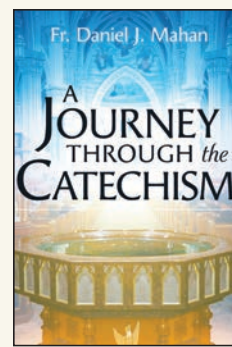




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Evangelizing catechesis

Father Daniel Mahan writes new book on the catechism, page 10.

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‘The gift of life that we have to honor’: Finding a path to hope after a tragic night

(Editor’s note: As Pope Francis has announced a Jubilee Year for the Church with the theme, “Pilgrims of Hope,” The Criterion has invited you, our readers, to share your stories of hope—how embracing hope has helped and guided you in the toughest moments of your life, how others have given you hope for your future, how your faith in God has sustained you and uplifted you. Here is another story in a continuing series.)

By John Shaughnessy

Before the drunk driver hit their car from behind at 100 mph, the three friends had been recalling the remarkable talk they had heard that evening.

Before their car spun sideways, struck a guardrail, went airborne and flipped over and over until crashing into some trees, Tony Talbert, his wife Donna and their friend David Marshall had talked about what they wanted to do to bring hope into the lives of people who needed it.

Before their car slid down a steep slope on its roof for what seemed

See HOPE, page 8

Tony Talbert, left, and David Marshall share the smiles of friendship, just hours before tragedy struck their lives in 2022. (Submitted photo)



Pope no longer on mechanical ventilation after respiratory crises; prayers continue

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The morning after suffering two acute episodes of respiratory crisis, Pope Francis no longer needed oxygen through a breathing mask, the Vatican said.



Pope Francis

The crises on March 3 led doctors to again put the pope on “noninvasive mechanical ventilation”—a treatment that delivers air with added oxygen through a tightly fitted face mask

and using positive pressure to assist breathing.

But early on March 4, the Vatican press office said, the pope was taken off the treatment and was instead receiving high-flow oxygen through a nasal cannula.

The press office also said he resumed his respiratory physiotherapy—which often consists of breathing exercises.

The pope suffered “two episodes of acute respiratory insufficiency” on March 3,

the Vatican said in its evening medical bulletin. The condition occurs when the lungs are unable to effectively take in sufficient oxygen or expel enough carbon dioxide to meet the body’s needs.

He underwent two bronchoscopies that day but “remained alert, oriented and cooperative at all times,” the bulletin said.

The Vatican also announced that the March 9-14 Lenten retreat for senior members of the Roman Curia would go ahead in “spiritual communion with the Holy Father.”

The theme, “The hope of eternal life,” was chosen “weeks ago,” said Matteo Bruni,

See POPE, page 2

See related story, page 3.

For the most up-to-date information on Pope Francis’ health, visit www.archindy.org/PopeFrancis.

Indiana Catholic Conference is focusing on school choice, immigration in second half of session

By Victoria Arthur

Universal school choice for Indiana is within reach as the 2025 legislative session moves into its second half, while an effort to abolish the death penalty in the state will have to wait for another year.

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) and other advocates continue to monitor key legislation that made it through crossover—the midway point of the General Assembly, when bills that are still active move from one legislative chamber to the other. This is a long session of the state legislature, held every other year and culminating in the passage of Indiana’s two-year budget.

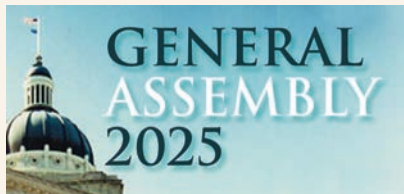
House Bill 1001—the proposed state budget—includes a provision removing the income cap on Indiana’s current Choice Scholarship Program, more commonly known as the voucher program. The measure passed the Indiana House of

Representatives on Feb. 20 by a 66-28 vote and now awaits further action in the Senate.

“We are pleased to have support for universal vouchers from both Gov. [Mike] Braun and the Indiana House of Representatives,” said John Elcesser, executive director of the Indiana Non-Public Education Association (INPEA), which represents the state’s more than 400 non-public schools, including Indiana’s 175 Catholic schools. “We do anticipate a more challenging road for its passage in the Senate, but with the passionate engagement of our non-public school stakeholders, universal choice is definitely achievable in the 2025 legislative session.”

Under House Bill 1001, every Indiana family regardless of income would be able to take the portion of the state’s budget allotted for their children to attend their local public school and apply it to tuition at a non-public school if they choose.

See ICC, page 9





A religious sister prays by candlelight as people gather in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican to recite the rosary for Pope Francis with Cardinal Robert F. Prevost, prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, on March 3. (CNS photo/Pablo Esparza)

POPE

continued from page 1

director of the Vatican press office.

The retreat is scheduled to take place in the Vatican's Paul VI Audience Hall and be led by Capuchin Father Roberto Pasolini, the new preacher of the papal household.

Church leaders continue to lead a nightly recitation of the rosary for the pope and for all the sick in St. Peter's Square, which Cardinal Leonardo Sandri said "is a beautiful gesture" of affection and of faith.

"Anyone can come. Praying together is a sign of ecclesiality, of being Church," said the Argentine cardinal, who is the retired prefect of the Dicastery for Eastern Churches.

"Our Lord himself said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,' " (Mt 18:20) the cardinal told Catholic News Service on March 4, after hundreds of people had gathered to pray the rosary for Pope Francis at 9 p.m. each night for more than a week.

Twenty years ago, the Argentine cardinal, then-substitute for general affairs in the Vatican Secretariat of State, was leading prayers in St. Peter's Square for the ailing Pope John Paul II, who left Rome's Gemelli hospital on March 13, 2005, for the last time.

Cardinal Sandri was delegated at the time to lead the recitation of the *Angelus* prayer at midday on Sundays and to read the texts Pope John Paul had prepared for the occasion while he was hospitalized and once he returned to the Vatican.

The Polish pope died on April 2, 2005, as Cardinal Sandri was leading the rosary with tens of thousands of people who started flocking to St. Peter's Square a few days earlier when it was clear Pope John Paul was dying.

At the time, the cardinal said, the Vatican Secretariat of State organized the prayer on the steps of St. Peter's Basilica. Now, with Pope Francis hospitalized, the nightly prayer is being organized by the secretariat and the Vicariate for Vatican City State.

While Pope Francis' doctors have said their prognosis is "guarded," they had told reporters on Feb. 21 that they expected his condition to have ups and downs as he tried to recover from double pneumonia.


The 88-year-old pope has been in the Gemelli hospital since Feb. 14 when bronchitis led to serious breathing difficulties.

In addition to the pneumonia, they said, the pope has two chronic lung conditions—bronchiectasis and asthmatic bronchitis—caused by years of respiratory problems and repeated bouts of bronchitis. The pope had undergone surgery in 1957 to remove part of his right lung after suffering a severe respiratory infection.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, led the first public rosary for Pope Francis on Feb. 24.

He introduced the prayer by telling those gathered, "The Acts of the Apostles recounts that the Church prayed intensely while Peter was in prison. For 2,000 years, the Christian people have prayed for the pope when he was in danger or infirm."

"So, too, in these days when our Holy



Public Schedule of

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

March 8–24, 2025

March 8 – 10:30 a.m.

Rite of Election at Holy Family Church, New Albany

March 10-12

USCCB Administrative Committee meeting in Washington, D.C.

March 12-14

The Way Forward Ecclesial Gathering at Fordham University Lincoln Center Campus, New York City

March 18 – 2 p.m.

Installation Mass for Archbishop-Elect Edward J. Weisenburger at Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Detroit, Mich.

March 20 – 9 a.m.

Mass at Plainfield Correctional Facility

March 22 – 2 p.m.

Mass for Knights of Columbus, 4th Degree, Supreme and Indiana Councils at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral followed by ceremony at McGowan Hall, both in Indianapolis

March 24 – 1 p.m.

Virtual Cross Catholic Outreach Board meeting

Father, Francis, has been hospitalized at Gemelli Hospital, an intense prayer is being raised for him to the Lord by individual faithful and Christian communities around the world," the cardinal said.

Those gathered in St. Peter's Square, he said, entrust the pope to "the powerful intercession of Mary," and pray that "she who is our caring mother would sustain him in this time of illness and trial and help him to recover his health soon." †

In Lenten reflection, U.S. bishops pray for peace, urge solidarity with ‘martyred people of Ukraine’

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—The U.S. bishops urged Catholics to answer Pope Francis' call for prayer for the people of Ukraine in their Lenten reflection as that nation fends off Russia's invasion.


In a Lenten reflection released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) on March 3, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the conference, wrote, "As we begin the holy season of Lent, a time of prayer, penance, and charity, we join our Holy Father, Pope Francis, in his solidarity with the 'martyred people of Ukraine.'

"We pray and hope that the United States, in concert with the wider international community, works with perseverance for a just peace and an end to aggression," said Archbishop Broglio, who heads the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services. "As our Holy Father reminded us in 2024, courageous negotiations require 'boldness' to 'open the door' for dialogue."

Although the reflection did not mention either event, it was published shortly after Ukraine marked the third anniversary of Russia's invasion on Feb. 24, and days after a tense Oval Office meeting between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and U.S. President Donald J. Trump and Vice President JD Vance.

"As Catholics, we are acutely aware that every past occupation of Ukraine has resulted in various degrees of repression of the Catholic Church in the country; we must not tolerate the forcing of our brothers and sisters underground again," Archbishop Broglio wrote. "I echo Pope Francis' plea for respecting the religious freedom of all Ukrainians: 'Please, let no Christian church be abolished directly or indirectly. Churches are not to be touched!'"


Lent began on Ash Wednesday, which this year was on March 5. †



Pope's prayer intentions for March

- For families in crisis**—Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences.

See Pope Francis' monthly intentions at archindy.org/popesintentions.



'We pray and hope that the United States, in concert with the wider international community, works with perseverance for a just peace and an end to aggression.'

—Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops



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Pope’s spirit ‘remains vigorous,’ nuncio tells faithful at basilica Mass

WASHINGTON (OSV News)—As worshippers entered the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington for the noon Mass on March 2, they saw at the base of the sanctuary a large portrait of a bespectacled, smiling Pope Francis, with a vase in front of the portrait bearing gold and white flowers—the colors of the Vatican flag.

The pope’s health was the prime focus of the Mass, celebrated by Cardinal Christophe Pierre, the apostolic nuncio to the United States. Following the Mass, the rosary was recited.

Cardinal Pierre’s homily linked Pope Francis’ situation to the Scripture readings of the day, the Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time.

The cardinal spoke of the pope’s spirit, “the inner self,” which he said “allows the pope ‘to proclaim [the Lord’s] kindness at dawn and [his] faithfulness throughout the night,’” quoting from Psalm 92, the source of the responsorial psalm for the day.

Noting that the psalmist also referred to palm trees and cedars as “vigorous and sturdy,” Cardinal Pierre said, “To be sure, the Holy Father’s body, 88 years old and beset with many infirmities, is not ‘vigorous and sturdy.’ But his spirit: That is what remains vigorous!”

Psalm 92 also says, “The just ... shall bear fruit even in old age ... declaring how just is the Lord, my rock, in whom there is no wrong.” Cardinal Pierre noted how, in the daily reports on Pope Francis’ health, “there is a simple phrase that has been repeated, which we might pass over easily. It is said, ‘he remains in good spirits.’

“As simple as that statement is, the word of God in today’s Mass would suggest that there is actually quite a bit of meaning in such a statement,” Cardinal Pierre said.

He added, “In these daily reports about the pope, we sometimes hear that he ‘resumed his work.’ Again, a simple phrase, but actually quite indicative of what motivates Pope Francis.”

The cardinal went on to quote from St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, the source of the second reading at the Mass.

“To use the words of Paul, the Holy Father is ‘always devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that [his] labor is not in vain’ ” (1 Cor 15:58).

At the beginning of the Mass, Msgr. Walter Rossi, rector of the basilica, said Pope Francis’ condition was “guarded.”

“The whole world has been praying for Pope Francis,” Msgr. Rossi said. “We in the shrine have been praying for him as well.”

The pope entered Gemelli Hospital in Rome on Feb. 14 initially to treat a respiratory infection, which ultimately developed into double pneumonia. On Feb. 28, he had a respiratory episode that, according to the Vatican press office, required “noninvasive mechanical ventilation.” By March 1, he was able to alternate between mechanical ventilation and high-flow oxygen therapy administered through a nasal cannula.

On March 3, he suffered “two episodes of acute respiratory insufficiency,” leading doctors to again put the pope on “noninvasive mechanical ventilation,” but by early on March 4, the pope was taken off the treatment and was instead receiving high-flow oxygen through a nasal cannula and was resuming breathing exercises.

In his homily, Cardinal Pierre noted the “many exalted titles” given a pope: “successor of Peter,” “supreme pontiff,” “vicar of Christ,” but said, “Francis himself would want us to remember the most basic identity: He is a Christian.”

The cardinal reminded Massgoers that at the start of his pontificate Pope Francis was asked, “Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio [the pope’s birth name]?” The reply: “I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon.”

Cardinal Pierre cited the Gospel passage proclaimed at the Mass in which Jesus taught his disciples, “ ‘A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, and a rotten tree does not bear good fruit.’ ... The fruit comes, not from our own strength, but from a heart which God has filled with his own love and grace” (Lk 6:43, 45).

Because of Pope Francis’ devotion to Mary, the rosary chosen to be recited featured the glorious mysteries, the last two of which deal with Mary’s assumption into heaven and the Blessed Virgin’s coronation.

At the conclusion of each decade of the rosary, a verse of “Immaculate Mary” was sung, which includes the verse “We pray for God’s glory, may his kingdom come; we pray for his vicar, our Father in Rome.”

Nearly 1,000 attended the Mass—more than a typical Sunday when there aren’t diocesan pilgrimages and tourist draws, according to Jacqueline Hayes, the basilica’s communications director. Once the plans were firmed up—on less than a

week’s notice, Hayes said—the basilica used social media and other methods to announce the special focus for the regularly scheduled Mass.

For Xin Liu Wall, this was her first time in any Catholic church. “I hope he gets well soon,” she said of Pope Francis.

Brock Ryan, a member of Holy Redeemer Parish in Kensington, Md., added similar sentiments: “I hope he gets well. He’s a good pope.”

“I’ve been praying for him,” John Ojo, a regular at the noon Mass at the shrine who stayed to pray the rosary, told the *Catholic Standard*, Washington’s archdiocesan newspaper. “It makes me wonder why the pope should be sick. I wonder why he has to suffer,” he added.

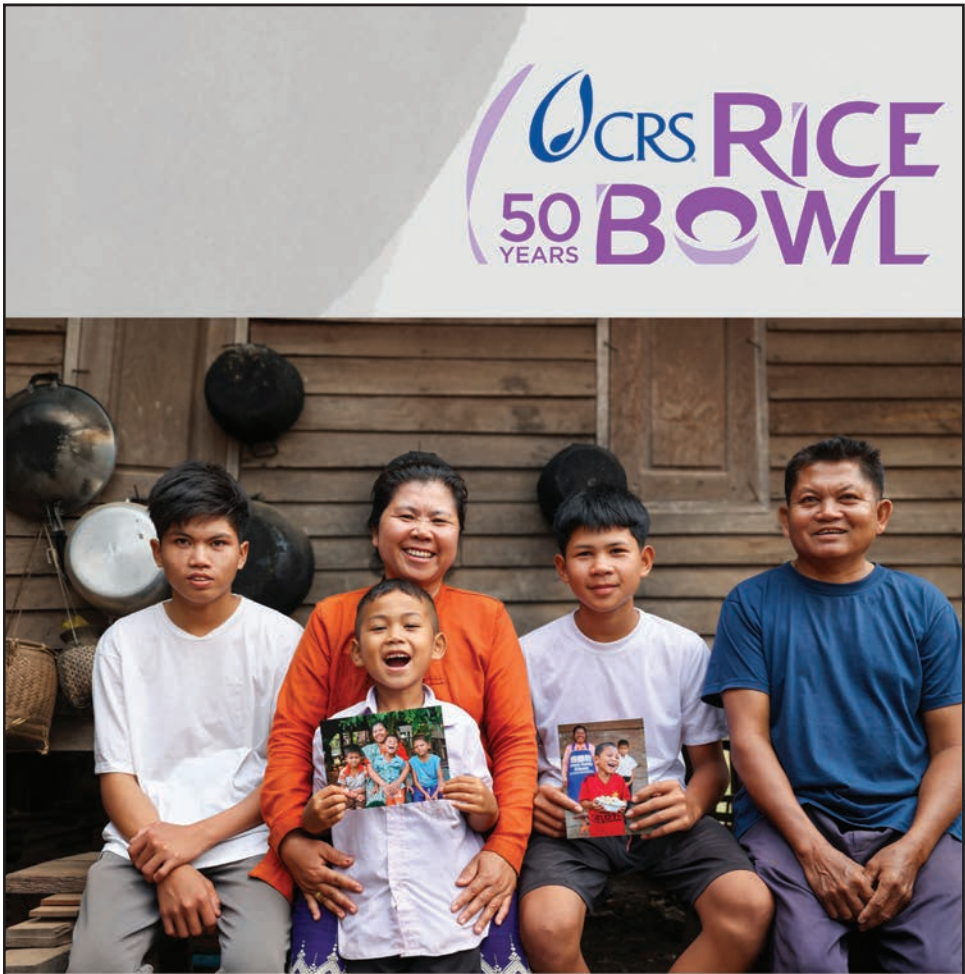
But “if you are a human being ... you have to go through different tribulations,” Ojo said. “God is a very fair God. If it can happen to the poor person on the street, it can happen to the pope.” †



Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, delivers his homily during a March 2 Mass he celebrated at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington for the intentions of Pope Francis. (OSV News photo/Mihoko Owada, *Catholic Standard*)



People pray during a March 2 Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington offered for the intentions of Pope Francis. (OSV News photo/Mihoko Owada, *Catholic Standard*)



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OPINION



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher*
Sally Krause, *Associate Publisher*
Mike Krokos, *Editor*

Editorial



Jesus is depicted carrying his cross in a mosaic of the second station of the Stations of the Cross at St. Thomas More Church on the campus of St. John's University in Jamaica, N.Y. Lent is an appropriate time to reflect on the Lord's healing ministry as we prepare for Easter. (OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Jesus heals us—body and soul

Jesus' healing mission reaches its climax in the events of the paschal mystery—his passion, death and resurrection. That's why the season of Lent, the time when we prepare for the joy of Easter, is an appropriate time to reflect on the Lord's healing ministry. Every healing that Jesus accomplished during his earthly life was fundamentally oriented toward his final and definitive victory over sin and death. As a result, each healing episode in the Gospels is a twofold sign for us: a sign that our Lord's victory over sin and death is already at work in the world, and a sign that he wants us to share in this victory through the healing of our bodies and our souls. In the penitential act of the Mass, we confess—both to God and to our brothers and sisters—that we have sinned through our own fault, and we ask the Lord to have mercy on us. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask that our trespasses be forgiven—as we forgive those who trespass against us. Before we receive holy Communion, we echo the words of the Roman centurion and confess that we are not worthy to receive the Lord. But we also affirm our absolute confidence that the Lord can and will “only say the word and our souls will be healed.” The Eucharist teaches us that we can present ourselves to Jesus for the purpose of healing. The Lord wants to forgive our sins and, at the same time, he wants to heal the ways of thinking and feeling that underlie our sinful actions. Jesus wants us to receive his love so intimately and so completely that the attitudes, desires and virtues of his heart become ours. The sacrament of penance is a privileged place in which we cry out to Jesus, the divine physician, to be our healer. The Gospels give abundant witness to Jesus' ability to heal those in need. In the Gospels of Mark and Luke, Jesus' public ministry begins with acts of healing. Whether of an unclean spirit, of an ailing body, or both, healing is an integral part of Jesus' life and ministry; it is fundamental to who he is, what he says, and what he does as the one sent

by the Father to save us from our sins. Among all the stories of healing told in the Gospels, one of the most striking is the healing of the paralytic who is lowered into a room from a hole in the roof. This miracle of healing stands out because it combines physical healing with the forgiveness of sins—and because it illustrates powerfully the absolute confidence that the paralytic and his friends had in Jesus' healing power. Here's how St. Mark describes the scene: *When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Child, your sins are forgiven.” Now some of the scribes were sitting there saying to themselves silently, ‘Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?’ Jesus knew what they were grumbling about, so he said, “Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or, ‘Rise, pick up your mat and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on Earth”—he said to the paralytic, “I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home.” He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!” (Mk 2:5-12).* This wonderful story makes the total character of Jesus' healing mission clear. Whether we are afflicted with infirmities of the body or sicknesses of the soul, Jesus wants to make us completely whole. And the healing he offers is not temporary or partial. It is a complete and total healing of the whole person. That makes it possible for us to enter into life eternal. Let's take time this Lent to break through the crowded life we live, with all its distractions and obstacles, and let's lower ourselves into the presence of Jesus. If we ask him with the boldness of faith, he will forgive our sins and heal all our infirmities. And once we are completely healed, our response will be, “We have never seen anything like this!”

