

Easter Message 2020

April 10, 2020
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The Criterion

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Alleluia! Let us rejoice in the Risen Lord Jesus Christ!

After a Lenten Season and Holy Week like none other in our lifetimes, and though it may not “feel” like it to many, this year’s celebration of Easter should hold even more profound meaning for us. It is with firm conviction of faith and hope, not mere “feeling,” that prompts us to rejoice in the Resurrection of the Lord and look forward to our own resurrection.



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Given the suspension of public Mass and other liturgical celebrations these last several weeks, as well as various parish gatherings and activities, our desire to encounter the empty tomb of our Savior is greatly heightened beyond anything the world can match or satisfy. Hopefully, the measures taken to combat the spread of the coronavirus have intensified our Lenten prayer, fasting and almsgiving to further enrich our appreciation for all that Jesus endured in his passion and death for our salvation. Taking up our cross has perhaps taken on new meaning for many of us, for it is in times of crisis and challenge that we discover whether we are truly Christ-centered or self-centered. It is in Him, not ourselves, that we are saved.

Like those first Apostles to the empty tomb, we may be wondering what this particular Easter experience might mean for us. Unlike those first Apostles, we know the rest of the story. Jesus Christ is alive! Having conquered sin and death, He is Risen! He has won victory for us over all things of this world. He is with us, lifting the hearts and minds of all those who place their trust in Him. Nothing can separate us from the saving love and grace of God.

Indeed, amid whatever fears or concerns we may be experiencing at this or any given moment, we have cause to rejoice. Let us be bold in our witness to proclaim the Good News of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ. Now is the time for all believers to embrace the call to holiness and mission, focusing on what is essential for salvation. We are Church, the Body of Jesus Christ, both crucified and risen. Alleluia!

Blessed Easter!

+ *Charles C. Thompson*

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson



The Resurrection is depicted in this 19th-century painting by Johann Friedrich Overbeck. Easter, the chief feast in the liturgical calendars of all Christian churches, commemorates Christ’s resurrection from the dead. Easter is on April 12 this year.

(CNS photo/Bridgeman Images)

Mensaje de Pascua 2020

Queridos hermanas y hermanos en Cristo:

¡Aleluya! ¡Alegrémonos en nuestro Señor Jesucristo resucitado!

Luego de una temporada de Cuaresma y una Semana Santa como ninguna otra que hayamos tenido en nuestras vidas, quizá la de este año no se “sienta” como una celebración de Pascua, pero debería encerrar un significado todavía más profundo para nosotros. Nos alegramos por la resurrección del Señor y esperamos con ansias la nuestra, no con un mero “sentido” sino con la firme convicción de fe y esperanza.

Dada la suspensión de las misas públicas y otras celebraciones litúrgicas de las últimas semanas, así como de otras reuniones y actividades parroquiales, nuestro deseo de encontrar el sepulcro vacío de nuestro Salvador crece exponencialmente, más allá de cualquier consideración terrenal. Ojalá que las medidas adoptadas para

combatir la propagación del coronavirus hayan intensificado nuestra oración, ayuno y limosna cuaresmal, para enriquecer todavía más la valoración de todo lo que Jesús soportó por nuestra salvación durante su pasión y muerte. Quizá para muchos de nosotros la expresión “cargar con la cruz” haya adquirido un nuevo significado ya que en tiempos de crisis y desafíos es que descubrimos si estamos verdaderamente centrados en Cristo o en nosotros mismos. Nuestra salvación está en Él, no en nosotros.

Al igual que los primeros apóstoles frente al sepulcro vacío, quizá nos estemos preguntando qué significará específicamente para nosotros esta experiencia pascual. Pero, a diferencia de los primeros apóstoles, conocemos el resto de la historia: ¡Jesucristo está vivo! ¡Conquistó el pecado y la muerte, y ha resucitado! Logró la victoria por nosotros sobre todo aquello que hay en este mundo. Está con nosotros, levantando los corazones

y las mentes de todos los que depositan su confianza en Él. Nada puede apartarnos del amor y la gracia salvadora de Dios.

Efectivamente, a pesar de los temores o las preocupaciones que tengamos en este momento o en cualquier otro, tenemos motivos para alegrarnos. Seamos testigos audaces que proclaman la Buena Nueva de nuestro Señor Jesucristo resucitado. Ahora es el momento para que todos los creyentes adoptemos el llamado a la santidad y a nuestra misión, y nos concentremos en aquello que es esencial para la salvación. Somo Iglesia, el Cuerpo de Cristo crucificado y resucitado. ¡Aleluya!

¡Que tengan una bendecida Pascua de Resurrección!

+ *Charles C. Thompson*

Arzobispo Charles C. Thompson

Let us continue to be good stewards in this time of crisis

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings in Jesus Christ the Cornerstone! Though it may seem as if there is no light at the end of the tunnel during this time of sheltering and social distancing to combat the coronavirus, let us not forget that every Lenten season of penance and sacrifice gives way to the awesome joy of Easter. Beyond the cross is the wonder of the empty tomb and encounter with the



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Risen Lord Jesus Christ.

Given the drastic shutdown of so many businesses and various places of work, many are already experiencing great economic, emotional and personal hardship. The prospect of enduring

another month or so before the economy can begin to reverse course weighs heavily on many households. The poor and vulnerable are often most impacted by the effects of any crisis.

For those who are blessed with economic security, if you have not already been doing so, please consider providing financial support to your parish in this critical time. The Church stands as a beacon of hope in many communities, hope that does not so much radiate in the brick and mortar of a building as through the ministries and services provided by your parish. Many in our communities, including fellow parishioners, are in need of various forms of medical care. Throughout this pandemic, the archdiocese and parishes are continuing to provide service to the poor and vulnerable, especially by way of food and shelter. This is a particularly lonely and confusing time for those who have never found themselves in a



Public Schedule of Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

No public events scheduled at this time.

situation of needing to ask for assistance. On behalf of all those served by your generosity, thank you.

Catholics are not very good at advertising our great works and successes, and rarely do these make the spotlight. The fact remains, however, that the Catholic Church is the single most charitable institution in the United States and the world. The Catholic Church daily provides ministries and services of outreach to thousands of individuals and families. We do so because we are Catholic. Anchored in word and sacrament, especially the Eucharist, service is the hallmark of our baptismal call to holiness and mission in the name of Jesus Christ.

Underlying the incredible charitable works of the Church is the commitment of its members being good stewards

and faithful disciples. Please continue to support your parish in helping others who are less fortunate and in need. Pope Francis often points to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37) and the Parable of the Talents (Mt 25:31-46) as the measure for loving and serving our neighbor. Each of us makes a difference in the lives and spirits of many beyond what can be truly appreciated.

With assurance of my prayers and blessings for everyone throughout the archdiocese, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Charles C. Thompson

+Charles C. Thompson
Archbishop of Indianapolis

Sigamos siendo buenos representantes de la Iglesia en esta época de crisis

Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

¡Saludos en Jesucristo, la piedra angular! Aunque pareciera que no hay luz al final del camino en estos tiempos en los que estamos llamados a refugiarnos en nuestras casas y a practicar el distanciamiento social para combatir el coronavirus, no olvidemos que cada temporada de Cuaresma penitencial y sacrificial da paso a la maravillosa alegría de la Pascua. Más allá de la cruz se halla el milagro del sepulcro vacío y el encuentro con el Señor Jesucristo resucitado.

Dado el cierre drástico de tantos negocios y diversos lugares de trabajo, muchos ya están viviendo en carne propia grandes dificultades económicas, emocionales y personales. Para muchos hogares, el prospecto de aguantar aproximadamente otro mes hasta que la economía comience

a tomar su cauce nuevamente resulta bastante penoso. A menudo, los pobres y los vulnerables son los más afectados por los estragos de cualquier crisis.

Para quienes tienen la bendición de contar con seguridad económica, les ruego que consideren ofrecer apoyo financiero a su parroquia en este momento crítico, si no lo han hecho aún. La Iglesia se erige como un faro de esperanza en muchas comunidades, esperanza que no irradia de la estructura física de un edificio sino de los ministerios y los servicios que ofrece su parroquia. Muchos en nuestras comunidades, incluidos algunos compañeros parroquianos, necesitan distintas formas de atención médica. A lo largo de esta pandemia, la arquidiócesis y las parroquias continúan prestando servicios a los pobres y los vulnerables, especialmente mediante refugio y comida. Es un momento de gran confusión y de soledad para aquellos

que jamás se han encontrado en la situación de tener que pedir ayuda. Les doy las gracias en nombre de todos los que se benefician de su generosidad.

Los católicos no somos conocidos por destacar nuestras buenas obras y éxitos, y raramente estos se convierten en el centro de atención. Sin embargo, el hecho es que la Iglesia Católica es la institución más caritativa en Estados Unidos y en todo el mundo, y todos los días ofrece ministerios y servicios para llegar a miles de personas y familias. Y lo hacemos porque somos católicos. Anclados en la Palabra y los sacramentos, especialmente la eucaristía, el servicio es el sello característico de nuestro llamado bautismal a la santidad y nuestra misión en el nombre de Jesucristo.

El compromiso de los fieles de ser buenos representantes y discípulos fieles es lo que acentúa las increíbles obras

de caridad de la Iglesia. Les ruego que continúen apoyando a su parroquia a ayudar a otros menos afortunados y que están necesitados. El papa Francisco a menudo se refiere a las parábolas del Buen Samaritano (cf. Lc 10:29-37) y a la de los Talentos (cf. Mt 25:31-46) como la medida para amar y servir a nuestro prójimo. Cada uno de nosotros puede hacer la diferencia en la vida y el espíritu de muchos, más allá de lo que verdaderamente podamos apreciar.

Con la certeza de mis oraciones y bendiciones para todos en la Arquidiócesis,

quedo de ustedes en Cristo,

+ Charles C. Thompson

+Charles C. Thompson
Arzobispo de Indianapolis

GOD'S WORK
through
OUR HANDS

In response to so many who have asked us how they can support their parish, archdiocesan Catholic high school, Catholic charity or ministry during this time of uncertainty, we have created a central location where you can do just that!

You can now give online at
www.archindy.org/Giving

Television Masses

The following channels and times show when Sunday Masses may be viewed over-the-air in different areas of the archdiocese:

Indianapolis: WHMB, 40.1, 9:30 a.m.
Indianapolis: WNDY, 23, 6:30 a.m.
Terre Haute: WTHI, 10.3, 10 a.m.
Cincinnati: EKRC, 12.2, 8:30 a.m.
Evansville: WEVV, 44.2, 6 a.m.
Louisville: WBNA, 21, 7 a.m.

Correction

In an article about the "Walking with Moms in Need" Year of Service in the April 3 issue of *The Criterion*, the website address for the ministry was misspelled. The address is walkingwithmoms.com.

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Father John Beitans served archdiocesan parishes and Latvian Catholics

By Sean Gallagher

Father John Beitans, a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, died on April 3 at St. Vincent Hospice



Fr. John Beitans

in Indianapolis. He was 72. At the time of his death, he was providing sacramental assistance at Good Shepherd Parish in Indianapolis.

Because of measures prohibiting large public gatherings due to the coronavirus pandemic, a private committal service was celebrated at the priests' circle at Calvary Cemetery in Indianapolis. A memorial Mass for Father Beitans is expected to be celebrated at a later time.

Father Robert Robeson, pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove and administrator of Good Shepherd Parish in Indianapolis, got to know Father Beitans well over the past few years while they served together at Good Shepherd.

"He was very conscious about how his relationship with individuals could impact their faith and was conscientious about treating others with dignity and respect, especially those who were isolated or lonely or alienated in some way," Father Robeson said. "He had a very tender heart and great compassion for those who were on the margins. That was something I really respected about him."

Father Beitans' concern for people on the

margins of society may have been rooted in his experience of isolation and alienation early on in life. He was born in 1947 in a displaced persons camp in Geesthacht, Germany, to Latvian parents who fled their home country during World War II. They emigrated to the U.S. in 1952, arriving at Ellis Island before settling in Terre Haute.

"He was a huge figure within the Latvian community in Indiana and throughout the world," Father Robeson said. "He was frequently called upon to travel all over the world to celebrate sacraments for Latvian families who were connected to him in some way and to celebrate Mass in the Latvian language."

Retired Father Joseph Rautenberg said Father Beitans had an interest in various cultures around the world that may have been rooted in his own experience as an immigrant.

"He traveled widely," said Father Rautenberg, an ordination classmate of Father Beitans. "He had an extensive collection of books on foreign sites and their history, art and culture."

Father Beitans' thirst for knowledge was wide and varied. He had an interest in music and astronomy, earned a pilot's license and even did skydiving.

"He was not afraid to try new things," Father Rautenberg said.

Through it all, though, Father Beitans was dedicated to parish ministry. Ordained an archdiocesan priest in 1973, Father Beitans spent 47 years of priestly life and ministry in faith communities across central and southern Indiana, while also at times leading archdiocesan ministries.

"He was kind, generous and a faithful

pastor of his people," Father Robeson said. "He had a deep love for life, and a deep appreciation for the beauty of the world. He genuinely cared about his parishioners."

"He would often talk about his previous parishes with great fondness and became very close to quite a number of people over the years ... who have often expressed their love for him."

John Beitans was born on June 24, 1947, to the late August and Adele (Spila) Beitans in Geesthacht, Germany.

After he and his parents emigrated to the U.S., Father Beitans was educated in Terre Haute before becoming an archdiocesan seminarian. He received priestly formation at the former Saint Meinrad College in St. Meinrad, and at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, also in St. Meinrad.

Archbishop Paul C. Schulte ordained Father Beitans a priest on June 10, 1973, at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Terre Haute. Father Beitans celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving the following day at the church.

His first pastoral assignment was as associate pastor of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville, where he served from 1973-74. He then ministered as associate pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Terre Haute from 1974-77.

In 1977, Father Beitans became associate pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis, continuing there until 1982.

During that time, Father Beitans also served as archdiocesan director of activities for the Basilica of the National

Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, from 1982-83.

After serving at St. Michael, Father Beitans ministered as associate pastor of St. Christopher Parish in Indianapolis from 1982-83.

In 1983, he became a pastor for the first time, leading St. Ann Parish in Indianapolis from 1982-88.

