thrust upon us. We are not captured by sin against our will. We choose to sin.

Perhaps, ultimately, the deadliest effect of original sin was the human tendency to minimize the danger of sin and to deny personal responsibility.

In these readings, the Church calls us to awaken and then turn away from sin. It reminds us of our own personal role in sin. It pleads with us not to underestimate temptation. It reassures us that, although temptations may be strong, Jesus is our Redeemer and our strength. His strength is enough to overcome any temptation.

However, we must fortify ourselves by asking for the Lord's strength. This is the purpose of Lent. †

Daily Readings

Monday, March 6

Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18
Psalm 19:8-10, 15
Matthew 25:31-46

Tuesday, March 7

St. Perpetua, martyr
St. Felicity, martyr
Isaiah 55:10-11
Psalm 34:4-7, 16-19
Matthew 6:7-15

Wednesday, March 8

St. John of God, religious
Jonah 3:1-10
Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19
Luke 11:29-32

Thursday, March 9

St. Frances of Rome, religious
Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25
Psalm 138:1-3, 7c-8
Matthew 7:7-12

Friday, March 10

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

Saturday, March 11

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

Sunday, March 12

Second Sunday of Lent
Genesis 12:1-4a
Psalm 33:4-5, 18-20, 22
2 Timothy 1:8b-10
Matthew 17:1-9

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Names of parishes and churches can change when faith communities merge

Why do names of churches have to change when parishes merge? I understand that they might not want to have a St. Mary's/St. Joseph's, but the new names are nothing like what we were used to; they are more complicated and difficult to remember. (New York)



Names of churches do not necessarily have to change when parishes merge and, in fact, in many instances, the name chosen for the new, merged parish is a combination of the former ones—as you indicate, “St. Mary's/St. Joseph's.”

The new title may be selected by the parishioners of the newly merged parish, with the approval of the diocesan bishop. It can be named after: the Holy Trinity; the Holy Spirit or the angels; Christ, invoked under one of the mysteries of his life; Mary, under one of her traditional titles; or a canonized or beatified saint.

My own experience several years ago might be helpful here: The faith community a mile down the street from us closed and merged with our own to create a new parish.

Parishioners felt generally that a hyphenated title that would combine the two former names might perpetuate division in the parish; in this, they were supported by a document on mergers issued by our diocese that asked that “a new patron not be a combination of the older names, since a new entity is being formed.”

Parishioners of both parishes voted on the same weekend for a name, which was then approved by our bishop. (The title chosen was “Mater Christi,” the name of our former diocesan seminary that stood within the boundaries of the new parish.)

You are correct that such mergers can result in a host of new titles, which initially can cause some confusion—particularly when people are trying to track down their sacramental records. But the upside is that people learn about new saints and new mysteries of their faith. (In our own diocese, we now have parishes with such names as Christ Our Light, Our Lady of Hope and St. Kateri Tekakwitha.)

In my parish, there is an appreciation dinner every year for high-end donors, by invitation only. (I would

estimate that anywhere from 5 to 7 percent of parishioners attend.) But among the invitees I have not seen people who devote a lot of time working for the parish community, but can't afford to contribute enough money to be eligible for the “dinner club.”

It strikes me that such fundraising techniques might be appropriate for some other charitable organizations but not for the Catholic Church. As Christians, we are taught to place spiritual values over material ones. It calls to mind the Gospel account of the poor widow who put two small coins into the temple treasury, and whom Jesus called more worthy than all the rest. Any thoughts? (Georgia)

On occasion, I choose a letter for this column not so much to answer the question posed, but to present what I think is a writer's valid concern—hoping that it will prompt some reflection among readers. So it is with this query.

The situation presented gives a glimpse into the difficult but perennial balancing act between the practicalities of life and what might constitute the ideal.

One of a pastor's responsibilities is to keep a parish afloat financially. The parish provides spiritual enlightenment, pastoral support, educational opportunities and social services to the poor and vulnerable.

To do all of that requires staff, facilities and their upkeep—all of which requires money. Fundraisers have long recognized that, while most people are genuinely unselfish in wanting to help, purse strings can be loosened a bit when a donor is recognized and thanked.

But the letter writer points out correctly that there are many ways to serve a parish. We priests are forever reminding our congregations that their generosity can be expressed by sharing “time, talent or treasure.” So why not recognize all three ways of giving?