—Daniel Conway

Be Our Guest/Greg Erlandson

Called not to be served but to serve

Pope Francis' most recent encounter with mortality has captured the world's attention. As of this writing, he remains in the hospital fighting double pneumonia with a guarded prognosis. God willing, he returns to his duties, but it has been obvious that the 88-year-old pontiff has ongoing health issues as befits his age, and he is vulnerable to pulmonary illnesses. The latest bout has ratcheted up the quite predictable speculation of some about who may succeed him. Before we rush off to the betting offices to put our money on a possible *papabile*, however, we might recognize what Francis has accomplished so far in his papacy. His agenda was known from the beginning. In fact, before the 2013 conclave that elected him, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio had told his assembled brothers—all of whom had been appointed by St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI—what that agenda would be. “The Church is called to come out of herself and go to the peripheries, not only geographically, but also the existential peripheries” “When the Church does not come out of herself to evangelize, she becomes self-referential and then gets sick.” This can lead to a “very serious evil, spiritual worldliness.” “Thinking of the next pope: He must be a man who, from the contemplation and adoration of Jesus Christ, helps the Church to go out to the existential peripheries” This is the man the cardinals elected. He himself is, in a sense, from the periphery, the first pope from Latin America. And it would seem part of the divine plan that this voice from the southern hemisphere would challenge the Church to hear the cries of the poor, of the unwanted, of those who feel the Church does not have room for them. ends, I hope his lasting accomplishment will be that he reminded us all that we are called not to be served, but to serve. We are called to be the good shepherd looking for the lost, the good Samaritan caring for the wounded, wherever they may be found. (Greg Erlandson is an award-winning Catholic publisher, editor and journalist whose column appears monthly at OSV News. Follow him on X [formerly Twitter] @GregErlandson.) †

the refugee, the elderly, the teeming masses that the powerful so easily ignore. He has been widely admired, but he is not the liberal darling that some in the news media wanted him to be. They paid little attention to his repeated criticism of abortion, euthanasia and gender ideology. But neither has he been the scourge turning his back on modernity. In one of his most remembered quotes, he described the modern Church as a “field hospital.” “The thing the Church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the Church as a field hospital after battle.” This idea of proximity to suffering

humanity is implicit in the advice he gave to pastors to have “the smell of the sheep,” a typically earthy Pope Francis observation. The Holy Father in his dozen years and counting has reformed the curia, overhauled Vatican finances, brought women and laymen into positions of authority, and appointed cardinals from the periphery rather than just the traditional cardinalate sees. He has worked to heighten Church leaders' appreciation of the sin of sexual abuse. He has also spoken truth to power in challenging rich nations. He has not been afraid to take risks, and he has at times made mistakes, and he has incurred not-very-muted criticism from some of his own back benchers. But his agenda has been to take the Church to those most in need of its succor. Whenever his pontificate

He himself is, in a sense, from the periphery, the first pope from Latin America. And it would seem part of the divine plan that this voice from the southern hemisphere would challenge the Church to hear the cries of the poor, of the unwanted, of those who feel the Church does not have room for them.

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letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including spelling and grammar). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be printed. Letters must be signed, but, for serious reasons, names may be withheld. Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org. †

ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Lent helps us open our hearts to the needs of others

Before the heart of Jesus, living and present, our mind, enlightened by the Spirit, grows in the understanding of his words and our will is moved to put them into practice. (“Dilexit Nos,” #27)

As we begin the holy season of Lent, we are challenged to open our hearts, as Jesus did, to the needs of others. We are challenged to overcome the sin of indifference and to turn away from self-centered pursuits that prevent us from being women and men for others.

Lent is a time of spiritual renewal. It is an opportunity to pause, as Pope Francis reminds us repeatedly in his Lenten messages, “to pause in prayer, in order to receive the word of God, to pause like the Good Samaritan in the presence of a wounded brother or sister,” and to reflect on what it means to be loved by God beyond all measure.

Pope Francis identifies three actions that we can take to root out the sin of indifference. First, the Holy Father says, we can pray. As people of faith, we dare not underestimate the power of prayer which is so essential to our communion with Christ and his Church.

Secondly, we can deny ourselves

the worldly pleasures and comfort that cause us to forget about others and think only of ourselves.

Third, the pope says, “we can help by acts of charity, reaching out to both those near and far through the Church’s many charitable organizations.”

These three actions are an expression of spiritual conversion, a change of heart. They are outward signs of the inner disposition to care about much more than our personal needs, wants and desires. These three actions are the traditional Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. They are not unrelated to one another but are united as expressions of selfless love of God and neighbor.

We pray to be in communion with the triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). We fast because we know that true happiness can never be found in simply satisfying our appetites. And we share generously with others all the gifts we have received from God because we know that we are all one in Christ. The three disciplines work together to help us open our hearts in love.

As individuals, we are too often tempted by indifference. “Flooded with news reports and troubling images of

human suffering, we often feel our complete inability to help,” the pope says. During Lent, we are challenged to ask ourselves what we can do to avoid being caught up in hopelessness and fear.

Pope Francis teaches us that prayer, fasting and almsgiving are especially effective during this penitential season to help us “cast out the idols that weigh us down, the attachments that imprison us.” These spiritual disciplines free us from the burdens of selfishness and sin. Then, the Holy Father says:

The atrophied and isolated heart will revive. Slow down, then, and pause! The contemplative dimension of life that Lent helps us to rediscover will release new energies. In the presence of God, we become brothers and sisters, more sensitive to one another; in place of threats and enemies, we discover companions and fellow travelers.

In his recent encyclical “*Dilexit Nos*” (“On the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ”), Pope Francis offers a sustained reflection on the love that overcomes selfishness and indifference to the needs of others. The Sacred Heart of Jesus provides us with an image of love that is “firm and

merciful, attentive and generous, a heart which is not closed, indifferent or prey to the globalization of indifference.”

Lent is a favorable time for showing our love for God and our neighbor by small yet concrete signs of our belonging to the one human family. As Pope Francis teaches:

A merciful heart does not mean a weak heart. Anyone who wishes to be merciful must have a strong and steadfast heart, closed to the tempter but open to God. A heart which lets itself be pierced by the Spirit so as to bring love along the roads that lead to our brothers and sisters. And, ultimately, a poor heart, one which realizes its own poverty and gives itself freely for others.

During the next six weeks of Lent, the Church provides us with many different opportunities to practice the spiritual disciplines that will help us develop the heart muscles that will allow us to love others as God loves us.

Let’s take full advantage of this season of grace so that our prayer, fasting and almsgiving can strengthen our hearts and allow us to serve God and our neighbor with hearts overflowing with love. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

La Cuaresma nos ayuda a abrir el corazón a las necesidades de los demás

Ante el Corazón de Jesús vivo y presente nuestra mente comprende, iluminada por el Espíritu, las palabras de Jesús. Así nuestra voluntad se pone en marcha para practicarlas. (“Dilexit Nos,” #27)

Al comenzar el tiempo santo de la Cuaresma, se nos desafía a abrir nuestros corazones a las necesidades de los demás, tal como lo hizo Jesús. Se nos desafía a superar el pecado de la indiferencia y a alejarnos de las conductas egocéntricas que nos impiden ser mujeres y hombres que velan por los demás.

La Cuaresma es una época de gracia especial, una oportunidad para hacer una pausa, como nos recuerda repetidamente el papa Francisco en sus mensajes cuaresmales, “hacer una pausa en oración, para recibir la palabra de Dios, detenernos como el buen samaritano ante un hermano herido,” y reflexionar sobre lo que significa que Dios nos ame más allá de toda medida.

El papa Francisco identifica tres acciones que podemos aplicar para erradicar el pecado de la indiferencia: en primer lugar, podemos rezar. Como personas de fe, no nos atrevamos a subestimar el poder de la oración, tan esencial para nuestra comunión con Cristo y su Iglesia.

En segundo lugar, podemos negarnos los placeres mundanos y la comodidad

que nos hacen olvidarnos de los demás y pensar únicamente en nosotros mismos.

En tercer lugar, el Sumo Pontífice nos dice que “podemos ayudar mediante actos de caridad, tendiendo la mano tanto a los que están cerca como a los que están lejos a través de las numerosas organizaciones caritativas de la Iglesia.”