Father Beitans then began a series of pastoral assignments in the New Albany Deanery. He led St. John the Baptist Parish in Starlight from 1988-99. He also served as administrator of St. Mary Parish in Navilleton from 1995-96, and of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville from 1998-99. Father Beitans also ministered as dean of the New Albany Deanery from 1996-99.

From 2000-10, Father Beitans served as pastor of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis, while also ministering as chaplain of the Latvian Catholic Association from 2006-10.

His last assignment as a pastor was of Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburg and St. Rose of Lima Parish in Franklin, leading those two faith communities from 2010-14. During that time, he also served as director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism.

In 2014, Father Beitans was appointed sacramental minister of Good Shepherd Parish in Indianapolis. He was granted retirement in 2017 while continuing to provide sacramental assistance at Good Shepherd.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, 3001 E. 30th St., Indianapolis, IN 46218. †

Amid COVID-19 pandemic, pope prays for homeless, cites newspaper photo

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—During his livestreamed daily morning Mass, Pope Francis prayed that the coronavirus pandemic may awaken people's consciences to the plight of the homeless.

At the start of the April 2 Mass in the chapel at his residence, the Domus

Sanctae Marthae, the pope said he was struck by a photo in a local newspaper of "homeless people lying in a parking lot under observation" that "highlight so many hidden problems" in the world.

The picture that Pope Francis apparently referred to was published on April 2 by

the Italian newspaper *Il Messaggero* that showed a temporary shelter for the homeless in an outdoor parking lot in Las Vegas.

According to an April 1 report in *The New York Times*, city officials chose to house the homeless in a parking lot despite that fact that thousands of hotel rooms in Las Vegas are empty.

The shelter was set up due to the temporary closing of a Catholic Charities shelter after a homeless man tested positive for COVID-19. However, city officials said the Catholic Charities shelter was reopened on April 3, *The New York Times* reported.

"There are so many homeless people today," he said. "We ask St. Teresa of

Calcutta to awaken in us a sense of closeness to so many people in society who, in everyday life, live hidden but, like the homeless, in the moment of the crisis, are living in this way."

In his homily, the pope reflected on the day's reading from the Book of Genesis and the Gospel of St. John. Both readings focused on the figure of Abraham and God's covenant with him.

The pope said that God's promise to make Abraham the father of many nations highlights "the election, the promise and the covenant," which are "the three dimensions of the life of faith, the three dimensions of Christian life." †

Easter Sunday Mass to be livestreamed on archdiocesan website and FOX59 in Indianapolis

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is livestreaming its April 12 Easter Sunday Mass at 11 a.m. on www.archindy.org from SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. The Mass will also be broadcast simultaneously on TV station WXIN FOX59, also in Indianapolis.

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will be the principal celebrant, and Father Patrick Beidelman, rector of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish, will be the homilist. †

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Editorial



The Resurrection is depicted in a 15th-century painting by Italian painter Andrea Mantegna. Easter, the chief feast in the liturgical calendars of all Christian churches, commemorates Christ's resurrection from the dead. Easter is on April 12 this year.

(CNS photo/Bridgeman Images)

Meditation for Holy Saturday

(This editorial was inspired by the Office of Readings, part of the Liturgy of the Hours, for Holy Saturday.)

Something strange is happening today. There's a great silence and stillness on Earth today because the King is asleep. God has died in the flesh. He was crucified yesterday and hell trembles with fear. He has not yet risen from the dead.

By his death in the flesh, God has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began.

Jesus has gone to search for Adam, our first parent, as a shepherd would search for a sheep. Because of his death, he has freed Adam and Eve and their descendants. He now approaches them bearing the cross, the instrument and the weapon that won him the victory.

At the sight of him, Adam strikes his breast in terror, but Jesus takes him by the hand and says, "Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead."

Jesus then tells him, "I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. Out of love for you and for your descendants I now by my own authority command all who are held in bondage to come forth, all who are in darkness to be enlightened, all who are sleeping to arise."

"I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be held a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead. Rise up, work of my hands, you who were created in my image. Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in me and I am in you; together we form only one person and we cannot be separated."

God reminds Adam that it was for his sake, and that of his descendants, that he, whose home is above the heavens, humbled himself and took the form of a slave, became human for the sake of humans.

He says, "For the sake of you, who left a garden, I was betrayed in a garden, and I was crucified in a garden. See on my face

the spittle I received in order to restore to you the life I once breathed into you. See there the marks of the blows I received in order to refashion your warped nature in my image. On my back, see the marks of the scourging I endured to remove the burden of sin that weighs upon your back. See my hands, nailed firmly to a tree, for you who once wickedly stretched out your hand to a tree."

Jesus tells Adam that he, Jesus, slept on the cross and a sword pierced his side for Adam, who slept in paradise while God brought forth Eve from his side. Now, he says, "My side has healed the pain in yours. My sleep will rouse you from your sleep in hell. The sword that pierced me has sheathed the sword that was turned against you."

Jesus bids Adam to leave this place called hell, but not the hell of the damned; it's where the dead were awaiting their redemption, now accomplished by Jesus.

Jesus resumes his talk: "The enemy led you out of the earthly paradise. I will not restore you to that paradise, but I will enthrone you in heaven. I forbade you the tree that was only a symbol of life, but see, I who am life itself am now one with you."

As a result of Jesus' passion and death, everything has changed. God tells Adam, "I appointed cherubim to guard you as slaves are guarded, but now I make them worship you as God. The throne formed by cherubim awaits you, its bearers swift and eager. The bridal chamber is adorned, the banquet is ready, the eternal dwelling places are prepared, the treasure houses of all good things lie open. The kingdom of heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity."

Jesus accomplished our redemption by obeying the will of his Father and proved that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."

—John F. Fink

Archbishop: Closure of churches is necessary to keep all safe

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I bid you grace, peace and hope in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen! As the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic



continue to take a great toll on our lives, especially the livelihood of so many, let us not allow our spirits to succumb to the virus or other any enemy visible or invisible. In addition to the great efforts of health care workers and first responders, there are many unsung heroes continuing to provide care, assistance and encouragement to others. Though there has been a great shift in the way in which we provide spiritual and pastoral care, necessity has spawned much creativity in reaching out to individuals and families particularly through the Internet. Many thanks to those who manage our archdiocesan and parish websites, and to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for providing so many wonderful resources.

There has been quite a bit of speculation on social media about the closing of churches during the pandemic in many dioceses throughout the country and world. Some have been supportive while others have been critical of these decisions. To be sure, this is quite unprecedented in our lifetime. It is most painful for all—clergy and laity. As human beings, we

are social by nature. As Christians, we are drawn to gather as a community of believers. As Catholics, gathering for Mass is our greatest form of prayer and worship. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our identity and mission.

Each bishop is responsible for his decision in this regard. With that in mind, if it will help to bring about some understanding and appreciation for such action, I take this opportunity to explain the reasons for churches remaining closed in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

First and foremost, please be assured that the closing of churches and the celebration of Mass without community is a painful reality for everyone. I know of no one among the clergy or the laity who does not lament this sad and difficult hardship. Celebrating Mass in an empty cathedral or church is a surreal experience, especially during the apex of the entire liturgical year—namely, Holy Week, the Triduum and Easter. So much in our Catholic culture has been disrupted during these special weeks such as fish fries, Stations of the Cross and penance services. We can't get these things back from this year. Pope Francis has reminded us that the Church is missionary by nature. As Church, rooted in memory of the past and assurance of divine promises made, we must always be reading the "signs of the times" in the present and looking toward the future of eternal life. We have not lost what matters most;

See CLOSURE, page 15

Reflection/John Shaughnessy

The unexpected invitation

The unexpected invitation came on a Good Friday, leading to an overwhelming response from teenagers and adults alike.



The invitation was tied into a high school's touching dramatization of the Stations of the Cross a few years ago.

As each Station was shared, a student portrayed one of the people who helped, watched or harmed

Christ on the path to his crucifixion—Simon of Cyrene, Veronica, the women of Jerusalem, a Roman soldier, John the Apostle, the Blessed Mother. Each shared how interacting with Christ in his journey to his death moved them, and even changed them.

When the powerful presentation ended, the unexpected invitation followed. The high school students and adults who had been watching were invited to approach the full-size cross and attach their handwritten notes to Christ on it—to ask him for anything. The crowd, mostly teenagers, kept approaching the cross in waves.

Many asked God to protect their friends and families. Some asked for forgiveness of their sins. Others asked for blessings for the poor, the homeless, the suffering and people who have lost loved ones. Then there were the more individual requests. One asked for prayers "for those who struggle with who they are." Another pleaded for "my dad's faith. He's falling away from God and his family, and it scares me." Another simply noted, "Help me."

By the time the last teenager affixed a plea, the wooden cross was transformed by the various colors of the notes: orange, blue, yellow, lime green and hot pink. Even more, the trust and hope of the students became attached to the cross—and the sacrifice it represents.

One of the great gifts of friendship comes when we reach a point where we realize we can't do something by ourselves, when we know that our burdens are too much to bear alone—and then a friend comes through for us, sharing the burden, lifting it from us. The greatest symbol of that gift of friendship is the cross. In accepting the agony of his crucifixion, Christ showed he would do anything to share our burdens, to lift them away for us.

The burdens connected with the coronavirus weigh constantly on us now. So do the fears associated with it, and the news that people we know are getting it and dying from it. Focusing on these burdens, fears and tragedies, Pope Francis used his recent address to the world to offer a source of hope to people everywhere: that Christ is still with us, and still willing to take our burdens on his shoulders.

"We have a hope," Pope Francis said. "By his cross, we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation, when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up—and we experience the loss of so many things—let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and living by our side."

If you had the opportunity, what message would you leave for Christ on the cross? What fear would you ask him to help you overcome?

During this unsettling time, let us accept Christ's invitation to bring our burdens and our fears to him, knowing he will lift us up, knowing that the heartbreaking suffering of Good Friday and the eternal promise of Easter Sunday show us how much he loves us.

(John Shaughnessy is the assistant editor of The Criterion and the author of Then Something Wondrous Happened: unlikely encounters and unexpected graces in search of a friendship with God.) †



Christ the Cornerstone

Jesus shows his love in his sacrifice for us

“Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins; upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed” (Is 53:4-5).

Good Friday is an unusual day in the Church year. It is a day of great sadness, commemorating the day when our Lord suffered and died for us. But it is also a day for rejoicing, the day when we recall how much Jesus loved us and how much he sacrificed to set us free.

Good Friday is a day of mourning and it is a day of silence, but it is also the day when the Light of the World shatters the darkness of sin and death.

On Good Friday, the sun breaks through, opening up our dark and dreary world to the joyful light of heaven. The silence of Good Friday prepares us for the joyful songs of the Easter Vigil—the Exultet and the Great Alleluia that proclaim Christ’s victory over sin and death.

Good Friday celebrates the triumph of humility over self-centered pride. As

we read in the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9):

“In the days when Christ was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him” (Heb 5:7-9).

In the ultimate act of humility, Jesus freely accepted death on a cross—one of the cruelest forms of capital punishment ever invented—in order to sacrifice his life for us.

Good Friday is the day when we rejoice in the humility of God. It is the day when the Church reminds us that the freedom, the love and the happiness that every human being seeks is made possible only through the miracle of self-giving love.

The Son of God did not have to empty himself to accept the bitter pain

and torture of Good Friday, or to die the death of a criminal.

What we recall today is Jesus’ free decision to suffer and die for our sins—in spite of his very human desire to avoid this suffering and humiliation. It is a painful memory that should cause each of us to feel remorse for our part in this day of sadness—for our contributions to the burden of sin that our Lord carried on his shoulders as he made his way to his crucifixion.

But the paradox of Good Friday is that the *Via Dolorosa* is not a dead end. Instead, it is a road that opens the way to salvation and to joy. And so, without ever forgetting the bitter tears that were shed on this day by Mary, and by those few who loved him enough to stand by him at the foot of the cross, we rejoice and thank God for the great gift of this day of remembrance and of joy.

Jesus’ humility, his sacrifice on the cross, has something profoundly important to teach us. The way to happiness is the Way of the Cross. That means that we will never find true happiness by seeking wealth, power, success or fame. We will never discover the freedom and love we desire if we

dedicate ourselves to our own comfort and satisfaction. Jesus’ humility teaches us that true love is found in sacrifice and that true happiness comes not when we cling to life’s blessings and comforts but when we share them generously with others.

Good Friday gives us the opportunity to rejoice in spite of our sadness, and to praise God for his Son’s humility and for the great gift of his self-giving love, even as we mourn his cruel and utterly undeserving condemnation and death on a cross.

Good Friday celebrates the humility of God that paradoxically (by our earthly standards) has exalted the name of Jesus Christ above all other names—so that at this name every knee should bend and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

May we always remember Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross, which has won our salvation and shown us the way to happiness and peace. May his cruel, undeserved suffering, and our songs of bitter mourning, lead us to Easter joy and prepare us to sing once again: Alleluia! Christ is risen! †



Cristo, la piedra angular

Jesús nos demuestra su amor en su sacrificio por nosotros

“Ciertamente Él llevó nuestras enfermedades, y cargó con nuestros dolores. con todo, nosotros lo tuvimos por azotado, por herido de Dios y afligido. Pero Él fue herido por nuestras transgresiones, molido por nuestras iniquidades. El castigo, por nuestra paz, cayó sobre Él, y por Sus heridas hemos sido sanados” (Is 53:4-5).

El Viernes Santo es un día inusual en el año eclesial, ya que está cargado de una enorme tristeza al recordar el día en el que nuestro Señor padeció y murió por nosotros. Pero también es un día de júbilo en el que conmemoramos cuánto nos amó Jesús y su gran sacrificio para liberarnos.

El Viernes Santo es un día de duelo y de silencio, pero también es el día en el que la Luz del Mundo destruye las tinieblas del pecado y de la muerte.

El Viernes Santo sale el sol para iluminar nuestro mundo oscuro y tenebroso, y mostrarnos la luz jubilosa del cielo. El silencio del Viernes Santo nos prepara para los himnos de alegría de la Vigilia Pascual, el pregón pascual y el Aleluya que proclaman la victoria de Cristo sobre el pecado y la muerte.