In the parish from which I recently retired, we scheduled an annual “Volunteers' Dinner” to which dozens of people were invited who had offered their help in a wide range of parish programs and projects—catechists; lectors; ushers; extraordinary ministers of holy Communion; parish council and school board members; home visitors; food pantry workers, etc.

(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

Unrepeatable

By Katie Rahman

I am born
and I am unrepeatable.

So what am I to do?

Laundry?
Dishes?
Dinner?

Laundry.
And dishes.
And dinner.

And read the same favorite book
to the same face-like-mine
one more time.

And forgive
and ask forgiveness of
the ones I choose again
to love each day.

Some days

when there are no words
or too many
and I am tired
of always being the one
who has to ...
I want to shout,
“Is this all?”

But not every day.
Some days

I hold pure love
soft in my arms,
feel muscled arms
hold me up
and I could

almost
break

from joy.

“This. Is All!”

And my grateful heart
flies to my God
and bends low.

I am unrepeatable.

Help me, Lord,
do what I am to do.

I am born.

And I am born anew.

(Katie Rahman is a member of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute.)

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.

BILLMAN, Julie V., 45, St. Louis, Batesville, Feb. 20. Daughter of Melvin and Carolyn Billman. Sister of Amy Caliendo and Annette Reeves. Aunt of several.

BOOK, Charles E., 89, St. Michael, Bradford, Feb. 16. Husband of Agnes Book. Father of Rose Ann, David, Donald, Kenneth, Marvin, Patrick, Stephen and Thomas Book. Brother of Earl Book. Grandfather of 19. Great-grandfather of 17.

COOPER, Sharon K. (Hall), 65, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), Feb. 12. Wife of William Cooper. Mother of Tamara Baxter and Brandon Cooper. Daughter of Imogene Beckner. Grandmother of five.

DENU, Ronald L., 70, St. Martin of Tours, Siberia, Feb. 2. Father of Lisa Long, Deann Mann, Tina Vaal and Todd Denu. Brother of Kenny and Steve Denu. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of one.

DONAHUE, Cecilia F. (Smutzki), 80, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Feb. 18. Wife of Paul Donahue. Mother of Darby Durham, Margaret Mary Roland and Paul Donahue, Jr. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of six.

DURBIN, Josephine, 87, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Feb. 16. Wife of David Durbin. Mother of Patty Horan, Judy Lee, Carol Munsell, Kathleen Porter, Mary Sparks, Jean Thayer and Sylvia Zimmerman. Grandmother of 16. Great-grandmother of 6.

EHALT, JoAnn (Grimm), 77, St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County, Feb. 20. Mother of Beth Burks, Terri Summers, Phil and Steve Ehalt. Sister

of David Bottorff and John Grimm. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of seven.

EISERT, Marie A., 89, St. Charles Borromeo, Milan, Feb. 20. Mother of Kimberly Barton, Michael and Terry Eisert. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of seven.

FELTMAN, Richard H., 78, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Feb. 11. Husband of Diana Feltman. Father of Tina Blandford, Lisa Hensley, Teresa Plummer, Brenda, Debra, Daniel and Joseph Feltman. Brother of Doris Clements, Lois Dwenger, Mary Ann Mieth and Paul Feltman. Grandfather of 13. Great-grandfather of four.

GOODIN, Rose Marie, 88, St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville, Feb. 11. Mother of Susie Willen, David and Steve Goodin. Grandmother of nine. Great-grandmother of 13.

HAGEDORN, Florence M., 97, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, Feb. 6. Mother of Patricia Dilger, Carol Hedbeck, Jack and Jim Hagedorn. Sister of Mary Rose Haas and Adeline Hardwick. Grandmother of 18. Great-grandmother of 42. Great-great-grandmother of one.

JOHNSON, Lawrence C., 57, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis, Feb. 6. Husband of Juanita Johnson. Brother of Cathy Honeycutt, Jim Burrows, Andrew, Daniel, Erik, Jamie, Philip and Sean Johnson. Uncle of several.

KAPFHAMMER, Edward S., 62, Prince of Peace, Madison, Feb. 13. Husband of Theresa Kapfhammer. Father of Ed, Jr., Matt and Phil Kapfhammer. Brother of Michael and James Kapfhammer. Grandfather of five.