Estas tres acciones son una expresión de conversión espiritual, una transformación del corazón. Son signos externos de la disposición interior a preocuparnos por mucho más que nuestras necesidades, deseos y anhelos personales; se trata de las disciplinas cuaresmales tradicionales de oración, ayuno y limosna. No son ajenas entre sí, sino que se unen como expresiones del amor desinteresado a Dios y al prójimo:

rezamos para estar en comunión con el Dios Trino (Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo); ayunamos porque sabemos que la verdadera felicidad nunca se encuentra en la mera satisfacción de nuestros apetitos; y compartimos generosamente con los demás todos los dones que hemos recibido de Dios porque sabemos que todos somos uno en Cristo. Las tres disciplinas trabajan en coordinación y nos ayudan a abrir el corazón al amor.

Como individuos, muy a menudo nos sentimos tentados por la indiferencia.

“Inundados de noticias e imágenes inquietantes del sufrimiento humano, con frecuencia sentimos nuestra total incapacidad para ayudar,” afirma el Papa. Durante la Cuaresma, tenemos el reto de preguntarnos qué podemos hacer para evitar quedar atrapados en la desesperanza y el miedo.

El Papa Francisco nos enseña que la oración, el ayuno y la limosna son especialmente eficaces durante este tiempo penitencial para ayudarnos a “deshacernos de los ídolos que nos agobian, los apegos que nos convierten en esclavos.” Estas disciplinas espirituales nos liberan de las cargas del egoísmo y del pecado. Tal como lo expresa el Santo Padre:

Entonces, el corazón atrofiado y aislado se despertará. Por tanto, desacelerar y detenerse. La dimensión contemplativa de la vida, que la Cuaresma nos hará redescubrir, movilizará nuevas energías. Delante de la presencia de Dios nos convertimos en hermanas y hermanos, percibimos a los demás con nueva intensidad; en lugar de amenazas y enemigos encontramos compañeras y compañeros de viaje.

En su reciente encíclica, titulada “*Dilexit Nos*” (Sobre el amor humano y divino del Corazón de Jesucristo), el papa Francisco ofrece una reflexión sostenida sobre el amor que supera el egoísmo y la indiferencia ante las

necesidades de los demás. El Sagrado Corazón de Jesús nos proporciona una imagen del amor que es “fuerte y misericordioso, vigilante y generoso, que no se deje encerrar en sí mismo y no caiga en el vértigo de la globalización de la indiferencia.

La Cuaresma es un tiempo propicio para mostrar nuestro amor a Dios y al prójimo con pequeños signos concretos de que pertenecemos a la única familia humana. Como nos enseña el Santo Padre:

Tener un corazón misericordioso no significa tener un corazón débil. Quien desea ser misericordioso necesita un corazón fuerte, firme, cerrado al tentador, pero abierto a Dios. Un corazón que se deje impregnar por el Espíritu y guiar por los caminos del amor que nos llevan a los hermanos y hermanas. En definitiva, un corazón pobre, que conoce sus propias pobreza y lo da todo por el otro.

Durante las próximas seis semanas de Cuaresma, la Iglesia nos ofrece muchas oportunidades para practicar las disciplinas espirituales que nos ayudarán a desarrollar los músculos del corazón que nos permitirán amar a los demás como Dios nos ama.

Aprovechemos al máximo este tiempo de gracia para que nuestra oración, ayuno y limosna fortalezcan nuestros corazones y nos permitan servir a Dios y a nuestro prójimo con corazones rebosantes de amor. †

Events Calendar

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

FISH FRIES

For a complete list, go to www.archindy.org/fishfries.

EVENTS

March 11

Church of the Immaculate Conception, 1 Sisters of Providence, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Taizé Prayer at the Woods**, 7-8 p.m., silent and spoken prayers, simple music, silence, virtual option available. Information: Taize.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952.

March 13

St. Mary Church, 317 N. New Jersey St., Indianapolis. **O Love of God: Lenten Hymn Festival**, 7 p.m., St. Mary music director Susan Powell directs Bethlehem Lutheran Church Choir in Lenten hymns, free. Information: 317-637-3983.

March 14, 15

Theater at the Fort, 8920 Otis Ave., Indianapolis. **“Why We Must Die So Young,”** 7:30-9:30 p.m., play about the White Rose movement in Nazi Germany, performed by

Agape Theater Company, \$20 individual, \$15 student, senior or military. Tickets: artsforlawrence.org/tickets. Information: agapetheatercompany.com.

March 15

Geddes Hall Auditorium, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind. **The Changing Face of Life-Limiting Prenatal Diagnoses: Clinical, Pastoral, and Ethical Considerations**, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., lunch included, \$50 physicians, \$30 nurses, midwives, and other health professionals, \$10 for diocesan/parish staff, parents, students, and clergy. Information, registration: 574-234-0687, leverett@diocesefwsb.org, diocesefwsb.org/pnd-conference.

March 15, 16

Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Retreat**, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. both days, includes light breakfast, box lunch, snacks, all books, materials, Mass, opportunity for confession, \$200. Information, registration: 317-236-7310, marriageandfamily.archindy.org/pre-cana-retreat.

March 16

Ancient Order of Hibernians St. Patrick’s Day Events. St. John the Evangelist Church, 126 W. Georgia St., Indianapolis. **Celtic Cross Blessing, Mass, Parade:** 10:15 a.m. Celtic cross blessing in church courtyard followed by 10:30 a.m. Mass, 11:30 a.m. parade to Indiana Roof Ballroom, 140 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, for **Ancient Order of Hibernians St. Patrick’s Celebration**, noon, plated luncheon, Irish music, raffle for Ireland trip for two, \$40 adults, \$16 ages 12 and younger, register for dinner by March 11. Information: aohindy.com/spc. Registration: 317-258-5159, jhegarty@scecina.org.

West Vigo High School, 4590 W. Sarah Meyers Dr., West Terre Haute. **St. Mary-of-the-Woods Parish Gift Card Bingo**, doors open noon, event begins 1 p.m., 20 games, \$20 before March 15, \$25 at the door. Information: 812-535-1261, elizabeth@shjth.org.

Theater at the Fort, 8920 Otis Ave., Indianapolis. **“Why We Must Die So Young,”** 3-5 p.m., play about the White Rose

movement in Nazi Germany, performed by Agape Theater Company, \$20 individual, \$15 student, senior or military. Tickets: artsforlawrence.org/tickets. Information: agapetheatercompany.com.

March 19

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439, catholiccemeteries.cc.

March 20

Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.cc.

March 21

St. Joan of Arc Parish, 4217 Central Ave., Indianapolis. **Italian Lenten Supper**, 5:30-7:30 p.m., meatless Italian lasagna (pesto or vegetable) with sides, salad, bread, mac-and-cheese, gluten-free option available, adults \$12, seniors \$10, children \$5. Information: 317-283-5508, pto@sjoa.org.

March 23

SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St.,

Indianapolis. **Filipino Mass**, Divine Mercy 3 p.m., rosary 3:10 p.m., Mass 3:30 p.m. with homily in English, every fourth Sunday. Information: mariasolito@yahoo.com.

March 27, April 3, 10

St. Mary Parish, 629 Clay St., North Vernon. **Soup Supper and Lenten Study**, 6-8 p.m., three sessions on Pope Benedict XVI’s apostolic exhortation “The Sacrament of Charity” about the Eucharist, Father Jerry Byrd presenting, free. Information: 812-346-3604, parishsecretary@stmarysnv.com.

March 28-30

Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, 1 Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. **Come and See Retreat**, 4 p.m. Fri.-2 p.m. Sun., for single Catholic women ages 18-42 wanting to explore religious life, free, meals and housing provided. Information, registration: 361-500-9505, jluna@swsmw.org, events.siste4rssofprovidence.org.

April 2

MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**,

5:30-8:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605.

April 4

Women’s Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, womenscarecenter.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass 6 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, msross1@hotmail.com.

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Friday Devotion**, 11:40 a.m., litany, consecration to the Sacred Heart, Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by noon Mass. Information: 812-246-2512. †

Retreats and Programs

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

March 21-23

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Christian Contemplative Prayer: Being Centered on Christ**, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

March 22

Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **Lent with Mary and the Saints**, 9 a.m.-noon, day of reflection facilitated by Franciscans of the Immaculate Father Joseph Michael McShane,

free. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com.

March 27

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Lenten Series**, 6:30-8 p.m., last of four independent sessions, Franciscan Father John Barker and Franciscan Father E.J. Stein facilitating, \$15. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

March 28

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45, includes

room, lunch, Mass and use of common areas and grounds, overnight stay available for additional \$32, dinner additional \$11. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

March 28-30

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Being True to the Path**, 6:30 p.m. Fri.-noon Sun., president of Red Bird Foundation Paula D’Arcy presenting, \$275, includes single room, meals. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

March 29

Mystics and Fellowship virtual program, 9-10:30 a.m., sponsored by Sisters of Providence, last of four independent sessions, register by March 26, \$25. Information, registration: events.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

April 1

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Lenten Evening of Reflection: It Was Not You Who Chose Me, But I Who Chose You—Coming home to God and realizing our life in God**, 5-9 p.m., Father Joseph Moriarty presenting, \$45, includes Mass, dinner and program. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

April 2

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Lenten Day of Reflection: It Was Not You Who Chose Me, But I Who Chose You—Coming home to God and realizing**

our life in God, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m., Father Joseph Moriarty presenting, \$45, includes Mass lunch and program. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

April 4-6

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Living a More Deliberate and Conscious Christian Life: Lenten Weekend Retreat**, 6 p.m. Fri.-noon Sun., Father James Farrell and Mary Schaffner presenting, \$225, includes single room, meals. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

April 10, May 8

Virtual guided meditation series via Zoom, 7-7:45 p.m., every second Thursday of the month through May, offered by Providence Spirituality & Conference Center, free, registration required. Information, registration: events.SistersofProvidence.org, 812-535-2952, provctr@spsmw.org.