El Viernes Santo celebra el triunfo de la humildad sobre el orgullo egoísta. Tal como leemos en la Carta a los Hebreos (Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9):

“Cristo, en los días de Su carne, habiendo ofrecido oraciones y súplicas con gran clamor y lágrimas al que lo podía librar de la muerte, fue oído a causa de Su temor reverente.

Aunque era Hijo, aprendió obediencia por lo que padeció; y habiendo sido hecho perfecto, vino a ser fuente de eterna salvación para todos los que le obedecen” (Heb 5:7-9).

En un acto de humildad suprema, Jesús aceptó voluntariamente la muerte en la cruz, una de las formas de pena capital más crueles que se haya inventado, para sacrificar su vida por nosotros.

El Viernes Santo es cuando nos regocijamos en la humildad de Dios, el día en que la Iglesia nos recuerda que la libertad, el amor y la felicidad que busca cada ser humano solo es posible a través del milagro del amor desinteresado.

El Hijo de Dios no tenía que entregarse y aceptar el amargo dolor y la tortura del Viernes Santo, ni

morir como un criminal.

Lo que conmemoramos hoy es la decisión libre de Jesús de sufrir y morir por nuestros pecados, a pesar de su deseo muy humano de evitar el sufrimiento y la humillación. Es un recuerdo doloroso que debería evocar remordimiento en nosotros en este día tan triste por nuestro aporte al pecado que cargó nuestro Señor en los hombros camino a su crucifixión.

Pero la paradoja del Viernes Santo es que el Vía Crucis no es un callejón sin salida sino un camino que se abre hacia la salvación y la alegría. Así pues, sin olvidar jamás las amargas lágrimas que derramaron hoy María y los pocos que lo amaban lo suficiente para quedarse con él al pie de la cruz, nos alegramos y le damos gracias a Dios por el inmenso regalo de este día de conmemoración y júbilo.

La humildad y el sacrificio de Jesús en la cruz nos enseñan algo muy importante: el camino a la felicidad es el camino de la cruz. Esto significa que jamás encontraremos la verdadera alegría al buscar la riqueza, el poder, el éxito o la fama. Jamás descubriremos la libertad y el amor que deseamos si nos dedicamos a nuestra propia comodidad y satisfacción. La

humildad de Jesús nos enseña que el amor verdadero se encuentra en el sacrificio y que la alegría verdadera viene no cuando nos aferramos a las bendiciones y comodidades de la vida, sino cuando las compartimos generosamente con los demás.

El Viernes Santo nos ofrece la oportunidad de regocijarnos a pesar de nuestra tristeza y de alabar a Dios por la humildad de su Hijo y el maravilloso regalo de su amor desinteresado, aunque lloremos su condena cruel y totalmente injusta de muerte en una cruz.

El Viernes Santo se celebra la humildad de Dios que, paradójicamente (según nuestros estándares terrenales), ha exaltado el nombre de Jesucristo por encima de todos los demás para que con solo nombrarlo toda rodilla se doble y toda lengua confiese que Jesús es el Señor para la gloria del Padre.

Que siempre recordemos el sacrificio de Cristo en la cruz que conquistó nuestra salvación y nos mostró el camino hacia la felicidad y la paz. Que su sufrimiento cruel e inmerecido y nuestros cánticos de amargo dolor nos guen a la alegría de la Pascua y nos preparen para cantar una vez más: ¡Aleluya! ¡Cristo ha resucitado! †

Pope: Life, measured by love, is meant to serve others

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—With a small procession down the vast and empty central nave of St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis began the first of a series of Holy Week liturgies celebrated without the presence of the faithful from the general public.

Palm Sunday Mass, the liturgy that begins with a commemoration of Jesus entering Jerusalem among a jubilant crowd, was celebrated on April 5 without the usual outdoor procession and blessing of the faithful's palm fronds.

A small number of pews were set out, with 13 people—each holding a woven palm frond—sitting one per pew; just eight people sang in the choir. The basilica was decorated with a potted olive tree and greenery. Also displayed were the “*Salus Populi Romani*” (“health of the Roman people”) icon and what Romans call the “Miraculous Crucifix,” normally housed in the Church of St. Marcellus; over the centuries, both the icon and crucifix have been associated with miraculous interventions to save the city and its people.

Broadcast and livestreamed over a wide range of media, the pope preached in his homily about the betrayal and abandonment Jesus experienced before and during his Passion.

He was betrayed by a disciple who “sold him” and one who denied him, betrayed by people who sang “hosanna” to him and then shouted “crucify him,” betrayed by “the religious institution that unjustly condemned him and by the political institution that washed its hands of him,” the pope said.

Then, on the cross, Jesus asked God “the most excruciating question, ‘Why? Why did you, too, abandon me?’” (Mt 27:46)

“Why did all this take place?” the pope asked. “It was done for our sake, to serve us.”

“God saved us by serving us,” and by taking upon himself all the punishment for people’s sins “without complaining, but with the humility, patience and obedience of a servant, and purely out of love,” he said.

“The Lord served us to the point of experiencing the most painful situations of those who love—betrayal and abandonment,” he said.

The reason, the pope said, was so “when we have our back to the wall, when we find ourselves at a dead end, with no light and no way of escape, when it seems that God himself is not responding, we should remember that we are not alone.”

Jesus experienced total abandonment, he said, “in order to be one with us in everything. He did it for me, for you, to say to us, ‘Do not be afraid, you are not alone. I experienced all your desolation in order to be ever close to you.’”

“Today, in the tragedy of a pandemic, in the face of the many false securities that have now crumbled, in the face of so many hopes betrayed, in the sense of abandonment that weighs upon our hearts, Jesus says to each one of us, ‘Courage, open your heart to my love. You will feel the consolation of God who sustains you.’” Pope Francis said.

Inspired by the Lord’s example of love and service despite the cost, the



Pope Francis holds palm fronds celebrates Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on April 5. The Mass was celebrated without the presence of the public as Italy battles the coronavirus. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

faithful are also called to “refuse to betray him for whom we were created and not abandon what really matters in our lives.”

“We were put in this world to love him and our neighbors,” the pope said. “Everything else passes away; only this remains.”

“The tragedy we are experiencing summons us to take seriously the things that are serious and not to be caught up in those that matter less; to rediscover that life is of no use if not used to serve others,” he said. “For life is measured by love.”

So with the start of a Holy Week with people in their homes, “let us stand before the crucified one, the fullest measure of God’s love for us, and before the God who serves us to the point of giving his life, and let us ask for the grace to live in order to serve.”

The pope asked that people reach out to those who are suffering and most in need, and be concerned less with “what we lack, but what good we can do for others.”

“Loving, praying, forgiving, caring for others, in the family and in society, all this can certainly be difficult,” he said. “It can feel like a ‘*via crucis*.’ But the path of service is the victorious and life-giving path by which we were saved.”

Also marking the day when World Youth Day is celebrated on a diocesan

level, the pope called on young people to not be afraid of devoting their lives to God and others, and putting “your lives on the line.”

“Dear friends, look at the real heroes who come to light in these days: they are not famous, rich and successful people; rather, they are those who are giving themselves in order to serve others,” he said.

“Life is a gift we receive only when we give ourselves away, and our deepest joy comes from saying yes to love, without ifs and buts. As Jesus did for us,” he said.

Before praying the *Angelus*, the pope recalled how young people from Panama were supposed to have handed over the World Youth Day cross to a delegation from Lisbon, Portugal, which will host the event in 2022. That ceremony now will be held on Nov. 22, the feast of Christ the King.

The pope also greeted all those who had followed the Mass through the media and asked families and individuals who cannot participate in Holy Week liturgies in person to pray at home even with the help of the Internet and other means.

Be spiritually close to those who are sick, their families and those who are selflessly taking care of them, the pope said, and praying for the deceased, he said, “everyone is present in our heart, our memory, our prayer.” †



Pope Francis celebrates Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on April 5. The Mass was celebrated without the presence of the public as Italy battles the coronavirus. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Several archdiocesan parishes to livestream Divine Mercy Sunday services on April 19

Criterion staff report

Parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will livestream Divine Mercy Sunday services on April 19.

St. John Paul II instituted the observance of Divine Mercy Sunday on the first Sunday after Easter. The devotion is based on the visions of St. Faustina Kowalska, a member of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy who died in 1938.

Additionally, the Divine Mercy novena prior to the feast day begins on Good Friday, which is on April 10 this year.

To learn more about the novena and the possible plenary indulgence and promises connected to Divine Mercy Sunday, go to www.thedivinemercy.org.

Livestreamed Divine Mercy Sunday

prayer services on April 19 reported to *The Criterion* as of April 6 are as follows:

All Saints Parish, Dearborn County, 3 p.m.

Access:

- bit.ly/2w4yKdI (YouTube)
- shorturl.at/mnpX5 (Facebook)
- twitter.com/AllParish (Twitter)

Holy Family Parish, New Albany, 3 p.m.

- www.facebook.com/HolyFamilyCatholic

Prince of Peace Parish, Madison, 3 p.m.

- shorturl.at/gCOX4 (Facebook)

St. Ann Parish, Indianapolis, 2:15 p.m.

Ways to access:

- www.facebook.com/stannindy
- www.st-ann-rcindy.org

St. Joseph Parish, Shelbyville, 3 p.m. (bilingual)

- www.facebook.com/stjoeshelby

St. Paul Parish, Tell City, and St. Mark Parish, Perry County, 10 a.m. CDT/11 a.m. EDT

- bit.ly/2UBa6L9 (YouTube)

SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, Greenwood, 10 a.m.

- zoom.us/j/712954744
- Phone: 312-626-6799, enter meeting ID 712954744 (audio only) †



The original Divine Mercy painting by Eugeniusz Kazimirowski. (Wikipedia Commons photo)

VIPs

Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to bit.ly/2M4MQms or call 317-236-1585.



Mike and Donna (Etherington) Amrhein, members St. Louis, Batesville, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 4.

The couple was married in St. Jude, Indianapolis on April 4, 1970.

They have four children: Christina Ashley, Sarah Foley, Andrew and David Amrhein. They have eight grandchildren. †



The Face of Mercy

By Daniel Conway



Pope Francis reflects on storms caused by the coronavirus pandemic

“The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love” (Pope Francis, *Urbi et Orbi* message, March 27, 2020).

On March 27, Pope Francis stood in the empty square outside St. Peter’s Basilica and proclaimed “to the city and the world” (*“urbi et orbi”*) that, even in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, our hope is found in the calm, healing power of Jesus Christ. The pope’s message reflects on a reading from St. Mark’s Gospel (Mk 4:35-41), which recalls the time that Jesus and his disciples were in a boat when a sudden, turbulent storm threatened to upend the boat and drown them all.

Here is how Pope Francis describes this situation:

The disciples are terrified, but Jesus is sleeping calmly in the stern, in the part of the boat that sinks first. In spite of the tempest, he sleeps on soundly, trusting in the Father; this is the only time in the Gospels we see Jesus sleeping. When he wakes up, after calming the wind and the waters, he turns to the disciples in a reproaching voice: “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?”

More than simply being afraid, which the pope says is natural under the circumstances, the disciples lash out at Jesus saying, “Teacher, do you not care if we perish?” (Mk 4:38). In their self-centered terror, they accuse Jesus of not caring about them. “One of the things that hurts us and our families most,” the Holy Father points out, “is when we hear it said: ‘Do you not care about me?’ It is a phrase that wounds and unleashes storms in our hearts.”

Because Jesus cares so deeply about his disciples, and all of us, the disciples’ childish immature question, “Do you not care if we perish?” is not only hurtful and inappropriate, it is a sign of the weakness of their faith. How many

times before has Jesus demonstrated the depths of his love for them? How often has he performed miracles of healing and hope in the most seemingly hopeless situations? No wonder when he wakes up, after calming the wind and the waters, Jesus reproaches the disciples’ lack of faith in him.

The Holy Father draws the parallel between this situation in St. Mark’s Gospel and the sudden, tempestuous storm that threatens the world with the coronavirus pandemic. He says:

The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities. The tempest lays bare all our prepackaged ideas and forgetfulness of what nourishes our people’s souls; all those attempts that anesthetize us with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly “save” us, but instead prove incapable of putting us in touch with our roots and keeping alive the memory of those who have gone

before us. We deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to confront adversity. In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters.

The “antibodies” that Pope Francis speaks about combat the spiritual maladies that confront us in this time of worldwide crisis. Just as we struggle to develop immune systems, vaccines and drugs that can cure the physical illnesses we are threatened by, we must also achieve a robust spiritual health and vitality that is sufficient to prevent anxiety and despair from overwhelming us.

The cure for what ails us spiritually is trust in the Lord’s healing power. We dare not doubt that he cares for us, lest we give up all hope. “Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith,” the Holy Father says. “Which is not so much believing that you exist, but coming to you and trusting in you.”

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

“Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God.”

—Pope Francis, “*Misericordiae Vultus*” (“The Face of Mercy”)



“Jesús de Nazaret con su palabra, con sus gestos y con toda su persona revela la misericordia de Dios.”

—Papa Francisco, “*Misericordiae Vultus*” (“El rostro de la misericordia”)

El rostro de la misericordia/Daniel Conway

El papa Francisco reflexiona sobre las tormentas que ha ocasionado la pandemia del coronavirus

“El Señor nos interpela y, en medio de nuestra tormenta, nos invita a despertar y a activar esa solidaridad y esperanza capaz de dar solidez, contención y sentido a estas horas donde todo parece naufragar. El Señor se despierta para despertar y avivar nuestra fe pascual. Tenemos un ancla: en su Cruz hemos sido salvados. Tenemos un timón: en su Cruz hemos sido rescatados. Tenemos una esperanza: en su Cruz hemos sido sanados y abrazados para que nadie ni nada nos separe de su amor redentor” (Papa Francisco, mensaje *Urbi et Orbi*, 27 de marzo de 2020).

El 27 de marzo el papa Francisco se paró delante de una plaza vacía en el atrio de la Basílica de San Pedro y proclamó “a la ciudad y el mundo” (*“urbi et orbi”*) que, incluso en medio de la pandemia del coronavirus, nuestra esperanza se encuentra en la calma y el poder sanador de Jesucristo. El mensaje del papa es una reflexión sobre la lectura del Evangelio según san Marcos (Mc 4:35-41), que recuerda el tiempo en el que Jesús y sus discípulos estaban en un barco y, repentinamente, una tormenta turbulenta amenazó con voltearlo y hundirlos a todos.