KOEHL, Clara J., 96, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Feb. 15. Mother of Gary, Rick and Ron Koehl. Sister of Martha Conkle and Robert Fon. Grandmother of three.

KOORS, Andrew J., 58, St. Louis, Batesville, Feb. 21. Brother of Tress Zielinski and Tony Koors. Uncle of several.

LANGLAIS, Susan M. (Fournier), 53, St. Thomas More, Mooresville, Jan. 28. Wife of Justin Langlais. Mother of Kateland and Zachary Langlais. Daughter



Mardi Gras sisters

Members of the Sisters of the Holy Family hand beads to a man and child on Feb. 19 from a float during a Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans. It was the first time in New Orleans Mardi Gras history that a women's religious congregation participated as a group on a carnival float. Over their habits, they wore a T-shirt honoring Mother Henriette Delille, who founded their congregation in 1842. (CNS photo/Peter Finney Jr., Clarion Herald)

of Thomas Fournier. Sister of Debra Sharp, Carol, Julie, Pamela and Thomas Fournier Jr. Grandmother of two.

LEE, David G., Jr., 74, Prince of Peace, Madison, Feb. 16. Husband of Jeannine Lee. Father of Lorie Gomon, David and Michael Lee. Brother of Barbara Haley and Jerry Lee. Grandfather of nine. Great-grandfather of nine.

MAGERS, Frank I., Jr., 95, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Feb. 14. Husband of Rose Magers. Father of nine. Brother of Thomas Magers. Grandfather and great-grandfather of several.

MOHR, Anna M., 90, St. Malachy, Brownsburg, Feb. 8. Sister of Jeanne and Robert Mohr. Aunt of several.

NIEHAUS, Alvin, 98, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, Jan. 14. Father of Patty Grant,

Jane Hellmann, Dennis, Rich, Ron and Tim Niehaus. Brother of Dorothy Beckman, Barbara Franchville and Norma Kessner. Grandfather of 11. Great-grandfather of 12.

ONDERCIN, Thomas C., 78, St. Anne, New Castle, Feb. 10. Husband of Mary Ondercin. Father of Shelley Jackson. Brother of Robert Ondercin. Grandfather of two.

PORTER, Virginia M., 88, St. Christopher, Indianapolis, Feb. 11. Mother of Patty Noel, Linda Raas, Judy Roth and John Porter, Jr. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of four.

ROBINSON, Rosemary E., 93, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Feb. 18. Mother of Susan Bridgewater. Grandmother of four. Great-grandmother of six.

ROGIER, Eileen D., 63, Holy Cross, St. Croix, Feb. 17. Wife

of William Rogier. Mother of Gwen Bland. Sister of Mildred Fest, Estella Kreilein and Rosalee Wieshan. Grandmother of two.

SHEA, Michael J., 78, St. Thomas More, Mooresville, Jan. 13. Husband of Maureen Shea. Father of Nancy Bennett and Molly Brugh. Brother of Patricia Elward and Robert Shea. Grandfather of three.

STEPIEN, Pauline A., 94, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Feb. 12. Wife of Stanley Stepien. Mother of Richard Stepien. Grandmother of two. Great-grandmother of five.

TROESCH, Othmar H., 81, St. Meinrad, St. Meinrad, Jan. 27. Father of Rachael Fortune and Robert Troesch. Brother of Dorothy Beckman, Barbara Franchville and Norma Kessner. Grandfather of four.

WHELAN, Clifford, 81, St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, Feb. 18. Husband of Maralou Whelan. Father of Sherrie Mehne and Mike Whelan. Brother of Mary Lee Whelan. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of one.

WHITNEY, Dr. John, Sr., 77, St. Thomas More, Mooresville, Jan. 28. Husband of Sherry Whitney. Father of Shellie Brooks, Brady, James, Joshua and John Whitney III. Brother of Mary Kelly and June Moffat. Grandfather of 15. Great-grandfather of five.

WITKEMPER, Linda S., 65, St. Mary, Greensburg, Feb. 7. Wife of Bob Witkemper. Mother of Christina Lipps, Andy and Joe Witkemper. Sister of Delores McCreary, Carol Menefee and Larry Stephens. Grandmother of eight. †

Late bishop's Little Black Book provides many with Lenten inspiration

ALLOUEZ, Wis. (CNS)—Every year, Catholics look for ways to observe the 40 days of Lent.