April 11-13

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **The Passion(s) of the Christ**, Benedictine Archabbot Kurt Stasiak presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

April 15, 16, 17

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Holy Week Days of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45 per day, includes room, continental breakfast, lunch and use of common areas and grounds, overnight stays available for additional \$32 per night, dinner additional \$11 per meal. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

April 16-20

Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Holy Week: A Time to Ponder and Rejoice**, Benedictine Father Simon Herrmann presenting, \$625 single, \$1,000 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats. †

Evangelization informational event set for March 22 in Indianapolis

The archdiocesan Office of Evangelization is offering an Evangelization Informational Gathering at St. Monica Parish, St. Augustine Hall, 6131 Michigan Road, from 10 a.m.-noon on March 22.

The gathering is an event for anyone who is interested in learning more about parish evangelization teams. Organizers will share a basic approach to encouraging parish

communities and their leaders to share the Gospel.

The event is free, but registration is required at tinyurl.com/Monicaevang25. To access St. Augustine Hall, park in the north (rear) lot and enter through Door 1.

For more information, contact Anita Bardo, archdiocesan evangelization coordinator, at 317-236-1466 or abardo@archindy.org. †

Gov. Mike Braun to speak at Catholic Business Exchange on March 20 in Indy

Indiana Gov. Mike Braun will speak at the Catholic Business Exchange at Northside Events and Social Club, 2100 E. 71st St., from 6:35 am.-9 a.m. on March 20.

A rosary will be recited at 6:35 a.m. followed by Mass at 7 a.m. During a buffet breakfast after Mass, the governor—who, with his wife Maureen,

is a member of St. Joseph Parish in Jasper, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville) —will offer a “fireside chat.”

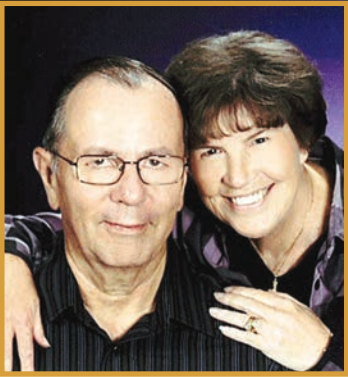
The event is \$20 for Catholic Business Exchange members and \$25 for non-members. Registration is required by noon on March 18.

For more information or to register, go to cutt.ly/CBE-Reg. †

Wedding Anniversaries

LEROY AND ELIZABETH (BUTCHER) BATEMAN, members of St. Ann Parish in Indianapolis, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on March 6.

The couple was married in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on March 6, 1965. †



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

Join Archbishop Thompson on Sept. 23-Oct. 2 Jubilee of Catechists pilgrimage to Rome, Orvieto and Assisi

By Natalie Hoefer

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will lead a pilgrimage sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to Rome, Orvieto and Assisi—all in Italy—on Sept. 23-Oct. 2.

The pilgrimage will include participation in Vatican events celebrating the Jubilee for Catechists on Sept. 26-28, including Mass with the pope; catechist-focused retreats on Sept. 29-Oct. 1; the opportunity to meet Antonia Acutis, whose son Carlo Acutis is scheduled to be canonized in April; plus sightseeing and free time in each location.

As chairman of the USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis,



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

Archbishop Thompson was chosen to lead the pilgrimage.

“Jubilees are a time to focus on repentance, thanksgiving and prayer,” the archbishop notes in a video posted on the pilgrimage registration page.

“They are a spiritual pilgrimage. They give us opportunities to receive graces and grow closer to God.”

In the video, he quotes from Pope Francis’ letter announcing the 2025 Jubilee: “We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart, and farsighted vision. The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire.”

It is in that same spirit that Archbishop Thompson invites members of the archdiocese “to join me as Pilgrims of Hope for the Jubilee of Catechists.”

A spiritual and cultural journey

After traveling to Rome and settling into a hotel, participants will enjoy a welcome dinner and, if time allows, a panoramic tour of Rome.

Day three will include a visit to the

Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel, with Mass at the Basilica of St. John Lateran. Pilgrims will also see the *Scala Sancta*. According to tradition, Christ climbed these “Holy Stairs” during his trial in the praetorium of Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem.

Days four through six will focus on the Jubilee of Catechists events at the Vatican, including a visit to the Jubilee Year Holy Doors at St. Peter’s Basilica, as well as Mass and the commissioning of catechists with Pope Francis on the morning of Sept. 28.

That afternoon, pilgrims will travel 60 miles to the ancient city of Orvieto to see the Chapel of the Eucharist Miracle of Bolsena, then journey on to Assisi.

The first of three catechist-focused retreats begins on day seven, with Mass at the Basilica of San Francesco, a visit to the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore for reflections—led by a team of spiritual directors accompanying the pilgrims—on the call to be catechists and the ministry of “echoing the Faith,” and a visit to the Museum of Memory to learn the story of Assisi’s support for Jews during World War II.

The afternoon includes prayer at the Basilica of St. Clare followed by an optional walking tour on the trails of St. Francis.

The retreat continues on the morning of day eight with Mass at the Basilica of Santa Maria de Angeli, a visit to the Portiuncula of San Francesco and time for guided reflections by the spiritual director team. The afternoon includes a visit to Tili Vini & Olio, where wine has been made for 1,200 years.

The final morning of the retreat includes Mass at the Cathedral of San Rufino. After Mass, the spiritual directors will reflect on the challenges for catechetical leaders of living a “Jubilee spirituality” in daily life. The afternoon includes a visit to the Nuzzi Pottery Factory, operated by a local Catholic family. Pilgrims will then return to Rome for a farewell dinner then fly home the next day.

The pilgrimage is limited to 50 people. While it focuses on catechists, all are invited.

The pilgrimage, organized by Nativity Pilgrimage, costs \$4,990 per person. The cost includes double-occupancy lodging



Pope Francis pauses in front of the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican before opening it and inaugurating the Holy Year 2025 on Dec. 24, 2024. Participants on the Sept. 23-Oct. 2 Jubilee of Catechists pilgrimage with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson will have the opportunity to pass through the Holy Door. (CNS photo/Cristian Gennari, pool)

in first-class hotels, roundtrip airfare from New York, ground transportation by deluxe motorcoach, breakfast and most dinners, airport taxes and fuel surcharges, and a medical protection plan. Airfare from Indianapolis to New York City is not included but can be arranged by a Nativity Pilgrimage agent when registering.

A non-refundable \$300 deposit per

person is required at the time of booking, and full payment is required by June 16.

For more information or to register, go to tinyurl.com/JubileeOfCatechistsPilgrimage.

For information not addressed online, contact Nativity Pilgrimage toll free at 844-400-9559 or e-mail info@nativitypilgrimage.com. †

Archbishop: Pope’s convalescence is reminder everyone deserves proper care

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis’ extended hospitalization and care is a reminder that every human being, especially the frail or elderly, must be given proper care, said Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

“What I would hope is that what we do for the pope we must do for everybody, for all the elderly, for all those who are alone, for all the abandoned,” he told reporters on the sidelines of a news conference at the Vatican on March 3.

That day, Pope Francis’ 18th at Rome’s Gemelli

Hospital for double pneumonia, Archbishop Paglia said the 88-year-old pope was “exercising an extraordinary magisterium on frailty. Not with words, but with his body. The pope is reminding every one of us, all people, starting with us elderly, that we are all frail and therefore we must take care of each other.”

As *The Criterion* went to press, the pope’s prognosis was guarded, which means doctors did not feel he was out of danger, especially since during his stay he has had two respiratory crises, which have required administering supplemental oxygen and a brief time of non-invasive mechanical ventilation.

The archbishop was asked about the Catholic Church’s position on medical treatment and care, a teaching that holds that it is not licit to suspend treatments that are required to maintain essential life functions as long as the body can benefit from them, while it is licit to renounce aggressive treatments or disproportionate medical procedures that provide only a precarious or painful extension of life.

How does the Church’s position apply to a pope, the reporter asked. “What would happen?”

“The pontiff is a person like every believer, so we say that even when

someone cannot be cured, one must always provide care,” a person must always be accompanied, the archbishop said.

A pope would follow the same path for all Christians, he added, recalling Pope Francis’ support of the cessation of aggressive treatments in his speech to European members of the World Medical Association in 2017.

The pope had said that people who are dying must be accompanied by loved ones and the care of medical professionals, but there is no requirement that every means available must be used to prolong their lives.

“Even if we know that we cannot always guarantee healing or a cure, we can and must always care for the living, without ourselves shortening their life, but also without futilely resisting their death,” the pope had said.

Archbishop Paglia was asked what the pope meant by feeling “blessed” in his written *Angelus* message on March 2 when he said he felt “in my heart the ‘blessing’ that is hidden within frailty because it is precisely in these moments that we learn even more to trust in the Lord.”

The pope feels the support of so many people’s prayers, the archbishop said. And it would be beautiful if every man and woman who was hurting could feel the same kind of support from people’s prayers “and not, as is often the case, abandoned and eliminated.”

“How much do you miss Francis at a time like this” when his message makes him seem so alone, the archbishop was asked.

“We miss him so much. That’s why it is good we pray for him to come back soon,” he said, and to “lend his voice even publicly because we need men like him who are really universal and not just partisan.” †



A balloon featuring an image of Pope Francis is seen as people pray around a statue of St. John Paul II outside Rome’s Gemelli hospital on March 2. Pope Francis is receiving treatment there for double pneumonia. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

HOPE

continued from page 1

like an eternity in the darkness, the three friends had been reflecting on the story that U.S. Marine veteran and motivational speaker Josh Bleill had shared during the annual fundraising event for Seton Catholic Schools in Richmond.

Bleill, who had attended Purdue University and worked for the Indianapolis Colts, told the audience that while he served his country in Iraq, a bomb had exploded under the military vehicle in which he was traveling, resulting in the deaths of two of his friends and the loss of both his legs.

And yet the main message that Bleill had shared was one of hope.

He talked about his recovery, including two years of extensive rehabilitation at Walter Reed Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. He shared that while his body wasn’t whole, his mind and his spirit were. And what struck the three friends most of all was Bleill’s belief that, when challenges and tragedies come into our lives, we have to turn to God; we have to rely on him to help fix and heal us because we can’t do those things on our own.