El Santo Padre describe la situación

de la siguiente forma:

Mientras los discípulos, lógicamente, estaban alarmados y desesperados, [Jesús] permanecía en popa, en la parte de la barca que primero se hunde. A pesar del ajetreo y el bullicio, dormía tranquilo, confiado en el Padre—es la única vez en el Evangelio que Jesús aparece durmiendo. Después de que lo despertaran y que calmara el viento y las aguas, se dirigió a los discípulos con un tono de reproche: “¿Por qué tenéis miedo? ¿Aún no tenéis fe?”

Más que estar sencillamente atemorizados que, según el papa, es natural dadas las circunstancias, los discípulos lo atacan verbalmente diciéndole: “Maestro, ¿no te importa que perezcamos?” (Mc 4:38). En su terror egoísta acusan a Jesús de que no se preocupa por ellos. “Entre nosotros, en nuestras familias, lo que más duele—señala el papa—es cuando escuchamos decir: “¿Es que no te importo?” Es una frase que lastima y desata tormentas en el corazón”.

Puesto que Jesús se preocupa tan profundamente por sus discípulos y todos nosotros, la pregunta infantil de los discípulos “¿no te importa que perezcamos?” no solo resulta dolorosa e inadecuada, sino que es un signo de la debilidad de su fe. ¿Cuántas veces

les ha demostrado Jesús la profundidad de su amor por ellos? ¿Cuántas veces ha realizado milagros de sanación y esperanza en situaciones que aparentan ser desesperanzadas? No es de extrañar, pues, que al despertarse y luego de calmar los vientos y las mareas, Jesús les reproche su falta de fe en Él.

El Santo Padre compara la situación del Evangelio según san Marcos con la tormenta repentina y violenta que amenaza el mundo con la pandemia del coronavirus. Expresa:

La tempestad desenmascara nuestra vulnerabilidad y deja al descubierto esas falsas y superfluas seguridades con las que habíamos construido nuestras agendas, nuestros proyectos, rutinas y prioridades. Nos muestra cómo habíamos dejado dormido y abandonado lo que alimenta, sostiene y da fuerza a nuestra vida y a nuestra comunidad. La tempestad pone al descubierto todos los intentos de encajonar y olvidar lo que nutrió el alma de nuestros pueblos; todas esas tentativas de anestesiarse con aparentes rutinas “salvadoras,” incapaces de apelar a nuestras raíces y evocar la memoria de nuestros ancianos, privándonos así de la inmunidad necesaria para hacerle frente a la adversidad. Con la tempestad, se cayó

el maquillaje de esos estereotipos con los que disfrazábamos nuestros egos siempre pretenciosos de querer aparentar; y dejó al descubierto, una vez más, esa (bendita) pertenencia común de la que no podemos ni queremos evadirnos; esa pertenencia de hermanos.

La “inmunidad” de la que habla el papa Francisco es para combatir los males que nos azotan en esta época de crisis mundial. Así como luchamos para fortalecer nuestro sistema inmunitario, crear vacunas y medicamentos que puedan curar las enfermedades físicas que nos amenazan, también debemos alcanzar un estado de salud y vitalidad espiritual que sea lo suficientemente fuerte como para prevenir se la ansiedad y la desesperación se apoderen de nosotros.

La cura de lo que nos aqueja espiritualmente es la confianza en el poder sanador del Señor. No nos atrevamos a dudar que Él nos cuida porque perderemos toda la esperanza. “Señor, nos diriges una llamada, una llamada a la fe» dice el Santo Padre. Que no es tanto creer que Tú existes, sino ir hacia ti y confiar en ti.”

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

Superintendent answers questions related to closing of schools

By John Shaughnessy

Gina Fleming knew that students, teachers and parents would have questions and concerns when Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb announced on April 2 that all Indiana schools will stay closed for the remainder of the 2019-20 academic year.

As the superintendent of the 68 Catholic schools in the archdiocese, Fleming knew there would be disappointment and even heartache among the high school seniors who will miss out on such experiences as going to prom or participating in extracurricular activities ranging from spring theater productions to spring sports.

She also knew there would be questions from students, parents and families about high school graduation ceremonies and efforts to feed children who rely on federal government food programs.

The mother of two children also prepared to answer questions from parents about how to continue to motivate their children about learning, how to help them make the most of family time together, and also how to help their children as Indiana heads into one of the crucial stages of the coronavirus crisis in the state and the country.

Fleming shared her thoughts and insights on all these areas in an interview with *The Criterion*. Here is an edited version of that interview.

Q. What was your reaction to the governor's announcement?

A. "The governor's announcement was not a surprise to our team at the Office of Catholic Schools. While we miss our students greatly and know that the best option is typically our Catholic school experience in full, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis is committed to the safety of all those we serve.

"Our hope is that this extended time period allows for Indiana residents to get past the highest transmittal period for COVID-19 in our state and then effectively 'flatten the curve.' As Governor Holcomb has said, all of us are 'in this together.'"

Q. Among the impacts this has on students and staff, there is the reality of how it's particularly hard in some ways on high school seniors. They will miss out on such traditions as graduation ceremonies and prom, plus a host of extracurricular

activities ranging from spring theater productions to spring sports. Share your thoughts about the seniors.

A. "On behalf of Archbishop [Charles C.] Thompson and all of us in the Office of Catholic Schools, I wish to share our disappointment for our seniors. Recognizing that this pandemic has affected some significant milestones yet to be experienced and knowing how these same events and experiences have been valued for generations, there really are not words that can adequately express our empathy.

"That being said, it is often in the most unexpected situations and experiences that we learn a great deal about ourselves, about our relationship with God, and about the world around us.

"I pray that our seniors are open to creating new and different milestones that possibly only they will experience—milestones that speak to their trust in God, their resilience, their desire for social justice and their gratitude for the many gifts and talents with which they have been blessed."

Q. Have any decisions been made regarding high school graduations, whether they will take place in any form at all?

A. "Leadership teams at each high school are working on plans for graduations for our high school seniors. The Office of Catholic Schools will work with all Catholic schools to ensure that the Class of 2020 experiences a beautiful Baccalaureate Mass as a milestone of their final days in our Catholic schools.

"There will not be large group gatherings for either, but school leaders are thinking creatively about ways to make these

special experiences as personal and memorable as possible for the seniors, their families and loved ones. More details will be shared when they become solidified."

Q. According to government and medical projections, Indiana is heading toward a period soon where the impact of the coronavirus crisis will intensify in the state. What advice would you give to parents for handling the concerns of children who are worried and even fearful of that reality?

A. "As with all things, young people are consistently watching the adults in



'The most important message I would like to share is that our Lord and Savior loves each of us so very much that he took up his cross so that we may each get to celebrate eternal life in heaven with our Father, his Son and the Holy Spirit. I can think of nothing more uplifting, inspiring and true.'

—Gina Fleming, archdiocesan superintendent of Catholic schools

their lives as role models. By remaining calm and ensuring that conversations on this matter are based on factual information and logical reasoning, our children will be much better informed and will be able to use this as a true learning opportunity.

"This is a good time to reinforce the importance of hand-washing and other hygiene practices as well as proper responses to coughing, sneezing, food preparation, etc. It is also important to point out that healthy individuals, particularly their age, who have contracted COVID-19 have been able to recover.

"Finally, I can think of no better way to find peace and comfort than in celebrating the Eucharist, participating in eucharistic adoration, praying and vigilantly working to grow deeper in relationship with God. I believe it was St. Francis of Assisi who said, 'Pray twice as often as you fret.' That's good, sound advice."

Q. Many Catholic school students rely on the free-lunch program from the federal government for nutritious meals during their school day. When e-learning began in mid-March, there were plans in place to continue to provide these meals to children. How have those plans worked so far, and what is the future of those plans going forward?

A. "Students and children 18 years and younger have meal options in every corner of the archdiocese. Many of these options are provided in our very own schools, while others are provided through the local public school and/or community centers.

"There is a great need for continued support of local food pantries. However, in many cases, the majority of daily volunteers are those who are most vulnerable to this virus. Therefore, members of our Church are encouraged to reach out to their local Society of St. Vincent DePaul or other food sources for those less fortunate to see if assistance is needed."

Q. Christians will celebrate Easter this weekend, a time of rejoicing for followers of Christ. This is a tough period for all people, and the news about schools adds to these tough times. What Easter message would you like to share with students, staff and parents at this time?

A. "We must remind ourselves that the early Christians often had to stay in hiding to ensure their livelihood. For centuries, the only communication was person-to-person. We are blessed to be able to celebrate our Christian Catholic faith openly and joyously.

"We are also blessed to have technology that allows us to connect with others across the world. Just last week, my family celebrated Mass with our pastor and others through livestreaming, daily Masses with several other priests across the archdiocese, and we experienced an hour with Pope Francis.

"In his extraordinary message [on March 27 about the pandemic], Pope Francis reminded us, 'Many fathers, mothers, grandparents, and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer.'

"The trials and tribulations faced at this time are very real and difficult, yet when we trust in God and put these sacrifices in his hands, he is sure to help us. This is an opportunity for each of us to offer up our own hardships as a Lenten sacrifice for all those afflicted with COVID-19 and for those who have been entrusted to care for them.

"The most important message I would like to share is that our Lord and Savior loves each of us so very much that he took up his cross so that we may each get to celebrate eternal life in heaven with our Father, his Son and the Holy Spirit. I can think of nothing more uplifting, inspiring and true."

See **SCHOOLS**, page 15

Fleming praises educators, shares advice on motivating students

By John Shaughnessy

As a former teacher and as a mother of two children, Gina Fleming knows the disappointment that most students and teachers felt when Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb announced on April 2 that all Indiana schools will stay closed for the remainder of the academic year.

At the same time, the superintendent of the 68 Catholic schools in the archdiocese believes there are considerable opportunities for students, teachers and parents to make the most of the remaining school year as students continue their education at home.

"My hope is that young people will be inspired by the educators, Church leaders, first responders and medical professionals who have all stepped up in heroic ways to give of themselves for the betterment of others—that our young people will be inspired to seek the ways in which God is calling them to best use their gifts to honor and glorify him.

"My advice to teachers is to continue to keep the students and our mission in

front of their minds and hearts. Teachers need to trust themselves as highly qualified professionals who have grit, stamina and the skills necessary to powerfully and positively impact students' lives, even if it must be accomplished remotely."

Fleming also shared her thoughts on how parents can help motivate their children to continue to learn during this time.

"As our students grow, the hope is that they begin to *own* their learning and find joy in the process of learning as much as the knowledge itself," Fleming noted. "When your child needs a little extra motivation, it can be helpful to take a break, take a walk together or perform some other task together."

She also offered a few questions that parents can ask their children to continue to motivate them.

- What have you accomplished this week that made you proud?
- What is your goal for today? Tomorrow?
- How do you believe you might use this knowledge, from a particular subject area, in your life?

"If your child cannot provide responses, you can certainly jump in," Fleming advised. "The more relevant and meaningful the learning is, the more likely your child will embrace it and store it in long-term memory."

The superintendent also had high praise for the efforts of Catholic school educators for "always keeping young people and their needs at the forefront of decision making."

"Countless messages from our teachers can be found online, echoing the desire to interact with *their* children—the students that they have come to know and love as part of their school family," Fleming said. "The personal phone calls, online tutoring support and innovative teaching strategies being employed are all positively impacting young people."

She also noted that educators have strived to be flexible in response to the needs and challenges that some families and students face at home.

"For example, if a family of five whose parents are working from

home struggle to get everyone online simultaneously, teachers may decide that due dates can be flexible so that the family can easily adjust their schedules," Fleming said.

"Another situation that has been encountered results from the fact that not all families have accessibility to the Internet at home. Schools have worked very hard to accommodate these families, even going so far as to seek Wi-Fi options that could be covered for the remainder of the school year."

Fleming also praised the efforts of families and school communities to keep their faith at the forefront during Lent and Holy Week.

"Communities such as St. Luke [the Evangelist], Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Barnabas [all in Indianapolis] have created their own Stations of the Cross for the parish and the neighborhoods nearby.

"To see students and parents keeping the focus on Christ's passion, death and resurrection illustrates how well parents and Catholic schools have prepared their children." †

Cloistered religious in archdiocese offer wisdom for those ordered to stay at home

By Sean Gallagher

Stay at home, except for essential business and activities.

That was the order that Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb gave to residents across the state on March 24.

The purpose of the extraordinary executive order was to help stop the spread of the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, which as of April 7 had killed 173 people and infected more than 5,500 others across the state.

But this radical change in daily living is the ordinary way of life for members of cloistered religious communities in the archdiocese.

Carmelite nuns at the Monastery of St. Joseph in Terre Haute and Benedictine monks at Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad “stay at home” as part of their vocation.

Members of these two communities—Carmelite Mother Mary Joseph Nguyen and Benedictine Father Gueric

DeBona—recently spoke with *The Criterion* to offer advice for Catholics across central and southern Indiana, who are now living a much more cloistered life than they’ve lived before.

Father Gueric is Saint Meinrad’s subprior (third in leadership) and oversees the formation of its novices and monks in temporary vows.

Mother Mary Joseph was elected the new prioress of the Monastery of St. Joseph on Feb. 11, about a month before major changes began to daily life in Indiana because of the coronavirus.

A native of Vietnam, she knows the human challenges that families may be facing now as they spend more time with each other than they’re used to. She leads a community of sisters of diverse personalities and interests from countries around the world.

“The reason we’re able to live together, love one another and grow together is because we make an effort to love one another and accept one

another,” Mother Mary Joseph said. “We’re different, but we have the same goal. We’re journeying together and accept one another.”

Seeing love as a choice and something requiring effort is part of Benedictine Father Gueric DeBona’s view on the trials and blessings of living with people who are different from him, people he might ordinarily choose to stay away from.

“One of the challenges of living together is that you just can’t wish the other person away,” he said. “The other maybe more difficult reality is that, after a certain point,



Members of the Carmelite Monastery of St. Joseph in Terre Haute pray before an outdoor shrine on the grounds of their monastery. The nuns in the cloistered community do not ordinarily go beyond the grounds of its monastery. (Photo courtesy of the Monastery of St. Joseph)

when people get older, they are not going to change. They’re going to stay the way they are. Married couples know this.