Bishop Kenneth E. Untener

Finding inspiration for prayer—one of the three Lenten faith traditions, along with fasting and almsgiving—is a top priority, and one favorite source for many is *The Little Black Book*.

Now in its 17th year of publication, *The Little Black Book*

has its origins in the Diocese of Saginaw and was the idea of Saginaw's bishop, the late Bishop Kenneth E. Untener. A gifted homilist and writer, Bishop Untener died in 2004.

Cathy Haven has been editor of *The Little Black Book* since 2004. In an interview with *The Compass*, the newspaper of the Green Bay Diocese,

she explained how this Lenten resource Bishop Untener created for members of his diocese turned into an internationally popular devotional book.

It is now published in English, Spanish and Vietnamese and also comes in different colors and themes: *The Little Blue Book* for Advent/Christmas; *The Little White Book* for the Easter season; and *The Little Burgundy Book*, an undated four-week reflection on stewardship in light of the Gospels. For copies, log on to www.littlebooks.us.

"In the mid-1990s, Bishop Untener had decided that he wanted to do something that would kind of bring the traditions of Lent to the forefront of peoples' minds," said Haven. "He started a Lenten task force and chose the theme of reconciliation."

The task force included diocesan staff members with backgrounds in religious education and liturgy. The result was a Lenten reflection that was well received. The popularity of this reflection led to the

first *Little Black Book*.

In 1999, Bishop Untener asked Haven, who was diocesan director of communications, and Sister Nancy Kyotte, an Immaculate Heart of Mary sister, to help him create a reflection that would use the tradition of "*lectio divina*," a prayerful way of reading Scripture, to help people prayerfully experience Jesus' passion.

However, "he wanted something that could be put into a coat pocket," said Haven, a booklet with no artwork identifying it as a religious publication so anyone could carry it in public. The goal was to "spend six minutes with the Lord" every day.

"Even though it was intended for our diocese, we received a lot of calls from around Michigan," said Haven. "Then it kept growing."

According to Haven, more than 3 million books have been sold worldwide. "Last year, we did an Advent and Lenten book in large print. It was so well received that we also added an Easter

book in large print."

Haven said she is pleased that the Lenten booklet remains popular today, nearly 13 years after Bishop Untener's death. She also feels blessed to be part of continuing the bishop's legacy. While new material is featured each year, the staff of Little Books—a nonprofit corporation not affiliated with the Saginaw Diocese—continues to draw from Bishop Untener's writings.

"I am honored by the fact that I am doing this," said Haven. "I know God's hand is in it because of how well it's done. We have a small group that works on this, and I think we all feel like we're part of something much bigger than us. There is a very strong sense of purpose in what we are doing."

This Lent, thousands of Catholics in the Diocese of Green Bay and elsewhere will turn to *The Little Black Book* for their Lenten inspiration. Reflections, based on Christ's Passion according to John, began on Feb. 26 and end on Easter Sunday, April 16. †

Investing with Faith/Joanna Feltz

A final gift can help build your legacy of faith

As Catholics, we believe that once our life on Earth ends, we are born to new life. We look forward to the promise of peace with God, our Father, yet sometimes we still worry what legacy we will leave for this world. Once our souls become one with Christ, what about everything else? I know I worry about what I will leave behind for my family, my friends, and the Church.

While there are many ways to leave a legacy of our faith, planned giving offers the most



personalized opportunities. The simplest and most frequently chosen type of planned gift is a bequest.

A bequest is provided through a will or trust and is funded by assets: cash, stock, bonds, mutual fund shares, real estate or other types of property. Also, a bequest may come in the form of a specific asset (land, home, stock, etc.), a specific cash amount, a percentage of assets (for example, 50 percent of your net estate to the Church), or whatever remains after all obligations and previous wishes are met.

Another simple giving technique is a beneficiary designation. You choose a charitable organization and name it as a beneficiary on an annuity, life insurance policy or retirement plan asset. After your

passing, the organization receives whatever percentage of the amount of the assets you designated on your beneficiary form.

Through a bequest or beneficiary designation, donors can preserve lifetime income and earn an estate tax deduction at death, all while giving back and directly supporting the needs of future generations.