The message especially impacted the 37-year-old Marshall. From the backseat of the Talberts’ car that Tony was driving, Marshall talked about continuing to focus on turning around his life from the substance abuse problems of his past.

That positive energy filled the three friends as they were about a mile from Marshall’s home. A moment later, the drunk driver, who hadn’t turned on the headlights of his vehicle, rammed into their car, sending it and their lives spinning out of control.

‘I knew in my heart that nobody survived but me’

“We had no warning,” Tony recalls. “We were on a rural road. There were no lights on his car. It appears he tried to miss us at the end. He hit the left side of our car. That spun us sideways. Once we hit the guardrail, it launched us into the air, and we went airborne for about 100 feet. End over end. Until we hit a cluster of trees. And then we slid down a steep embankment about 40 to 50 feet on our roof.

“When we did stop, the sound was deafening. Glass breaking and metal crunching. Then all of a sudden, we had this moment of silence. I was afraid to say anything because I knew in my heart that nobody survived but me. Because it was so violent.”

A second later, he heard his wife say, “Tony, are you OK?”

“I said yes,” he recalls. “But I was trapped. I couldn’t get out of my seat belt. I was hanging upside down. She was facing the back of the car somehow. She said, ‘Tony, David is really bad.’ There was no way to get out of the car. It was crushed.”

In that moment, the car’s safety and security system activated, with a voice asking if everyone was conscious.

“We’re screaming, ‘Please help! Please help!’ ” Tony recalls. “Then a guy came down the embankment. He lived on the other side of the creek, he heard the noise, and he knew it was a crash. He grabbed Donna’s hand through the broken window and said, ‘Just pray. Just pray.’

“I could feel the Holy Spirit enter our vehicle, and I felt a sense of calm. I could feel a peace.”

His thoughts quickly focused on Marshall again.

“Even seeing what we saw with David, we hoped he could be revived,” Tony says. “When the EMT first got to us, Donna asked, ‘How’s David?’

“The EMT said, ‘He’s gone.’ ”

‘That hit me like a ton of bricks’

Shortly after the EMT told them that



Since a tragic accident took the life of their friend David Marshall, Tony and Donna Talbert have strived to bring hope to people in need in honor of Marshall. (Submitted photo)

Marshall was dead, firefighters arrived and started cutting through the car to free the Talberts.

“Eventually they got it opened enough where they could haul Donna out on a backboard. I just got out of the car. They took Donna up first. They made me wait until the second board came down,” Tony recalls. “We had concussions. I had a couple cuts. I had to have five stitches. Donna had glass in her leg, but that was it. It was a miracle. We know we shouldn’t have survived.”

Nearly three years have passed since that tragedy on April 23, 2022. In the days and weeks that followed, the couple received an outpouring of prayers and cards from people—thoughtful touches that made a huge difference to them. Still, there were struggles, including thoughts of why they survived. And those struggles continued for a long time.

“There have been weeks on end where we both have experienced dozens of flashbacks each day,” Tony notes. “I went through a period of a couple of months where I just had flashback after flashback all day long. I couldn’t focus. I had to take a medical leave from work.

“One of the mistakes I made was that I tried to fix myself. And when we try to fix ourselves, we just get broken again. But if we turn it over to the Lord, he heals us.”

Tony’s path toward healing was helped by a conversation with a friend, a retired psychiatrist, a few months ago.

“I reached a turning point when a friend suggested that when I have a flashback of seeing David pass away, I should see this event in a different light. He said that instead of seeing a dying David, I should see Jesus lifting him up to heaven from our vehicle, in this light and with a smile on his face.

“That hit me like a ton of bricks. I keep seeing that picture of Jesus raising David up. That brings me joy. That has given me the hope and path to a more complete emotional recovery.”

So has reaching out to the young man who caused the crash that night, including visiting him in prison.

‘I hope and pray for that every day’

“The kid who hit us—the Holy Spirit pulled me together to go to jail to visit him. It was maybe three weeks after the accident,” Tony says. “When I went, he had a one-page letter for me.

“He was asking for forgiveness and saying, ‘I wish it was me who died. I hope you can forgive me, but I can never forgive myself.’ He put in there, ‘I have been lost, lost in hope and faith. I’ve been reading the Bible, looking for answers.’ ”

After reading the note, Tony talked to the man, who is in his early 20s, and listened as he shared details from his life. He has returned to visit the young man two more times, each visit taking him back to that tragic night. Those memories also include what Tony had been reading on the morning of that day—when he looked forward to being with his wife and Marshall for the talk by Josh Bleill.

On that morning, Tony picked up the book, *Jesus Calling*, and focused on a Scripture readings for the day. Psalm 141:8 especially caught his attention: “But my eyes are fixed on you, O sovereign Lord; in you I take refuge. Do not give me over to death.”

Tony asked the prison personnel if he could give a copy of the book to the young man.

“They said yes, so I got him a copy,” Tony says. “Maybe in the time he’s incarcerated, it will help him not be influenced by a lot of evil people, and he’ll come out a better person. I hope and pray for that every day.

“I told him, ‘I forgive you, but your responsibility for my forgiveness is to come out of this as a better person.’ ”

Tony admits that his journey to forgiveness “wasn’t easy.” But he also says it’s been “life changing.”

“Since then, it is so much easier to forgive people,” he says. “If I can forgive somebody who killed somebody I love, I can forgive those little things that happen that maybe I would have held a grudge about before. It’s made anything that’s challenging easier for me.”

He pauses and adds, “We have our faith. I don’t know how people who don’t have faith get through something like this.”

Honoring the gift of life—and a friend

In the time since the tragedy, the Talberts have kept their focus on one main purpose.

“We know that God gave us the gift of life that we have to honor,” Tony says.

Their thoughts have also stayed focused on honoring Marshall.

The couple had volunteered

with him at the Tri-County Good Samaritans Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which serves people in Fayette, Union and Wayne counties. It’s also where Marshall’s mother, Vicky Greer, volunteered.

“David had a troubled past and made his way back home to his mom due to some health issues,” Tony says. “That’s how I met him. I introduced him to St. Vincent de Paul, and that’s what transformed David.”

As the couple drove Marshall home from the inspiring talk by Bleill, his energy was high. So was his willingness to take his involvement with the St. Vincent de Paul conference to another level.

“There was a really positive conversation going on,” Tony says. “We actually started talking to David about being a spokesperson for St. Vincent de Paul. In that conversation, he said, ‘I think that’s something I can do.’ We wanted to start this program called Changing Lives Forever where we help people get out of poverty. He came to the conclusion that he could be that spokesperson.”

In Marshall’s honor, his mother, the Talberts and other volunteers with the Tri-County Good Samaritans have created David’s House in Richmond, a place where the Changing Lives Forever program is offered, among other efforts, to give people hope and assistance in striving for a better life.

“We now know the path the Lord is leading us—to honor our gift of life that God has given us,” Tony says. “This path is to love our neighbor and give them hope. We facilitate this by leading our local St. Vincent de Paul conference and serving the poor.

“Through what was a very dark situation, God has given us a bright light to follow. This inspires us to let the Lord shine through us. He has put the right people in our path at the right time. We want to be pilgrims of hope, and we’re the perfect community to do that—the Catholic community.”

(If you have a story of hope to share, please send it to John Shaughnessy by e-mail at jshaughnessy@archindy.org or by mail in care of The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St. Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached.) †

Trump administration terminates bishops’ refugee resettlement contract

(OSV News)—The Trump administration “immediately terminated” its contract with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for refugee resettlement, effective on Feb. 27, according to letters issued by the U.S. State Department a day earlier.

Chieko Noguchi, executive director of the USCCB’s Office of Public Affairs, confirmed the cancellation, telling OSV News by a Feb. 28 e-mail that “on Feb. 26, the USCCB received notice from the State Department that they are terminating two of the cooperative agreements that fund much of the work we do in our Migration and Refugee Services department.”

The contract had been suspended by the administration on Jan. 24, just four days after President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order halting the U.S. Refugee Assistance Program (USRAP).

USRAP, a domestic program, was established by Congress in 1980 to formalize the process by which refugees vetted and approved by the U.S. government are legally resettled in the U.S. The program is an interagency effort that includes federal entities, the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations such as the Catholic Church.

The USCCB’s Migration and Refugee Services was one of 10 national resettlement agencies working with USRAP.

The USCCB filed a lawsuit against the administration on Feb. 18, arguing the suspension was “unlawful and harmful to newly arrived refugees,” and describing the suspension as “a textbook arbitrary-and-capricious agency action” that “violates multiple statutes” and “undermines the Constitution’s separation of powers.”

Noguchi told OSV News that at a Feb. 28 court hearing for the case, “the judge requested additional briefing in response to the February 26 State Department letters.

“We are preparing the requested briefing, which will be filed with the court next week,” she said. “Since this is an ongoing legal matter, I decline further comment at this time.”

The bishops were notified of the contract’s termination in two Feb. 26 letters—copies of which OSV News has obtained—sent by State Department comptroller Joseph Kouba to Anthony Granado, the USCCB’s associate general secretary for policy and advocacy.

The nearly identically worded letters separately referenced the bishops’ “Enduring Welcome Reception and Placement” program for fiscal year 2025 and their “MRA Reception and Placement” program for fiscal year 2024.

“This award no longer effectuates agency priorities,” wrote Kouba in both letters, citing passage 2 CFR 200.340 of the Code of Federal Regulations. OSV News has reached out to Kouba for comment and is awaiting a response.

Kouba’s Feb. 26 letters ordered the USCCB to immediately “stop all work on the program and not incur any new costs after the effective date cited above,” and to “cancel as many outstanding obligations as possible.”

The letters also noted that “final reports will be due in accordance with the Award Provisions.”

Copies of the letters were included in the Trump administration’s Feb. 27 “notice of change in material facts,” filed in response to the USCCB’s lawsuit.