“The conversion moment, then, becomes how can I accept my limitations and their limitations and live in peace under the Gospel when it comes to the reality that I have chosen. There should be a certain freedom in living in a community. The task is to discover the freedom.”

Father Gueric sees approaching daily life with people very different from himself as a means of growing in holiness. He reflected that, in a religious community as in a family, people of different and even conflicting personalities have been brought together by God for this purpose.

“There is a certain kind of sanctification that goes on when it comes to living the Christian life with people that you didn’t choose to live with,” he said.

The daily challenge of living at home can become a blessing, both religious said, if it is approached with faith and seen as an opportunity to grow in relationship with God and each other.

“God is with us, no matter how difficult the situation may be,” Mother

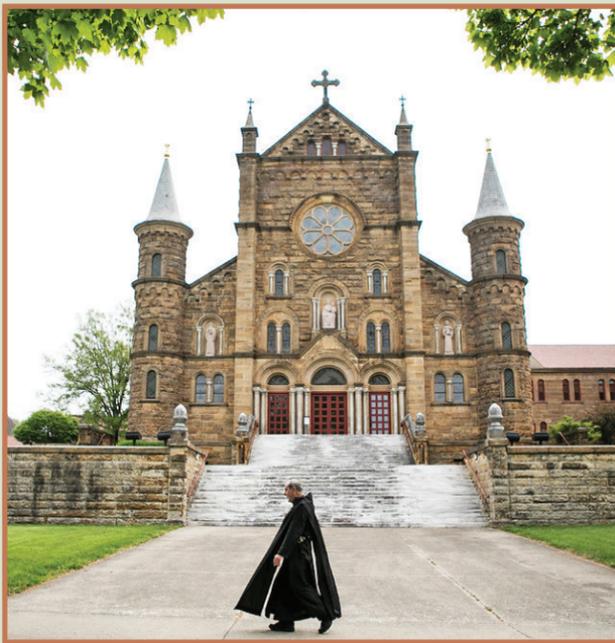
Mary Joseph said. “He is with us. He suffers in our sufferings. And he hears our cries. ... This time is a call for us to trust, to believe that God is infinitely loving and compassionate.

“There are many people out there who are suffering. In a sense, we can embrace the suffering of the world and be comforters for them by praying for them.”

Father Gueric suggested that families, like religious communities, mark different moments of the day by coming together for prayer. This can be especially meaningful, he said, as the Church comes to the end of Lent and looks forward to Easter.

“Our liturgical year is what usually keeps us calibrated. It’s our liturgical compass,” Father Gueric said. “If that becomes compromised in a sense that we can’t even get to Mass, what do we do? We become small communities that are prayer-oriented, that create their own schedules.

“We cannot give up on prayer. We have to find other ways of creating a relationship with one another and with God. What matters the most is that our relationship with Jesus continues.” †



A Benedictine monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad walks in front of the community’s Archabbey Church of Our Lady of Einsiedeln. (Photo courtesy of Saint Meinrad Archabbey)

Saint Meinrad monk relies on faith and prayer while in Rome during pandemic

By Sean Gallagher

Benedictine Brother Lorenzo Penalosa, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, is living at present in Italy, the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic in Europe.

Although the country is under a tight lockdown to stem the spread of the virus that has taken the lives of more than 16,000 people there, Brother Lorenzo said in a recent interview with *The Criterion* that he relies on his faith in God and monastic vocation to get him through this trying time.

He lives at the Collegio Sant’Anselmo in Rome, a residence for Benedictine monks from around the world who are pursuing graduate studies or ministering in the Eternal City. Brother Lorenzo is studying liturgical theology.

Although no visitors are allowed to join them in prayer, the monks at Sant’Anselmo gather daily for Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours and have periods for personal prayer and eucharistic adoration.

“With all of these,” Brother Lorenzo said, “it’s as if we’re saying, ‘Lord, we know that the world is hurting right now, but you are still in charge. We continue to sing of your praises. We continue to pray for the world. We continue to sanctify our time with prayer, knowing that you are still with us.’”

He’s also edified by the way that the people of Italy have responded to the trials of living under lockdown.

“Even in this dire situation, there are glimmers of hope,” Brother Lorenzo said. “There’s the now iconic image of Italians looking out from their balconies or windows, singing, playing music and applauding health care workers at certain times of the day. I can hear them even from my own window.”

Some who lived with Brother Lorenzo at

Sant’Anselmo have returned to their home countries. For the time being, he will stay in Rome.

“At this point, going home is close to impossible for many due to limited train and flights, closed borders and the high risk of catching the virus while traveling,” he said.

A transitional deacon, Brother Lorenzo hopes to return to Saint Meinrad later this year for his priesthood ordination, which is scheduled for Aug. 30.

“It’s still about five months away, so we hope and pray that the situation will improve by then,” he said.

In the meantime, while he wishes he were back at Saint Meinrad, he keeps in touch with his fellow monks through digital messaging and video chats.

“The livestreaming of liturgies in the Archabbey Church also gives me a lot of consolation,” Brother Lorenzo said. “Overall, although I can’t be at Saint Meinrad right now, I am grateful for my community here at Sant’Anselmo.”

As a monk who has a deep love for the Church’s worship, Brother Lorenzo sees its liturgy as a way for Catholics to find hope in this difficult time.

“I’ve been very touched to see so many priests and religious communities livestreaming their celebrations of Mass and prayer. It’s during this time of social distancing that we feel our hunger for the liturgy, for a deeper connection.

“... The entire Church prays together at every celebration. It’s ironic that even with social media and instant communication, many people still feel isolated. I pray that this time may reawaken in all of us our thirst for communion with God and our brothers and sisters.”

He noted that Evening Prayer on the first four Sundays of Lent include a reading from St. Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians that speak about athletes competing for a perishable crown of leaves while



Benedictine Brother Lorenzo Penalosa, a monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, stands on March 29 in a courtyard of the Collegio Sant’Anselmo in Rome, which is a residence for Benedictines from around the world studying or ministering in Rome. (Submitted photo)

Christians strive for an imperishable crown. The word for crown in Latin, Brother Lorenzo noted, is “*corona*.”

“Over here, it’s impossible to hear the word *corona* and not think about the virus and our situation,” Brother Lorenzo said. “In many ways, I think it’s providential that this verse appears in the liturgy at this moment. It’s a reminder that this *coronavirus*, too, will wither and pass, but we are called to the imperishable crown awaiting us as sons and daughters of God.” †



Chalk it up to perseverance

Bailey Freese and other members of the eighth-grade class of St. Luke School in Indianapolis decorate the sidewalk around the parish church on April 5, Palm Sunday. The school's eighth-grade class traditionally presents a Passion play for the parish and school during Holy Week. The event was not possible this year due to safe-distance guidelines during the coronavirus outbreak. So the classmates—remaining six or more feet apart—participated in a chalk art project on the sidewalks around the church on Palm Sunday morning, writing Scripture passages, encouraging messages and pictures. Parishioners and school families were invited on Palm Sunday afternoon to view the art as well as outdoor Stations of the Cross by car or by walking while maintaining safe distance. An e-mail about the project sent by the Eighth-Grade Room Parent Team to class parents stated, "This is a great way for the Class of 2020 to do our part to help our parish members to connect with St. Luke until we are able to worship together again." (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

Neighborhood Catholics in Indy create outdoor Stations of the Cross

Members of the MOMS (Ministry of Mothers Sharing) ministry of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis launched an effort to create an outdoor Stations of the Cross path in Indianapolis' Hill Valley neighborhood near the parish. Catholic families from the Indianapolis parishes of St. Barnabas, St. John the Evangelist, St. Jude, St. Mark the Evangelist and St. Roch who live in the

neighborhood were recruited to either create, host, or both create and host the stations to form a 2.5-mile path. "People have been coming through walking, driving or biking," said Rachel Miller, a member of St. Barnabas Parish. "For our family, this has already been the perfect lesson on the different Stations of the Cross. We are able to stop and reflect and ask each other questions." †



The 12th station, Jesus Dies on the Cross, is displayed in the yard of a Hill Valley neighborhood home in Indianapolis. Catholic families in the neighborhood joined to create a 2.5-mile homemade Stations of the Cross. (Submitted photo by Rachel Miller)

Pope Francis establishes coronavirus emergency fund for mission territories

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis established an emergency fund to help communities in the Catholic Church's mission territories affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

The pope has given an initial contribution of \$750,000 and asked Church organizations to contribute to the fund, which will be managed by the pontifical mission societies, according to a statement published on April 6 by Fides, the news agency of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

"In her task of evangelization, the Church is often on the front lines of major threats to human well-being," said Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, prefect

of the congregation. "The Holy Father is calling upon the Church's entire vast network to face the challenges ahead."

The pontifical mission societies, which are under the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, include the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Missionary Childhood Association, the Society of St. Peter Apostle and the Missionary Union of Priests and Religious.

The societies support more than 9,000 health clinics, 10,000 orphanages, 1,200 schools, 80,000 seminarians and 9,000 religious sisters and brothers in more than 1,150 mission dioceses—mostly in Africa and Asia. †

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Mark 10:45

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A priest lights a fire outside Mission St. Juan Diego in Arlington Heights, Ill., during a previous year's celebration of the Easter Vigil. Each Christian present is seen to be a bearer of the light of Christ. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Catholic New World)

Easter celebrates Christ's resurrection by moving from darkness to light

By David Gibson

"This is the night," the Church sings out again and again in a poetic hymn dating far back in Christian history called the *Exsultet*. The title is taken from the first word of its original Latin text, which means "exult."

It is heard each year in Catholic churches during the Easter Vigil marking the commencement of celebrations of the great feast of Christ's resurrection.

"This is the night, when Christ broke the prison bars of death and rose victorious from the underworld," the *Exsultet* declares. Affirming this as a "truly blessed night," the hymn basks delightedly in Easter's bright rays of light and hope, crying out:

"This is the night of which it is written:

The night shall be as bright as day, dazzling is the night for me and full of gladness."

Typically, the Easter Vigil begins in my corner of the world on Easter's eve around 8 p.m. or a bit later, after darkness descends. But this will be no celebration of darkness!

"Let all corners of the Earth be glad, knowing an end to gloom and darkness." That is the exhortation of the *Exsultet*.

So, darkness is not the true focus of the Easter Vigil's first part. The focal point is light, which means that the risen Christ is the focal point. For fire, candlelight, sunlight and even the brightening dawn of each new day all have symbolized Christ in Christian history.

The Easter Vigil commonly begins outdoors, where a blazing fire is lit and a church's new paschal candle awaits the community's members, all carrying small

candles called tapers. Ultimately, the paschal candle, itself a symbol of Christ, will share its flame with all those present, passed along first to a few handheld tapers and then, from them, to the rest of the participants.

The symbolism is clear. Each Christian present now is seen to be a bearer of the light of Christ. As all walk together into a darkened church, their candlelight is meant to illuminate the worship space.

Thus, Easter's light overcomes darkness.

The early part of the Easter Vigil is characterized by a focus on light, but also by the participants' procession from darkness into light, their movement from the dark setting where a fire of Christ is lighted into the church's interior, ready to glow with new light.

The light of Easter is not reserved to them alone, however. If Christ's light is a blessing, like every blessing its reverse side commissions all who receive it to convey it to others. It can be challenging to bring light to others whose lives are darkened by illness, sadness or other hard-to-overcome difficulties, but Christians are called to make the attempt.

Hopelessness is one difficult-to-overcome form of darkness that calls out for light. Pope Francis spoke of this during the 2019 Easter Vigil in St. Peter's Basilica. Crushed hopes hardly are unusual. But the pope sought to guard against any temptation "to think that dashed hope is the bleak law of life."

What blocks hope is discouragement, resignation or, for example, a sense of desolation, Pope Francis suggested. People may "lose heart and come to believe that death is stronger than life," and "a kind of tomb psychology takes over."

The pope asked, "How many times, once we have encountered the Lord, do we return to the dead, digging up regrets, reproaches, hurts and dissatisfactions, without letting the risen One change us?"

However, "in each of us [God] never ceases to see an irrepressible kernel of beauty," the pope emphasized. He called Jesus "a specialist at turning our deaths into life."

The Easter Vigil's message is all about overcoming darkness with light. But Easter hope is not naive. It does not deny the trouble big problems can cause. Yet, hope "means acknowledging that evil, suffering and death will not have the last word," Pope Francis has said.

The Easter Vigil's first part, typically called the service of light, brings the paschal candle front and center to signify that Jesus Christ is true light for the world. The *Exsultet* sings of the paschal candle, praying that it "may persevere undimmed to overcome the darkness of this night."

The service of light makes a basic statement about Christianity. The service reflects the faith of ancient Christians that Christ's light indeed overcomes darkness. History shows that early Christians bore Christ's light into their world against all odds and at great risk.

The *Exsultet* reflects such faith wonderfully when in a concluding petition it identifies the morning star with Christ. Today, of course, the morning star usually is identified with the light of the planet Venus rising in the east in early morning to announce compellingly that a new day is on the horizon.

That is what Easter meant to early Christians, the arrival of an entirely new day, the arrival, in fact, of a new creation.

The remarkable prayer of the *Exsultet* is that the paschal candle will be found "still burning by the Morning Star, the one Morning Star who never sets, Christ your Son, who coming back from death's domain has shed his peaceful light on humanity."

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



Worshippers hold candles during a celebration of the Easter Vigil at St. Jude Church in Mastic Beach, N.Y. The celebration of Christ's resurrection at Easter begins in darkness and moves toward light. (CNS file photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Joyful Witness/Kim Pohovey

Providence means trusting that God will take care of us

One of the enduring lessons my father taught me is that God always provides. My dad was an extremely hard-working



man of faith. For years, he owned his own meat and fruit market. He worked long hours, providing for not only his own family but those of his employees. He was also determined to help individuals throughout his tiny

township community by supplying groceries to those in need. When his market could no longer compete with the large grocery chains, his business went bankrupt. In his late 40s and with six children, a wife and mother-in-law living under his roof, he knew he had no other choice than to persevere.