When considering planned giving, know that the archdiocesan Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) is here to help. We can answer any questions you may have, provide all giving options, and connect you to ministries, organizations or causes that could benefit from your gift. 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, J.D., is director of planned giving for the Catholic Community Foundation in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, and consultant to the law firm Woods, Weidenmiller, Michetti, Rudnick & Galbraith PLLC. 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.) †

Greed, selfishness corrupt beauty of God's creation, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Humanity's greed and selfishness can turn creation into a sad and desolate world instead of the sign of God's love that it was meant to be, Pope Francis said.

Human beings are often tempted to view creation as "a possession we can exploit as we please and for which we do not have to answer to anyone," the pope said on Feb. 22 at his weekly general audience.

"When carried away by selfishness, human beings end up ruining even the most beautiful things that have been entrusted to them," the pope said.

As an early sign of spring, the audience was held in St. Peter's Square for the first time since November. Despite the chilly morning temperatures, the pope made the rounds in his popemobile, greeting pilgrims and kissing bundled-up infants.

Continuing his series of talks on Christian hope, the pope reflected on St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, which expresses the hope "that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption" (Rom 8:21).

St. Paul, the pope said, reminds Christians that creation is a "marvelous gift that God has placed in our hands."

Through this gift, he said, "we can enter into a relationship with him and recognize the imprint of his loving plan, which we are all called to achieve together."

Sin, however, breaks communion not only with God but with his creation, "thus making it a slave, submissive to our frailty," the pope said.

"Think about water. Water is a beautiful thing; it is so important. Water gives us life, and it helps us in everything. But when minerals are exploited, water is contaminated and creation is destroyed and dirtied. This is just one example; there are many," he said,

departing from his prepared remarks.

When people break their relationship with creation, they not only lose their original beauty, he said, but they also "disfigure everything surrounding them," causing a reminder of God's love to become a bleak sign of pride and greed.

St. Paul tells believers that hope comes from knowing that God in his mercy wants to heal the "wounded and humbled hearts" of all men and women and, through them, "regenerate a new world and a new humanity, reconciled in his love," Pope Francis said. †

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Employment

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Saint Boniface Catholic Grade School, located in Edwardsville, Illinois, is seeking applicants for the position of Principal. Interested religious or lay applicants should possess a Master's Degree in Educational Administration, teaching experience and preferably administrative experience.

Candidates can find more information and application instructions by visiting www.st-boniface.com. The application deadline is March 15, 2017. The duties of this position begin July 1, 2017.

Novena

UNFAILING NOVENA TO ST. JOSEPH

Glorious St. Joseph, foster-father and protector of Jesus Christ! To you I raise my heart and my hands to implore your powerful intercession. Please obtain for me from the kind heart of Jesus the help and graces necessary for my spiritual and temporal welfare. I ask particularly for the grace of a happy death and the special favor I now implore (REQUEST). Guardian of the Word Incarnate, I feel animated with confidence that your prayers in my behalf will graciously be heard before the throne of God. (REQUEST). Oh gracious St. Joseph, through the love you bear to Jesus Christ, and for the glory of His Name PLEASE HEAR MY PRAYERS AND OBTAIN MY PETITION.

PRAY FOR 9 DAYS AND PUBLISH. MAKE SURE YOU REALLY WANT WHAT YOU ASK BECAUSE IT HAS NEVER BEEN KNOWN TO FAIL. TRUST THAT YOUR PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED.

C.F.

UNFAILING NOVENA TO ST. JOSEPH

Glorious St. Joseph, foster-father and protector of Jesus Christ! To you I raise my heart and my hands to implore your powerful intercession. Please obtain for me from the kind heart of Jesus the help and graces necessary for my spiritual and temporal welfare. I ask particularly for the grace of a happy death and the special favor I now implore (REQUEST). Guardian of the Word Incarnate, I feel animated with confidence that your prayers in my behalf will graciously be heard before the throne of God. (REQUEST). Oh gracious St. Joseph, through the love you bear to Jesus Christ, and for the glory of His Name PLEASE HEAR MY PRAYERS AND OBTAIN MY PETITION.

PRAY FOR 9 DAYS AND PUBLISH. MAKE SURE YOU REALLY WANT WHAT YOU ASK BECAUSE IT HAS NEVER BEEN KNOWN TO FAIL. TRUST THAT YOUR PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED.

D.H.