“The State Department’s termination of the agreements underlying this dispute now plainly put this matter into the realm of a contract dispute seeking more than \$10,000, which falls within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Court of Federal Claims under the Tucker Act,” said the administration in its notice. “That is, the termination of the agreements leaves open only a question of unpaid money under the cooperative agreements, and, to the extent Plaintiff disputes any reimbursement, the dispute needs to be brought in the Court of Federal Claims.”

The notice also asserted that even if the court could have considered “injunctive relief” for the USCCB, “any such jurisdiction is now clearly absent as there is no action the Court could compel—the parties’ agreements are no longer in force.”

Additionally, the administration said the USCCB “can claim no irreparable harm absent an injunction,” since “the only relief now available” to the bishops consists of “money damages should the parties be unable to resolve any payment disputes” through available administrative channels.

In its suit, the bishops said that as of the contract suspension date, “more than 6,700 refugees assigned to the USCCB by the government ... were still within their 90-day transition period.”

Refugees already in the U.S. through the program “may soon be cut off from support, contravening the statutorily expressed will of Congress and making it more difficult for them to establish themselves as productive members of society,” warned the bishops.

Additionally, they said, “as a direct result of the suspension, the USCCB has millions of dollars in pending, unpaid reimbursements for services already rendered to



Refugees from El Salvador help distribute food during a Catholic Charities-hosted party marking World Refugee Day on June 20, 2019, at the agency’s immigration services center in Amityville, N.Y. (OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

refugees and is accruing millions more each week—with no indication that any future reimbursements will be paid or that the program will ever resume.”

The USCCB “has already been forced to initiate layoffs for 50 employees,” with its partner organizations also left to let staff go, due to the conference’s “inability to reimburse its partner organizations,” said the filing.

On Feb. 25, U.S. District Judge Jamal Whitehead in Seattle granted a preliminary injunction blocking the resettlement suspension, finding the Trump administration’s actions in the matter represented “an effective nullification of congressional will.”

Refugee aid groups including HIAS and Church World Service—which also received contract termination notices—have requested an emergency hearing with Whitehead to prevent the Trump administration from making what they have called an “end run” around the judge’s injunction through the termination notices.

The groups also noted in their request that “termination of funding based on purported ‘alignment with Agency priorities’ cannot be justified if agency action is unlawful.” †

ICC

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“Support for universal school choice has long been part of the ICC’s mission,” said Alexander Mingus, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. “We believe that all parents should have the ability to



Alexander Mingus

choose the school or educational route that they believe is best for their children.”

Another measure strongly supported by the ICC did not advance at the Statehouse. House Bill 1030, which called for an end to the death penalty in

Indiana following the first execution in the state in 15 years, never received a committee hearing.

The ICC had organized an early February press conference highlighting the bill, which was authored by Rep. Bob Morris (R-Fort Wayne), a Catholic lawmaker. Archbishop Charles C. Thompson and Bishop Robert J. McClory of the Diocese of Gary were among those at the Statehouse press briefing who emphasized the Catholic Church’s call to respect life from conception to natural death.

“As with every legislative session,

there are setbacks and disappointments,” Mingus said. “We will continue to advocate for a consistent ethic of life, which includes acknowledging that the state need not seek the death penalty.”

Respect for life underscores another area of focus for the Church—the humane treatment of migrants. The ICC is among the advocates speaking out against House Bill 1531, which gives additional tools to the Indiana attorney general regarding the enforcement of sanctuary city bans, as well as penalties for employers who intentionally hire undocumented immigrants.

“In evaluating this and other immigration bills this year, our primary concern is that we as a society and as a country do not have adequate humanitarian and family unity safeguards in place when enforcing immigration law,” Mingus told members of the House Judiciary Committee on Feb. 17. “Enforcement of immigration law, while necessary for the common good, should be targeted, proportionate and humane.”

Despite the concerns raised by the ICC as well as other faith leaders and educators, the measure passed the House on a 64-26 vote. In a recent ICC podcast, Mingus clarified that the Catholic Church does not advocate for open borders but for “the safe, orderly flow of immigration,” noting that the U.S. bishops have called for immigration reform for several decades.

At the same time, Mingus pointed out that the long history of Catholic social

teaching underscores “our responsibility to welcome the foreigner, and to recognize the dignity of the human person in the migrant.”

Church teaching on human dignity forms the basis for the ICC’s concerns about another measure advancing at the Statehouse. House Bill 1044, authored by a lawmaker who spent 40 years as a funeral director in Indiana, proposes an alternative to traditional cremation known as alkaline hydrolysis.

This method, which is currently offered in 28 states, involves dissolution of a deceased body by water instead of fire. At a recent House committee hearing on the bill, Mingus presented the Catholic Church’s views on proper reverence and respect for the deceased and explained that alkaline hydrolysis, like other recent alternatives to traditional cremation, does not meet the Church’s criteria.

“The major difference between these newer practices and cremation is found in what is left over at the conclusion of the process,” Mingus told lawmakers considering House Bill 1044. “After the traditional fire cremation process, all the human remains are gathered together and reserved for disposition. The bone fragments, reduced to powder, can be placed in an urn and interred in a sacred place.

“After the alkaline hydrolysis process, there are also remnants of bone that can be pulverized and placed in an urn,” Mingus continued. “But that’s not all that remains, however.”

Mingus then explained the Church’s objection to this practice: the potentially hundreds of gallons of brown liquid into which the greater part of the body has been dissolved—liquid that is then treated as wastewater.

“A number of [the proposed] newer methods and technologies pose serious problems in that they fail to manifest the respect for the last remains that the Catholic faith requires,” Mingus said. “Alkaline hydrolysis fails to meet the Catholic faith’s criterion that due respect

be shown to the bodily remains of the deceased in a way that gives visible witness to our faith and hope in the resurrection of the body.”

Despite the ICC’s objections, House Bill 1044 passed the House of Representatives by a 70-17 vote and now awaits further action in the Senate.

Another major concern for the ICC is the latest effort to expand the practice of predatory lending in Indiana. House Bill 1174, which narrowly passed the House by a 51-46 vote, would allow payday lenders to issue loans at rates as high as 149%—more than double the 72% rate considered felony loansharking under current Indiana law.

“Predatory lenders are back at the Statehouse asking for an incredible array of new loans that violate our criminal loansharking law and will shackle Hoosiers to long-term, damaging debt,” said Roarke LaCoursiere, associate director of the ICC. “We call on everyone to urge their elected officials to oppose this harmful legislation.”

She and Mingus also encourage the Catholic faithful to stay informed on all the issues currently under debate in the General Assembly—and where the Church stands on them—through the many resources the ICC offers.

“Now is the time to engage on the important legislation still in play at the Statehouse,” Mingus said. “As always, we must support or oppose legislation based on our discernment of Church teaching and the pursuit of the common good.”

To follow priority legislation of the ICC, visit www.indianacc.org. This website includes access to ICAN, the Indiana Catholic Action Network, which offers the Church’s position on key issues. Those who sign up for ICAN receive alerts on legislation moving forward and ways to contact their elected representatives.

(Victoria Arthur, a member of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus [Little Flower] Parish in Indianapolis, is a correspondent for The Criterion.) †

‘We do anticipate a more challenging road for its passage in the Senate, but with the passionate engagement of our non-public school stakeholders, universal choice is definitely achievable in the 2025 legislative session.’

—John Elcesser, executive director of the Indiana Non-Public Education Association



Priest guided by ‘evangelizing catechesis’ in writing book on the catechism

By Sean Gallagher

Serving for the past two years as the director of the Institute on the Catechism, an effort of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), it may be fitting that Father Daniel Mahan has authored a book titled *A Journey through the Catechism: Unveiling the Truth, Beauty, and Goodness of the Catholic Faith*.

But this book, published last fall by Ave Maria Press, was not the product of Father Mahan’s ministry of leading the institute, a role which he started in the summer of 2023.

The book’s origins go back much further to when the priest of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis was a seminarian in formation at the Pontifical North American College in Rome in the mid-1980s.

In 1985 during a meeting of the Synod of Bishops, a suggestion was made that the Church issue a new universal catechism. Just seven years later, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was a reality.

A few years later, as the English edition of the catechism rocketed to the top of bestseller lists, Father Mahan was asked by members of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, where he was serving as pastor at the time, to help them understand it better.

Father Mahan responded by creating a series of six 6-week sessions in which he gave presentations on the entire catechism from start to finish.

During some 30 years since then, he gave these presentations at other parishes where he ministered in the archdiocese and made a series of videos based on the talks titled “A Tour of the Catechism,” produced by Air Maria, a production company of the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate who operate the Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center in Bloomington.

The series more recently led to Ave Maria Press, based in South Bend, Ind., to invite Father Mahan to write *A Journey through the Catechism*.

“I like to tell people that it only took me 30 years to write the book,” Father Mahan said with a laugh. “The catechism

has been part of my priesthood all along, even going back to seminary.”

Guided by an evangelizing catechesis

Like the catechism, *A Journey through the Catechism* is divided into four sections in which the beliefs, worship, moral teachings and prayer in the Catholic tradition are explored and explained.

In those four sections, Father Mahan explores the catechism’s teachings by answering questions about the faith—263 questions to be precise.

He also relates these teachings to the basic Gospel message, called in the Catholic theological tradition the “*kerygma*,” in which is proclaimed God’s creation of humanity; its fall in original sin; its redemption in Christ’s death and resurrection; and its restoration to the life of grace that the baptized are now empowered to live.

“The *kerygma* is foundational,” Father Mahan said. “It is that upon which all of our teachings are situated and where they rest. It’s where we find the real meaning of every aspect of our faith.”

In exploring the catechism in his book, Father Mahan is trying to show what an “evangelizing catechesis” looks like, a way of teaching the faith that the USCCB has been promoting in the Church in the U.S. in recent years.

He described evangelizing catechesis as “forming the mind, the heart and the hands, what we know, our love for the Lord and our expression of our faith in everyday life.”

This approach, Father Mahan said, can be helpful for both lifelong Catholics and those preparing to be received into the full communion of the Church at the Easter Vigil through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults.