He switched to a career selling life insurance, a tough field to break into no matter the circumstance. Despite the difficulties of his new career and moving his family from a large, comfortable house to a smaller one which had not been very

well kept, he kept his eyes on the Lord. Dad attended daily Mass and prayed unceasingly. One of the most indelible images of my father is him kneeling beside his bed every night to say his prayers, no doubt thanking God for providing for his family. During this time, Dad never stopped volunteering his time or donating his treasure to his parish. He was steadfast in his faith and fervent in his prayer of providence. In time, he became extremely successful in his new career—I imagine because he was hardworking and trustworthy, and undoubtedly because God heard his prayers.

When my husband and I married, I carried this sentiment forward to our family. Whenever we experienced a financial challenge or setback, I would always tell my husband the same thing: “God always provides.” He was probably annoyed at first, but he too came to see God’s providence at work in our lives. It would seem that every time we owed an unexpected bill or had to deal with an emergency repair or medical issue, somehow we found a way to pay for it: some unexpected refund would come our way, or we finished paying on one thing

and money freed up to pay for the new bill. I think my husband has become a believer because he often expresses the phrase to me before I can say it to him.

Where we, as humans, get tripped up is in thinking *we* know what we need. The truth is God alone knows our needs. So at its core, God’s providence tells us that it doesn’t matter if we get laid off, lose value in our 401K, have to cancel a vacation, or God forbid, face more dire circumstances like homelessness or food insecurity, God will provide for us. Providence might certainly look different than what we *want*, but it always supplies what we *need*. And what we need is God steering our lives.

Be forewarned, however, that it takes more than simply uttering the words; it takes unconditional trust in God. It takes surrendering our current circumstances to the Lord and believing wholeheartedly that he will take care of us—one way or another—and not necessarily our way, but his.

(Kimberly Pohovey is a member of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis. She is the director of mission advancement for Archdiocesan Education Initiatives.) †

Our Works of Charity/David Bethuram

Church working to help break cycle of domestic violence

Almost 20 people per minute in the U.S. are physically abused by an intimate partner, according to the National Coalition Against



Domestic Violence. In a single day, Indiana domestic violence programs serve 1,800 victims. Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part

of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another.

Unfortunately, it is not unusual for Catholic Charities to help a person who is a victim of domestic violence. They come from all walks of life and may be asking for food assistance, housing, pregnancy, senior or mental health services. Many abused women seek help first from the Church because they see it as a safe place. Even if their abusers isolate them from other social contacts, they may still allow them to go to church. Here’s a story of a woman I know who came to Catholic Charities.

“Angela” was a sophomore in college. She fell in love with a wonderful guy, her prince charming. They married. It was

the perfect relationship—until one day she felt his hand on her face. He said, “[Profanity] if you had kept your mouth closed, it wouldn’t have happened.”

From that moment, her life was turned upside down. She was mentally, emotionally and sexually abused. He degraded her, and he talked about her being overweight. She began to question her self-worth and self-confidence. She thought of committing suicide many times. It was a way out.

Angela didn’t tell anyone. She said she was too embarrassed and ashamed to share what she was going through—her family and friends adored him. He isolated her, and he monitored her every move, limiting her communication with them.

Eventually she built up enough courage and strength to tell her situation to her aunt, who said she believed her and began to assist Angela with a plan in finding help.

Angela left her husband and went to live with her aunt, but he convinced her to return. He swore that he would seek counseling, an anger management program, but he never did. Angela believed him and gave in, giving him another chance.

Change never came. One day he put his hands around her neck and began strangling her. He told her that he would kill her if she ever left him again. Angela

saw herself dying at his hands.

She said she went to bed that night and prayed. She told me she heard this soft-spoken voice in her ear, and she knew it was voice of God. The next morning, she woke up and the voice said to her, “Today’s the day you leave.” Angela couldn’t believe what she was hearing. She told her husband that she was leaving for work and gave him a kiss goodbye. She hid behind a building across from their apartment building and when she saw him get into his car, she returned to the apartment to gather her things and never went back!

Starting over without her husband was very challenging and scary, but she pressed forward determined to live again.

The Church can help break this cycle. If you know anyone who is in a domestic violent relationship, please encourage them to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or TTY 1-800-787-3224 or go on the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence website icadvinc.org to find domestic violence programs near where you live in Indiana.

(David Bethuram is executive director of the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities. E-mail him at dbethuram@archindy.org.) †

The Theology of Technology/Brett Robinson

The spiritual benefits of today’s technology in a time of crisis

“Gather around the TV, kids, it’s time to pray.” Those are words I never thought I would utter as a Catholic media studies



professor who has spent the past 20 years studying the effects of media on children and families.

And yet, for the past few weeks during the coronavirus quarantine, I have found myself saying those words every day

at noon as we gather to “attend” Mass at a church that offers a daily livestream. The experience has forced me to re-evaluate our relationship with media technology as a Catholic family in a time of crisis.

As a kid, I can remember watching Mass on television during a particularly bad snowstorm in Pittsburgh, where I grew up. It was a little unsettling, but it also sent a powerful message.

To this day, I still tell my parents that watching Mass on TV in that snowstorm left more of an impression on me than anything I learned in catechism class. It

showed that my parents put such a high value on witnessing the holy sacrifice of the Mass on Sundays that we weren’t going to miss it, even if it meant watching it on TV.

Shouldn’t the opposite be true? Didn’t watching Mass on TV cheapen the experience by hollowing out its embodied and sacramental character? Under normal circumstances, perhaps.

If we could travel to Mass safely, there was no reason to watch on TV. But then there’s the story of St. Clare of Assisi who, when she was too ill to attend Mass, was granted a vision of the liturgy that was projected onto the wall of her room. It’s why St. Clare is now the patron saint of television.

All of this came into particular focus on March 27 when Pope Francis delivered an “*urbi et orbi*” extraordinary blessing to an empty St. Peter’s Square. Unable to attend because of the pandemic, the faithful were invited “to participate spiritually through the means of communication.”

We watched as a family as Pope Francis ascended the stairs of St. Peter’s alone in the rain as evening descended on the empty streets of Rome. The images were stark and arresting. There was a sad

beauty in the emptiness.

The thought of praying with the pope and the rest of the world while adoring the Blessed Sacrament was a consoling reminder that God’s love and mercy is not confined to any particular place. The televised experience provided a fitting analogy for God’s ability to transcend the temporal and physical constraints of this world to unite the Church through spiritual communion.

There is a very good case to be made about the corrosive effects of television that have accumulated over the past half century. But our recent need to see and hear the prayer of the Church while being separated from it has attenuated those effects for the moment.

For now, as our television culture gives way to a digital culture that has yet to reveal its own lasting effects, the TV is providing a spiritual lifeline to the Church that has been physically separated but remains spiritually intact.

(Brett Robinson is director of communications and Catholic media studies at the University of Notre Dame McGrath Institute for Church Life.) †

Twenty Something/

Christina Capecchi

‘I’m not fine’: the power of an honest answer

Stephanie Weinert’s Instagram followers have come to expect unfiltered captions to go with her pretty pictures.



That’s why she has amassed 7,000 followers, who click on images of her five young children and, in doing so, access her tips on skin care, home decor and liturgical living.

Each one is offered up in the spirit of

sisterhood: Here’s what works for me, maybe it’ll help you, too. The 39-year-old Catholic from Charlotte, N.C., has made a habit of sharing from the heart, starting with her days as a radio host and continuing now as a homeschooling mom and a Beautycounter senior director.

Instagram suits her well, rendering her a stand-in big sister whose extended captions feel like mid-conversation with an old friend.

“I stopped doing this stupid thing I’ve done pretty much my whole life,” she wrote last month in a post. “I stopped saying ‘I’m fine’ when someone asks me how I’m doing. And it’s been life changing.”

The text accompanied a picture of Stephanie holding her infant Beckett, smiling over her shoulder with a cascade of blond curls.

A riveting 400-word message followed: “I hate being a burden, and it’s always felt easier to just say ‘fine’ than to share hard stuff. But the truth is, when we tell our mom, our sister, our pastor, our bestie or our barista that we’re fine, we not only rob ourselves of the chance to be blessed, we also rob ourselves of the chance to be a blessing to others.”

A host of happy encounters flashed in Stephanie’s mind, each one the result of giving an honest answer to a generic inquiry of how she’s doing.

The lesson was clear, and Stephanie spelled it out online: “When I stopped saying ‘fine’ and started taking 10 intentional seconds to speak the truth, I found connection, solidarity, useful tips, hugs, humor and prayer support. I’ve made new friends and deepened old ones.”

Moving beyond “I’m fine” means sharing trials and triumphs. Stephanie had hesitated to talk about her business success, but has learned to open up. “I can do it in a way that honors God and also invites other women to come learn from me,” she said.

She concluded her post with brutal honesty: “So here’s me on a Wednesday. I’m not fine. I’m three months out from a traumatic labor and emergency C-section, followed by a surprise heart-defect diagnosis and then a shocking Down syndrome diagnosis. It’s been hard and emotional. Transitioning to five kids has also been tough. . . . My God, my amazing husband and beautiful friends lift me up and help me see the beauty in the chaos. . . . Your turn. How are you doing? How can I pray for you today?”

Hundreds of people responded. “Really burnt out,” one woman wrote. “The last 8-12 months I have not been in control,” another wrote. “To top it off, I can’t seem to pray or go to confession.”

“I’m not fine either,” another mom wrote. “I feel like I’ve been in survival mode for a long time.”

Foster-care struggles were recounted. Infertility. Unemployment.

“Whew,” Stephanie said of the many comments. “We are a hurting world.”

The best response is honesty: to make others feel less alone and to “witness to a story of grace,” she said. “God is with us in the good and the hard—and other people are too. I’ve learned this firsthand, and it’s such a relief and a blessing.”

(Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) †

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord/

Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 12, 2020

- Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37-43
- Colossians 3:1-4
- John 20:1-9

This weekend, the Church celebrates the greatest of its feasts, the Solemnity of the Resurrection of the Lord, or Easter.



It is the greatest of feasts because it rejoices in the fulfillment of human salvation, finalized and completed when the Lord Jesus rose from death to new earthly and eternal life after having been crucified.

On Holy Saturday, after dusk, the Church presents its splendid liturgy of the Easter Vigil. Quite vividly in the Vigil's readings, the Church recalls the long history of God's unfailing love for us.

For Easter itself, the first reading is from the Acts of the Apostles. Speaking on behalf of all the Apostles, Peter summarizes the life and mission of Jesus. More than a biography, it is a testament of God's love for humanity, given in Jesus and in his sacrifice of himself. It invites people to follow the Lord, eagerly offering a reassurance that God is with us still alive in Jesus, the Risen One.

For the second reading, the Church offers a passage from St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians. The Apostle tells us, as he told his first audience, that we have been raised with Christ. We usually associate resurrection with death, in that resurrection is re-vivification after physical death. In the Pauline writings, resurrection also meant an event on Earth while physical life is present. It is a resurrection over sin and despair, a gift of God to each disciple.

St. John's Gospel supplies the last reading. It is the familiar story of Mary Magdalene's early morning visit to the tomb where Jesus had been buried after being crucified. She found the tomb empty. Immediately, she hurried to Peter and the other disciples to give them the news.

The disciples took her word. Peter and John, named as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," hurried to the tomb and saw for

themselves that it was empty (Jn 20:2). John went into the tomb. He was not bewildered. Strong in faith, he knew that Jesus had risen.

Reflection

The readings for this feast, as well as the feast of Easter itself, are overpowering in the richness and breadth of their message. Jesus is the Savior! He lives forever!

In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter and the Apostles were exercising a role given them earlier by Jesus, as documented in the Gospels. Salvation in Jesus did not end when Jesus ascended to heaven. It lived on in the Apostles, and it lives now in and through the Church.

The second reading, taken from Colossians, calls us to turn totally to Jesus. We must drown our sins in baptism. Dead to sin, we also rise in our lives here on Earth. Sin is death. If we do not repent, our sins are final, dooming us to death. Turning to God brings us life.

Volumes have been written about these verses from the resurrection narrative from St. John's Gospel. Two figures are very important. The first is Mary Magdalene. The second is the Beloved Disciple.

Both Mary Magdalene and the Beloved Disciple loved Jesus without qualification, perfectly, totally.

They are examples for us to remember. Mary Magdalene is a model to follow as temptation and doubts occur. She played with fire by paying attention to the corpse of a condemned traitor. The Romans always were looking for conspiracies, and they played for keeps. Yet, disregarding the risk, and indeed not knowing what she would find, Mary went to the tomb.

The Beloved Disciple possessed the insight to realize what the empty tomb meant. Loving the Lord is all that mattered. It answers all questions.

As humans, we cannot predict, control or explain everything. We need Jesus. He lives. He awaits us. He will guide and save us. †

Daily Readings**Monday, April 13**

Monday within the Octave of Easter

Acts 2:14, 22-33

Psalm 16:1-2a, 5, 7-11

Matthew 28:8-15

Tuesday, April 14

Tuesday within the Octave of Easter

Acts 2:36-41

Psalm 33:4-5, 18-20, 22

John 20:11-18

Wednesday, April 15

Wednesday within the Octave of Easter

Acts 3:1-10

Psalm 105:1-4, 6-9

Luke 24:13-35

Thursday, April 16

Thursday within the Octave of Easter

Acts 3:11-26

Psalm 8:2ab, 5-9

Luke 24:35-48

Friday, April 17

Friday within the Octave of Easter

Acts 4:1-12

Psalm 118:1-2, 4, 22-27a

John 21:1-14

Saturday, April 18

Saturday within the Octave of Easter

Acts 4:13-21

Psalm 118:1, 14-15b, 16-21

Mark 16:9-15

Sunday, April 19

Second Sunday of Easter

Divine Mercy Sunday

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle**Remind nephew getting married outside Church of the gift of faith**

Q My family have been dedicated Catholics for generations. Recently, a nephew of mine announced that he



is planning to get married in a civil ceremony. (I believe that neither he nor his fiancée is dedicated to a religion. He is a "fallen-away Catholic" millennial.)

As the eldest in the family, I am saddened by this turn of events

and have researched the stand of my religion relative to my participation in this union. To be honest, the guidance I'm finding is not very direct as to the Church's stance. Can you provide me some clarity?

As a Catholic, can I attend? (My current decision is to not attend, and this is causing great angst in the family, a family that I treasure.) (City of origin withheld)

A I am not surprised that you are finding varying guidance in your dilemma. It is basically a "strategy question" with no hard and fast "rule." You are trying to strike a balance between fidelity to the Church's teaching and your legitimate desire to maintain family harmony, and different people will have different ideas as to how to do that.