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Job Description: St. Alphonsus Liguori Catholic Church in Zionsville, IN is seeking a full time Pastoral Associate of Evangelization for our growing parish of 1400+ families. Under the direction of the Pastor, the Pastoral Associate of Evangelization is responsible for designing, developing, directing and evaluating the daily mission work of the parish. This position advances the catechetical and evangelical programs that draw the People of God to a more intimate understanding of the faith and practice of the religion.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Participate fully in the practice of the Catholic Faith and articulate the teachings and traditions of the Roman Catholic Faith
- Coordinate all ministries and recruit, train and support uncompensated ministers listed in the purview.
- Supervise paid ministry coordinators.
- Design and maintain ministry opportunity and formation programs relevant to the needs of parishioners
- Develop and manage budget for all ministries

Key Skills:

- Demonstrate mature personal awareness for developing healthy and constructive relationships with fellow staff and parishioners
- Ability to organize and prioritize work according to milestones and deadlines
- Excellent communication and people skills
- Build relationships quickly and interact with people involved in 30+ parish ministries
- Self motivated, creative and engaging to positively impact ministry participation from 1400+ families

Required Education/Training:
Bachelor's degree and 5+ years of experience in a similar role
Master's degree in a related field is preferred

Interested persons should send a cover letter and resume to:
Mrs. Denni Badger
St. Alphonsus Liguori Catholic Church
1870 West Oak Street, Zionsville, IN 46077
administrationcoordinator@zionsvillecatholic.com

Employment

Full-Time Associate Coordinator of Youth Ministry Position Available

The Terre Haute Catholic Community is seeking a full-time Associate Coordinator of Youth Ministry to work collaboratively with the Coordinator of Youth Ministry to facilitate a Total Youth Ministry program for the five city parishes of Terre Haute, Indiana for Grades 9-12. This includes, but is not limited to: religious education and Confirmation programs, retreats and prayer services, mission trips, service projects, leadership development of students and volunteers, and fundraising.

Applicant should be a practicing Catholic and possess a love for and knowledge of the Catholic faith, as well as a strong commitment to the faith development of young people. The applicant must have the ability to organize, collaborate with coordinator, work well with volunteers, exhibit good leadership skills, creativity and initiative. Professional work ethic and excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, are essential. Bachelor's Degree and Youth Ministry programming experience preferred. Possession of a Youth Ministry Certificate or the willingness to obtain one is essential. Some overnight travel, frequent evening and weekend work is required.

Direct Inquiries by March 17, 2017 to:
Barbara Black
Youth Ministry Supervisor
2322 N 13 1/2 St., Terre Haute, IN 47804
812-466-1231 • barb@shjh.org

Vandalism at Jewish cemeteries decried, called hateful actions

PHILADELPHIA (CNS)— Responding to the destruction of some 100 gravestones at a Jewish cemetery in Philadelphia, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput on Feb. 27 deplored the “senseless acts of mass vandalism.”

The gravestones were discovered toppled over from their bases the previous morning at Mount Carmel Cemetery in northeast Philadelphia.

The archbishop issued a statement in which he called on the clergy, religious and laypeople of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia “to join in prayerful solidarity with the families of those whose final resting places have been disturbed. Violence and hate against anyone, simply because of who they are, is inexcusable.”

The incident at Mount Carmel Cemetery mirrors gravestones destroyed at another Jewish cemetery near St. Louis about a week earlier.

In a statement on Feb. 24, the chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs expressed solidarity and support for the Jewish community and also called for the rejection of such hateful actions.

“I want to express our deep sympathy, solidarity and support to our Jewish brothers and sisters who have experienced once again a surge of anti-Semitic actions in the United States,” said Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski of Springfield, Mass., speaking on behalf of all the bishops and U.S. Catholics. “I wish to offer our deepest concern, as well as our unequivocal rejection of these hateful actions. The Catholic Church stands in love with the Jewish community in the current face of anti-Semitism.”

Two days earlier, the National Council of Churches in a statement said that “anti-Semitism has no place in our society. Eradicating it requires keeping constant vigil.”

In his statement, Archbishop Chaput said that “for Catholics, anti-Semitism is more than a human rights concern. It’s viewed as a form of sacrilege and blasphemy against God’s chosen people. In recent weeks, our country has seen a new wave of anti-Semitism on the rise. It’s wrong, and it should deeply concern not only Jews and Catholics, but all people.”

Even as the archbishop issued his statement, a new wave of fear spread for Jewish people in the United States as about a dozen Jewish community centers across the country received anonymous threats of violence.