Here would be my suggestion: Go to the wedding, but first sit down and talk with your nephew. Tell him that you feel a certain awkwardness in attending, since he is not being married in a religious ceremony. Explain to him what the Catholic faith has meant to you, how it has sustained you over the years, offering comfort and guidance.

Tell him how much he means to you and that your deepest hope and prayer is that, one day, he might return to the practice of the faith he grew up with and seek the Church's blessing on his marriage.

If you do that, he will not see your attendance as an "endorsement" by the Church, you will not risk a family rupture that could be permanent, and you keep open the possibility of his return to Catholic practice through your prayer and gentle example.

Q I have read that Joe Biden, when he was vice president, presided over a same-sex wedding. As you know, Mr. Biden professes to be a Roman Catholic. I would think that his officiating

at this ceremony would have resulted in his excommunication. Has he been excommunicated? And if not, what is the reasoning behind that? (Little Rock, Arkansas)

A It is true that in 2016, Biden, who was then the vice president, presided at a same-sex wedding for two men who were longtime White House aides. The ceremony took place at the vice-presidential residence at the Naval Observatory.

Reaction from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) was swift in coming. Within a matter of days, three officials of the conference—without mentioning Biden by name, but clearly referencing his action—said this: "When a prominent Catholic politician publicly and voluntarily officiates at a ceremony to solemnize the relationship of people of the same sex, confusion arises regarding Catholic teaching on marriage and the corresponding moral obligations of Catholics." Such an action, the bishops wrote, "is a counter witness, instead of a faithful one founded in the truth."

The three bishops who signed the statement were Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, then-president of the USCCB; Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski, then-chair of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; and Bishop Richard J. Malone, then-chair of the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

Their statement continued, "Pope Francis has been very clear in affirming the truth and constant teaching of the Church that same-sex relationships cannot be considered 'in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and the family.'"

As to the question of excommunication, Edward Peters, professor of canon law at Detroit's major seminary, explained at the time in his blog that there is no specific canon that excommunicates a Catholic for officiating at a same-sex wedding and that Biden would have to demonstrate a pattern of behavior that violates Church law in order to trigger formal disciplinary action.

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

My Journey to God**The Palms of His Love**

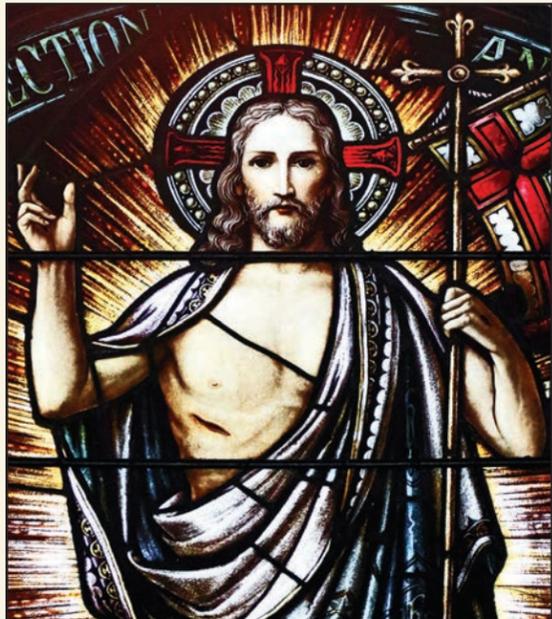
By Ron Lewis

From His hands and feet
Flowed cleansing blood
That drowned my sin
Beneath its flood.

Its crimson flow
And the power thereof
Captured my soul
In the palms of His love!

The price was high,
It was costly shed.
It was freely poured out
In my selfish stead.

The penalty was paid,
Now written above.
The proof? The scars
In the palms of His love!



(Ron Lewis is a member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Clarksville and is a Benedictine oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey. Photo: The Risen Christ is depicted in a stained-glass window at St. Aloysius Church in Great Neck, N.Y.)

(CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

St. John Paul showed how to face suffering by embracing God, Mary

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Remembering St. John Paul II and the 15th anniversary of his death, Pope Francis encouraged people to pray for his intercession and trust in Divine Mercy, especially during these “difficult days” of the coronavirus pandemic.

St. John Paul, who, after a long illness died on April 2, 2005, will always be an important figure for the Church, but is even more so now at a time when so many people are suffering worldwide, said Cardinal Angelo Comastri, archpriest of St. Peter’s Basilica.

The last years of his pontificate reflected personal trial and suffering, and he showed the world through his witness a life filled with faith and a way of accepting pain as something redeemed by God’s love, he said in an interview with Vatican News on April 1.

“This is one of the reasons why the epidemic is so frightening because, for so many people, faith has died.

John Paul II was a believer, a convinced believer, a coherent believer and faith illuminated the path of his life,” the cardinal said.

Just as the Church is marking Holy Week and the Easter Triduum in a radically different way this year because of restrictions to curb the spread of the coronavirus, the cardinal recalled how St. John Paul lived the same liturgical period in 2005 with serious illness and in isolation.

“We all remember John Paul II’s last ‘Good Friday.’ The image we saw on television is unforgettable—the pope, who had lost all his physical strength,

holding the crucifix in his hands, gazing at it with pure love. One could sense he was saying, ‘Jesus, I too am on the cross like you. But together with you, I await the resurrection.’” he said.

“John Paul II knew that life is a race toward God’s banquet—the feast of God’s embrace, his infinite glory and happiness,” the cardinal said.

“But we must prepare ourselves for that encounter, we must purify ourselves in order to be ready for it, we must cast off any reservations of pride and selfishness, so that we can embrace him who is love without shadows,” he said.

The late pope lived his suffering with this spirit, even during very difficult moments, like the 1981 assassination attempt, he said.

“He never lost his serenity. Why? Because before him he always had the purpose of life. Today, many people no longer believe in that purpose. That’s why they live through pain with despair, because they can’t see beyond the pain,” he said.

Before being named archpriest of St. Peter’s Basilica in 2006, Cardinal Comastri served more than eight years as the papal delegate overseeing the Shrine of Our Lady of Loreto, traditionally marked as the Blessed Virgin Mary’s house from Nazareth.

St. John Paul, in fact, asked the guardian of the Marian shrine to lead what would be his last Lenten retreat that fell during the Year of the Rosary. Cardinal Comastri has been reciting the rosary and praying the *Angelus* inside



St. John Paul II waves farewell to the people of Papua New Guinea from the steps to his aircraft in this 1995 file photo. April 2 was the 15th anniversary of the pope’s death in 2005. (CNS photo/Reuters)

St. Peter’s Basilica every day at noon as it is livestreamed on Vatican media.

Marian devotion was a hallmark of the saint-pope, so much so “*Totus Tuus Maria*” (“Mary, I am all yours”) was on his coat of arms.

When asked why Mary was so important to the late pope, Cardinal Comastri told Vatican News, “Because Our Lady was close to Jesus at the moment of the crucifixion and she believed this was the moment of God’s victory over human wickedness” through love—God’s greatest strength.

From the cross, when Jesus told Mary, “Behold your son” (Jn 19:26), referring to his disciple, John, the cardinal said that Jesus was telling her, “Don’t think of me, but think of others, help them to transform pain into love, help them to believe that goodness is the strength that overcomes evil.

“From that moment on, Mary took concern for us upon herself, and when we let ourselves be guided by her, we are in safe hands. John Paul II believed this, he trusted Mary, and with Mary he transformed pain into love,” he said. †

Archbishop Sheen’s niece recalls happy times with her uncle in new book

WASHINGTON (CNS)—As a child, Joan Sheen Cunningham got to travel with her parents from their Illinois home to visit her uncle, first in Washington, then later in New York City.

Her uncle was Archbishop—then Father—Fulton J. Sheen.

Now 92 years old, Cunningham has written a book recalling the times she spent with her relative, a candidate for sainthood, called *My Uncle Fulton Sheen*.

“My children knew I had done various things while I was growing up, and they thought I should write something about it,” Cunningham told Catholic News Service (CNS) in an April 1 phone interview from Long Beach Island, N.J., where she’s living with her son and daughter-in-law, but she had never gotten around to doing it.

Later, though, someone—she can’t remember who—approached her about writing a book. Cunningham saw a double benefit: “I would do something for my children, and I would do anything to help my uncle,” she said.

In one sense, it’s returning a favor. “I pray for him every day,” Cunningham said, laughing. “For different

things that I prayed to him and asked him to pray for, I would have gotten.”

The book, published by Ignatius Press in January, includes lessons she learned from her uncle, whose 20-year nationwide radio broadcast—followed by a hit five-year television series, “Life Is Worth Living”—made him the United States’ most visible priest.

“My faith is a big thing he gave me,” she told CNS. “As I grew up, my faith got deeper and deeper with God, and that was through him. I think it has gotten deeper in my older life. The things he taught me were very practical about being good to people, not to discriminate [against] people because of age or race or whatever.”

She noted, “Everything you do gets you closer to God, if you do certain things,” adding her favorite prayer is the Prayer of Our Lady. “It’s always very special to me. Normally, I’m doing more talking [to God] than formal prayers.”

As for her attending Mass, she said, “If I could go, I would go to church every morning. But I haven’t since

I had the chemo” from a cancer bout Cunningham successfully beat back last year.

That means no promotional book tour, either, “not in this atmosphere” of the coronavirus, Cunningham said.

She told CNS that she was the one who forced the issue of moving her uncle’s body to his birthplace in Peoria, Ill.

“If you look at the record, it’s *Joan Sheen Cunningham v. Archdiocese of New York*. Originally, it goes back to when he died. Cardinal [Terence J.] Cooke called me and asked if he could be buried under the altar at St. Patrick’s [Cathedral in New York City]. It was a very great honor, so of course I agreed to that. At the time, I still thought, ‘Let the body stay in New York.’ But after a couple of years and a lot of prayers, I realized that Bishop [Daniel R.] Jenky [of Peoria] was the one that started the [sainthood] cause. New York didn’t start it. Bishop Jenky did,” Cunningham said. The Peoria Diocese opened Archbishop Sheen’s cause for canonization in 2002.

“I got to thinking, ‘This is something that he [Bishop Jenky] wants. He’s earned it.’ I changed my mind. If the body could be moved—that’s when the trouble arose. It turned out the only way we could get it from the archdiocese was to sue them, take them to court. And we won each time. Four times. That’s how the body got moved.”

On June 27, 2019, the mortal remains of Archbishop Sheen were interred at St. Mary’s Cathedral in Peoria, completing a transfer from St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York.

She added, “I hope someday there will be a good feeling between Bishop Jenky and Cardinal [Timothy M.] Dolan [of New York]. My uncle would be very upset if they couldn’t forget the past.”

Cunningham said she was “very upset” over the delay in her uncle’s beatification. “And it came a very short time before the [scheduled] beatification.” Her best guess is “there was something about the state [of New York] had opened up a big opportunity for everybody that maybe had a complaint [on clerical sex abuse], or they had to bring it within that time framework.”

If there’s any regret for Cunningham, it’s that “I would have liked to see his cause finished and done with. I pray to the good Lord every day that I would like to live long enough to see the beatification,” which was to have taken place on Dec. 21, 2019, but was postponed. “I don’t think I’ll make it as long as the canonization.”

(Information about *My Uncle Fulton Sheen*, by Joan Sheen Cunningham and Janel Rodriguez, can be found on the Ignatius Press website, www.ignatius.com.) †



Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen is pictured with his niece, Joan Sheen Cunningham, to his right in a pink dress, and the rest of the Cunningham family, in this undated photo. Cunningham has written a book about her late uncle and sainthood candidate titled *My Uncle Fulton Sheen*.

Online Lay Ministry Formation

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

- Earn certificate in Lay Ministry
- Complete 12 courses online with ND STEP program
- CDU offers classes on Catechism of the Catholic Church
- 20% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners

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



REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW

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

- 1 Ethics Point**
Confidential, Online Reporting
www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com or 888-393-6810
- 2** Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator
P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410
317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548
carlahill@archindy.org

Call for help is sounded for shelter to assist homeless families during crisis

By John Shaughnessy

On a normal Easter weekend, the staff at Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis would be doing everything it could to make it a time of joy for the children and parents of the 22 families who live there—dyeing eggs and making cookies together, holding egg hunts and providing Easter baskets.

Yet in a time when there is no normalcy because of the coronavirus crisis, the Holy Family Shelter staff has focused all its efforts on one priority for the families who are homeless: “Absolute safety is our Easter this year,” said Bill Bickel, director of emergency and

specialized services for Catholic Charities Indianapolis.

To ensure that safety, the shelter has had to resort to extraordinary measures, including distancing the families as much as possible, and helping the families relocate quickly to apartments, rental houses and extended-stay hotels.

“It’s impossible to do proper social distancing” when 22 families share the same facility and the same dining room, Bickel said, explaining the need to find immediate alternative housing for the residents.

The need to find alternative housing has also led to an extraordinary need for financial contributions to help the

shelter serve the homeless during this time.

“Our most essential need is financial support,” Bickel said. “On our website, we normally place our ‘top 10 need items.’ There’s only one there now. We need to pay for the hotels, for food for them, and the support for them while they’re in there. Each of the hotel rooms has a kitchenette.”

While it was first thought to be transmitted through touch, evidence now reveals that it is being transmitted by air (e.g. coughing, sneezing and even breathing). There is further evidence that the virus can remain on various surfaces—wood, metal, paper, cardboard, plastic, etc.—for hours or days at a time. That means everything being touched or breathed on by someone unsuspectingly carrying the virus may be left for the next person coming along. This may be the case in a pew, a confessional, a chair, a doorknob, a missalette or even a palm. A priest who wants to hear confessions or take Communion from car to car in a parking lot cannot guarantee that he would not be an agent for transmitting the virus from one person to another or, even more devastating, from one family to another. In the case of an invisible and vicious enemy like coronavirus, as I have said before, there can be a fine line between being heroic and being an agent of transmitting disease.