Operations at the Jewish Community Center of Indianapolis ground to a halt for about an hour on the morning of Feb. 27 as local law enforcement officials investigated a bomb threat targeting the northside facility. No bombs were found, an all-clear was given, and the center resumed its daily operations.

Several centers in the Philadelphia region—including the Kaiserman Jewish Community Center, which includes a preschool, in the Philadelphia suburb of Wynnewood—had been evacuated the morning of Feb. 27 because of bomb threats, local media reported. By the afternoon, the facility along with others in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware had reopened.

Scores of other such threats have been received by Jewish community centers in recent weeks across the country.

“As a community, we must speak out to condemn inflammatory messages and actions that serve only to divide, stigmatize and incite prejudice,” Archbishop Chaput said. “We must continually and loudly reject attempts to alienate and persecute the members of any religious tradition.”

“Rather, as members of diverse faith

and ethnic communities throughout the region, we must stand up for one another and improve the quality of life for everyone by building bridges of trust and understanding.”

The heads of the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia met the afternoon of Feb. 27 at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia to discuss the situation. Msgr. Daniel Kutys, moderator of the curia for the Philadelphia Archdiocese, represented Archbishop Chaput at the meeting.

The archbishop, who is a co-convenor of the more than 30-member religious leadership council, was unable to attend the meeting.

In the neighboring Diocese of Camden, N.J., Bishop Dennis J. Sullivan called the desecration of the Pennsylvania cemetery “abhorrent behavior” that “has no place in contemporary culture [and] stands in opposition to everything the Catholic Church believes and teaches.”

Bishop Sullivan also noted that Jewish community centers in his diocese as well as in Pennsylvania and Delaware received bomb threats over the weekend and on Feb. 27, the day he issued his statement.

“As Catholics, we too are spiritual descendants of Abraham. We recognize that an attack or threat against our Jewish family members is an attack against all peoples of faith,” he said, adding that everyone in the Camden Diocese stands “in solidarity with our Jewish sisters and brothers against these hateful and anti-Semitic incidents.”

“We pray that the perpetrators of these incidents will come to know God’s love, bringing them to the light of peace where they may recant these acts of hate and join with all people of goodwill in forging a community of compassion,” Bishop Sullivan said.

In St. Louis, an interfaith cleanup effort of the vandalized cemetery took place on Feb 22 followed by an interfaith prayer service. Vandals toppled more than two-dozen gravestones and damaged an estimated 200 more at the historic Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery, which dates to 1893.

Represented by seminarians, priests, deacons, students and laity, Catholic St. Louisans stood with Jewish brethren at the cemetery in University City.



Men work to right toppled Jewish headstones on Feb. 21 after a vandalism attack on Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery in University City, Mo. The incident at the cemetery near St. Louis was repeated in suburban Philadelphia on Feb. 26 when gravestones were destroyed at a Jewish cemetery there. (CNS photo/Tom Gannam, Reuters)

They were among about 1,000 people who helped with cleanup, including Vice President Mike Pence and Missouri Gov. Eric Greitans. When he came unannounced to help rake leaves, Pence was wearing work clothes, as he had come from another event.

“There is no place in America for hatred, prejudice, or acts of violence or anti-Semitism,” he said later. “I must tell you that the people of Missouri are inspiring the nation by your love and care for this place and the Jewish community. I want to thank you for that inspiration, for showing the world what America is all about.”

Greitans, who came ready to work in jeans, boots and a work shirt, described the vandalism as “a despicable act ... anti-Semitic and painful. Moments like this are what a community is about. ... We’re going to demonstrate that this is a moment of resolve. We’re coming together to share service.”

Seminarians were among those who answered St. Louis Archbishop Robert J. Carlson’s call on Feb. 21 “to help our Jewish brothers and sisters.” About a dozen used their afternoon free time to help out.

“This is neat to see,” said seminarian Cole Bestgen, watching the workers fan out on a sunny and unseasonably warm 67-degree day, armed with rakes, trash barrels and buckets. Though toppled headstones already had been replaced, the volunteers took care of general cleanup and maintenance.

The desecration sparked outrage from numerous ecumenical groups—Jewish, Catholic, Christian, Muslim and more—and dignitaries across the country, including President Donald J. Trump, who sent messages of thanks through Pence and Greitans. †

encounter Lent

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Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS

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