Our priests continue to respond to sacramental and pastoral needs in danger of death, including entering hospitals and other places to hear confessions and administer the anointing of the sick, Viaticum and last rites. We are most grateful to those hospital chaplains that are on the front lines to provide spiritual comfort and

during this time. Learn how to play a new instrument or a new card game. Learn a new craft. Go on nature walks and explore the various types of trees and plants that grow well in our climate. Learn how to cook. Learn how to change a tire or the oil on a car.”

Q. Any other thoughts you’d like to share?

A. “My hope is that none of us—parents, teachers, school leaders and Church leaders—forget this time in our lives. Let it be a reminder of what a gift it is to live in a country where our religious liberties are upheld, a state where parental choice of schooling is honored, and communities where quality Catholic education and formation are provided to young people as a vital ministry of the Church.

“We cannot lose sight of the ways in which we have come together to support one another.” †



‘Our most essential need is financial support. On our website, we normally place our ‘top 10 need items.’ There’s only one there now. We need to pay for the hotels, for food for them, and the support for them while they’re in there.’

—Bill Bickel, director of emergency and specialized services for Catholic Charities Indianapolis

While most of the residents have been placed in alternative housing, some were able to move in with family and friends during this desperate time. Wherever they have ended up, they share the same emotions as everyone in the world during this crisis—and there is an added concern for people who are poor, Bickel said.

“They’re scared. Keep in mind that they’re also working as we speak. They work in grocery stores cleaning and stocking shelves, in the hospitals as certified nursing assistants, and two of the families work at gas stations—all jobs classified as ‘essential,’ which means they cannot work remotely.

“Right now, we’re just trying to get through the health crisis to make sure the families are safe and supported. Once that settles down, I think the fallout and the ripple effect on them will be substantial. It will be really, really tough on the poor.”

During this extraordinary time, the staff at Holy Family Shelter has been tested in many ways—and has risen to the challenge, Bickel noted about the 12 full-time employees and the seven part-time workers.

“It really speaks to the tremendous passion and quality of the staff we have here—that they understand the poor, and they’re able to walk with them in the good times and in these extraordinary times.

“Still, there’s this incredible commitment and mindset that says, ‘We don’t abandon the poor.’ This is a hundred times more challenging than usual, and yet they show up every day with a passion to serve the least among us, often at great personal sacrifice.

“If anyone is looking for the next greatest generation, they don’t need to look any farther than the staff I get to work with.” †

assurance to both patients and their families.

Finally, trying to do all that we can to support our health care workers and first responders, maintaining closed churches at this time is one means of lessening the curve of cases in our communities. Marion County, as would be expected, has by far the most diagnosed cases and deaths from the virus. While outlying counties within the archdiocese do not have so many cases, health care facilities in those areas are ill-equipped for any type of spike in such cases. We owe it to them and one another, especially in light of the Church’s preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, to do all we can in support of this effort to overcome this pandemic.

Our Catholic faith, while we have some beautiful cathedrals and churches throughout the archdiocese and world, is not confined to buildings. It is in buildings that we gather to pray, worship, learn Church teachings and gather in fellowship. But the living of our Catholic faith takes place in all facets of society such as homes, places of work, schools, neighborhoods, athletic events, political arenas, cultural venues and on the streets. While there has been a disruption in our ability to gather as a community of believers, we continue to be Catholic, Church, the

Body of Christ, missionary disciples and stewards of God’s grace by carrying on the mission in whatever form circumstances make possible. We need only think of the creative ways the first disciples were able to worship, learn and proclaim the faith in carrying out their call to holiness and mission in Jesus Christ.

There are great challenges before us during this pandemic and, no doubt, “staying in place” and “social distancing” is taking its toll on us. But there is also unique opportunity for us to delve deeper into prayer, spiritual reading, enriching our sense of devotion (via the rosary, the Divine Chaplet of Mercy, the Stations of the Cross, litanies, etc.), meditating on the Word of God (*lectio divina*), examination of conscience, learning more about our Catholic faith and discerning how to become more involved in the Church’s mission to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Whether inside or outside any given Church structure, above all, may we remain Christ-centered in all we say and do.

+ Charles C. Thompson

**Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson
Archbishop of Indianapolis**

Want to donate to Holy Family Shelter? Here’s how

To make an **online** financial donation to Holy Family Shelter, visit the website, www.holyfamilyshelter.net.

Checks can also be made payable to Holy Family Shelter and **mailed** directly to the shelter at:

**907 N. Holmes Ave.
Indianapolis, IN
46222-3714**

The shelter only needs financial donations at this time.

CLOSURE

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namely, the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. With the Father and the Holy Spirit, He remains forever with the Church, His Body, carrying forth the mission for which He was sent.

The decision to close churches here in central and southern Indiana had nothing to do with fear or pressure from government. Despite being dispensed from the obligation of Mass and being encouraged to remain at home just prior to the suspension of public Masses, many elderly and vulnerable persons attended Mass in very risky ways. Crowds of people continued to gather closely together. This was the same for communal celebrations of penance. A number of people told me that their elderly parents or grandparents would not stay home unless everything was suspended and churches were closed. Maintaining our primary focus on *salvation of souls* does not mean turning a blind eye to reason and prevention of serious harm.

As the data has shown, people who are asymptomatic, that is, not showing signs of having been infected, have passed on the virus to others before being diagnosed with COVID-19.

SCHOOLS

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Q. Your family is back together during this time. From your experience so far, what advice would you give to families to help them make the most of this time together?

A. “As my family sat at the dinner table together near the beginning of the ‘stay-at-home’ order, I recall saying to my husband and our two sons—one in high school and the other in college—‘It would be shameful if we get on the other side of this pandemic and we haven’t used the time and resources we have to learn something new, to take on a new hobby or to refine our skills in some way.’ I can’t say we all embraced this concept with similar enthusiasm, but I still have a few weeks to work on them.

“Imagine the creativity, innovation and joy our children can experience

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Cardinal Pell released from prison after court overturns conviction

VALLA BEACH, Australia (CNS) -- Cardinal George Pell has been released from prison after 405 days behind bars after the seven judges of the High Court of Australia unanimously overturned the original December 2018 jury verdict that found him guilty on five counts of molesting two 13-year-old choirboys in 1996.

The court's decision, read on April 7, concluded there was "a significant possibility that an innocent person has been convicted because the evidence did not establish guilt to the requisite standard of proof."

A few hours later, the 78-year-old Cardinal Pell was driven from Barwon prison to a Carmelite monastery in Melbourne.

"I have consistently maintained my innocence while suffering from a serious injustice," Cardinal Pell said in a statement, adding that he holds "no ill will toward my accuser."

"I do not want my acquittal to add to the hurt and bitterness so many feel; there is certainly hurt and bitterness enough," he said.

The Vatican said in a statement that it "welcomes the High Court's unanimous decision concerning Cardinal George Pell, acquitting him of the accusations of abuse of minors and overturning his sentence."

The statement said the Holy See "has always expressed confidence in the Australian judicial authority," and noted that "Cardinal Pell has always maintained his innocence and has waited for the truth to be ascertained."

"At the same time," the statement continued, "the Holy See reaffirms its commitment to preventing and pursuing all cases of abuse against minors."

The court reversed the result of Cardinal Pell's June 2019 appeal to the Victoria Supreme Court, which had upheld the jury verdict by a majority of 2-1. The High Court said the Victoria court should have overturned the verdict based on reasonable doubt about the cardinal having an opportunity to commit the offenses immediately after a Mass in the Melbourne cathedral.

The most senior Catholic to be convicted of child sexual offenses, Cardinal Pell originally was sentenced to six years in prison—with a possibility of parole after three years and eight months—for sexually abusing two choirboys in 1996 and 1997. One of the men has since died.

"The High Court found that the jury, acting rationally on the whole of the evidence, ought to have entertained a doubt as to the applicant's guilt with respect to each of the offenses for which he was convicted, and ordered that the convictions be quashed and that verdicts of acquittal be entered in their place," the brief judgment stated.

The High Court agreed with Cardinal Pell's legal counsel who argued that the judges on the Victoria court did not take into account the testimony of a witness who said that the cardinal, who was archbishop of Melbourne at the time, might not have had the opportunity to commit the offenses, thus raising reasonable doubt about his guilt, and therefore should have overturned the jury decision.

"The court held that, on the assumption that the jury had assessed the complainant's evidence as thoroughly credible and reliable, the evidence of the opportunity witnesses nonetheless required the jury, acting rationally, to have entertained a reasonable doubt as to the applicant's guilt in relation to the offenses involved in both alleged incidents," the High Court said.

Australia's final court of appeal issued its judgment less than a month after a two-day hearing by the justices on March 9-10. The decision was delivered initially by a Twitter message on the court's official feed linking to the decision, due to the unique circumstance of the COVID-19 pandemic that has infected more than 5,000 Australians and claimed more than 40 lives.

Due to social distancing measures in Australia to stem the spread of the coronavirus and the closure of some state borders in the country, the verdict was delivered by Chief Justice Susan Kiefel in a near empty room in the High Court registry in her home state of Queensland, rather than at the High Court in Australia's capital Canberra.

Cardinal Pell said in his statement that "my trial was not a referendum on the Catholic Church, nor a referendum on how Church authorities in Australia dealt with the crime of pedophilia in the Church. The point was whether I had committed these awful crimes, and I did not."

"The only basis for long-term healing is truth, and the only basis for justice is truth, because justice means truth for all," he said, adding "a special thanks for all the prayers and thousands of letters of support."



Cardinal George Pell is seen in a car after being released from Barwon prison in Geelong, Australia, on April 7. (CNS photo/James Ross, AAP Image via Reuters)

Many survivors' groups, who had seen the cardinal's conviction as vindication for their long-standing campaigns to get justice from the Church for decades of child sexual abuse, were devastated by the acquittal.

Archbishop Mark Coleridge, president of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, said in a statement that the High Court's ruling will be "welcomed by many, including those who have believed in the cardinal's innocence throughout this lengthy process."

"We also recognize that the High Court's decision will be devastating for others," he said. "Many have suffered greatly through the process, which has now reached its conclusion. The result today does not change the Church's unwavering commitment to child safety and to a just and compassionate response to survivors and victims of child sexual abuse. Any person with allegations of sexual abuse by Church personnel should go to the police."

Cardinal Pell's legal problems might not be over. Prosecutors could potentially revive another set of potential charges for a second set of historical abuse allegations that were headed for trial but dropped once he was originally convicted.

He is also facing a string of civil suits—Australian news media have

reported as many as 10 suits either filed or in preparation—and new allegations were made in recent weeks as part of a three-part documentary series on child abuse in the Australian Church.

In addition, Australian Attorney General Christian Porter is now free to authorize the removal of lengthy redactions to two case studies from the country's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

One case study concerned a timeframe when the cardinal was a priest in the Diocese of Ballarat and was supposedly advising the bishop at a time when serial child sexual abuse by other priests occurred, as documented by the Royal Commission. The other covered a time frame when he was archbishop of Melbourne when other such offenses were committed by priests in the diocese.

Survivors groups are pressing Porter to release the information.

The Vatican had said Cardinal Pell faced an abuse investigation by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, but that investigation was put on hold awaiting the conclusion of the Australian legal process.

The Vatican statement on April 7 did not say whether or not the Church investigation would continue. †

Bishops: Long-held ethical, moral principles must guide COVID-19 response

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The coronavirus pandemic is creating fear over limited resources for treating patients, especially the most seriously ill, but "this is not a time to sideline our ethical and moral principles," said the chairmen of three committees of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

"It is a time to uphold them ever more strongly, for they will critically assist us in steering through these trying times," said the chairmen of the USCCB's doctrine, pro-life and domestic policy committees in a joint statement on April 3.

The statement came in response to recent news reports highlighting policies and practices relating to rationing protocols in response to COVID-19.

"Foremost in our approach to limited resources is to always keep in mind the dignity of each person and our obligation to care for the sick and dying," the prelates said. "Such care, however, will require patients, their families and medical professionals to work together in weighing the benefits and burdens of care, the needs and safety of everyone, and how to distribute resources in a prudent, just and unbiased way."

The statement was signed by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Doctrine; Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities; and Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

"This pandemic has highlighted the fact that we have limited resources and therefore may be facing

some difficult decisions ahead. At all times resources are limited—there are only so many beds and so many supplies—but this crisis has and will continue to challenge us greatly," they said. "Every crisis produces fear, and the COVID-19 pandemic is no exception."

Across the country, a critical shortage of personal protective equipment for medical personnel who are treating patients with the highly contagious virus and a lack of equipment such as ventilators has prompted some U.S. hospitals to consider instituting a blanket DNR, or "do not resuscitate" order, for COVID-19 patients despite their wishes or those of their family.

Bishop Rhoades and Archbishops Naumann and Coakley praised hospitals and medical personnel for their courage and compassion in treating the nation's COVID-19 patients.

"Hospitals and health care systems are the true epicenter of this pandemic and our health care professionals—doctors, nurses, technicians, administrators and support staff—have all demonstrated courage, compassion, and truly remarkable professional care in a time of growing crisis," the bishops said.

They acknowledged the difficult decisions about care confronting these health care workers, and urged them to read a number of important statements from Catholic health care and medical ethical organizations reminding them—and the general public—of ethical and moral principles to be applied in these difficult circumstances.

"The Catholic Health Association of the United States, the Catholic Medical Association, the National Association of Catholic Nurses-USA and the National

Catholic Bioethics Center have all published excellent reminders of these principles and guidelines," they said. "We ask people, especially medical professionals, to read these documents and apply them appropriately in their work."

The statements they cited can be found online at these organizations' respective websites: Catholic Health Association, www.chausa.org; Catholic Medical Association, www.cathmed.org; National Association of Catholic Nurses-USA, nacn-usa.org; and National Catholic Bioethics Center, www.ncbcenter.org.

Bishop Rhoades and Archbishops Naumann and Coakley also commended the Office of Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services "for issuing a reminder that in a time of crisis we must not discriminate against persons solely on the basis of disability or age by denying them medical care."

"Good and just stewardship of resources cannot include ignoring those on the periphery of society, but must serve the common good of all, without categorically excluding people based on ability, financial resources, age, immigration status or race," they said.

The prelates added: "With our Holy Father, Pope Francis, the entire Church continues to pray for, and offer support to, all those affected by this pandemic."

(The USCCB website has a special link to a page offering various resources for the nation's Catholics as they weather the ongoing coronavirus pandemic: usccb.org/coronavirus.) †