“When people get to the end of a chapter,” he said, “they’re asked to think about some questions that relate to how they are getting closer to the Lord, how they are living out the faith and how they are growing in their knowledge, love and expression of their faith in the Lord.”

A book born of decades of parish ministry

Father Mahan reflected on how his book is the fruit of decades of ministry in parishes in central and southern Indiana.

“The book is written in a pastoral style,” he said. “It’s written in a way that

I’m speaking to those who are reading it, inviting them in a personal way to learn more about the life of our Lord and the Church that he founded, and to draw nearer to him and the sacramental life of the Church, especially through the sacrament of penance and the holy Eucharist, to live out that faith in concrete, practical ways.

“That’s what I’ve been doing as a parish priest for 36 years now. That experience of being a parish priest is reflective on every page of the book.”

From that experience and his more recent ministry with the Institute on the Catechism, Father Mahan has gained a good understanding of what Catholics want and need to be formed well in the faith.

“People are realizing that what is being presented to them by the world is not helpful,” he said. “It’s not lasting. It’s not wise. They’re looking for truth. They’re looking for what is really beautiful, what is really good. And they will find it in the One who is the truth, the Lord who is the way, the truth and the life.

“They will find it in the beautiful expression of faith that is to be found in the Catholic Church and in the goodness of the lives of the saints, in the goodness of the life that we are called to live as we strive to be saints.”

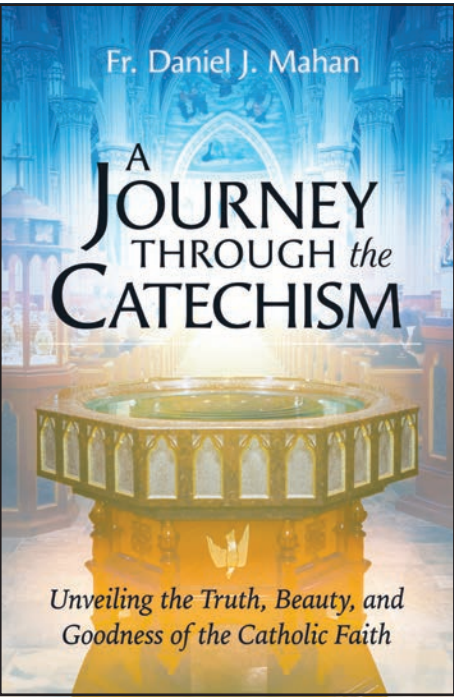
Father Mahan also pointed to the leadership of Archbishop Daniel M. Buechlein, who served as shepherd of the archdiocese from 1992-2011, as a source of inspiration for his book.

He gave credit to him for the “solidification of catechesis in our Church” and in his leadership of the USCCB’s efforts starting in the mid-1990s of helping publishers bring catechetical textbooks and resources into conformity with the catechism.

“Catechetical materials need to be grounded in the truth of the faith as expressed in the catechism and in the life of the Church through which we connect with the Lord Jesus and meet the Lord through the sacraments and the life of goodness to which we aspire, the goodness of one who says ‘yes’ to the Lord and repents when we say ‘no’ to him.”

‘How the Church is going to win souls’

Father Mahan has hope for the future of catechesis in the Church in the U.S. That hope was bolstered in part by



what he witnessed last summer when the National Eucharistic Congress took place in Indianapolis.

“There were so many beautiful talks that were given,” he said. “People were inspired and learned so much, all within the context of the holy Eucharist—the Mass, holy hours, the opportunity to go to confession and then the great sending forth. We were sent forth to bring to others the good news in word and in deed.

“What we experienced in Indianapolis last summer is really a good summary of how the Church is going to win souls and to make a true difference in our troubled world.”

Seeing an event like the congress effectively show forth evangelizing catechesis on such a big stage was gratifying to Father Mahan, who has done much to promote it in his ministry with the institute and in his work on his book.

“In an age of doubt and confusion, the Church and its teachings are beacons of hope,” Father Mahan said. “And if just one person finds hope through this book, if just one person gets an insight and is drawn to a conversion by the Holy Spirit, then it will have been worth all the hours that I have put into it.”

(*A Journey through the Catechism is available in Catholic bookstores across central and southern Indiana and at AveMariaPress.com.) †*

No peace treaty possible without truth, justice, Ukrainian bishops say after dispute

(OSV News)—Ukrainian bishops spoke up as international reaction continued over U.S. President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance’s Feb. 28 televised White House clash with Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

In a message issued on March 2, the primate of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, said the previous week had witnessed continued frontline fighting and “daily attacks from the sky” on Ukrainians cities, and would also “probably go down in history as a period of international diplomatic upheaval.”

“Despite various signals from Western capitals, for Ukraine to win, we must have a cool mind, hot heart and steely will,” Major Archbishop Shevchuk said.

“We testify to the whole world that a peace treaty cannot be signed without truth and justice. Many today are talking about territories in Ukraine, but our Church and our state protect people, their right to exist, their freedom,” he said.

The Vatican’s nuncio to Kyiv, Archbishop Visvaldas Kulbokas, told Italy’s Servizio Informazione Religiosa on March 3 that the Feb. 28 White House encounter had been a “pseudo-dialogue.”

“It seems to me that what was missing in Washington the other day was listening,” he said. “As often happens at a political level, we witnessed a pseudo-dialogue with great difficulty in truly listening to the other, instead imposing one’s own will and vision on the other. And instead, a lot of mercy is needed on the part of Ukraine and on the part of the partners towards Ukraine.”

Catholic Church leaders in Ukraine have warned against possible shift of the new U.S. administration toward Russia and pledged support for their country’s continuing freedom struggle against the invader ruled by President Vladimir Putin.

“All healthy forces should be uniting against this evildoer, who remains unpunished after killing, destroying and inflicting poverty on our people,” said Bishop Stanislav Szyrokoradiuk of Odesa-Simferopol.

“That America, dear God, the world’s hearth of democracy, should be moving closer to this malefactor, this new Hitler of our times, is unimaginable.”

In a March 3 interview with OSV News, he said the Oval Office spectacle had been “unpleasant and worrying” for all Ukrainians, at a time when people were dying in a war launched by Russia.

Meanwhile, a Catholic bishop ministering close to Ukraine’s eastern front line told OSV News that Ukrainians were divided over the incident, with some accusing Zelenskyy of “reacting unwisely” to U.S. criticisms, and others praising him for defending his country’s interests and “not giving in to Russian and American demands.”

He added that many believed the United States had “already deceived us,” by failing to honor security assurances when Ukraine surrendered Soviet-era nuclear weapons to Russia in 1994, known as the Budapest Memorandum.

“Many think President Trump’s policy is harmful to Ukraine—when I talk to soldiers and their commanders, they’re adamant we cannot surrender,” said Auxiliary Bishop Jan Sobilo of Kharkiv-Zaporizhzhia.

“If the Americans force us to hand over territories, even temporarily, everyone knows the Russians will then go further,” he said. No peace established on such terms will be lasting “either for Ukraine or for Europe,” Bishop Sobilo said.

The exchanges took place as Zelenskyy returned to Kyiv after being received by Britain’s King Charles III following an emergency March 2 London summit of European heads of government.

The summit came two days after the Ukrainian leader

was ordered out of the White House without signing a planned deal facilitating U.S. access to Ukrainian rare-earth minerals, and as Russian drones and missiles struck a hospital and residential areas in the northeastern city of Kharkiv.

On March 2, the Ukrainian president said in London that he’s willing to meet Trump if the U.S. president invites him again “to solve real problems.”

“I am convinced that the situation will pass and more important things are ahead,” Zelenskyy said. If the U.S. president invites him “for a constructive dialogue,” and “for serious issues and real, decisive actions and answers—I will arrive,” he said, as cited by Bloomberg.

Bishop Szyrokoradiuk said the London summit had provided new confidence that “there are still countries united in helping Ukraine endure this terrible war.”

He added that Catholic clergy in his Black Sea diocese were counseling residents “not to lose hope and strength,” while continuing to trust “God will uphold justice and lead us to goodness and better times.”

He added that “the Ukrainian nation has also shown it can fight and has been doing so for years. We’ve paid heavily for our determination to remain independent and free, and we’ll continue fighting to stay alive, since we have no other choice.”

Addressing Russia’s Federal Security Service on Feb. 27 as U.S. and Russian diplomats met for second-round talks in Istanbul, Russian President Putin praised the Trump administration’s “pragmatism and realistic view,” in contrast to the “stereotypes and messianic ideological cliches” of previous U.S. officials.

Meanwhile, in a March 3 national address, Zelenskyy said his war-torn government understood “the importance of America,” and was grateful for “all the support we have received from the United States,” but reiterated that security guarantees would be key to any lasting peace. †

SIMPLY CATHOLIC

Lent is a time where God seeks to draw us more fully into his divine life

By Tom Hoopes
(First of two parts)

(OSV News)—We sell our faith short, and so we sell our Lent short. At least I do.

I have spent most of my life thinking of the faith as a series of rules I have to live in conformity with. Don't get me wrong: I knew that the rules themselves were not the goal—they were a path to God's will, and therefore to God's love, and therefore to happiness.

But our faith is not just about union with God's will—it's also about union with Jesus Christ. God is love, a love so powerful he wants to be one with us. He became man to make that possible—and he made the sacraments, especially baptism, to make it happen.

I used to live Lent as a way to build my spiritual muscles to be able to do God's will better. Now I do exactly the same things I always did, but with a new intention: to become one with Jesus Christ.

The grace that flows from baptism throughout our lives guarantees that this is possible. If we cooperate with this grace, the sacrament fully enables us to be drawn into the divine life of the Trinity first of all by receiving the theological virtues: faith, hope and love.

Here is the first of two articles on 10 ways that we can during Lent cooperate more with the grace of baptism, and enter more fully into God's divine life that he seeks to share with us.

Faith: Pray with Christ in the desert to gain his faith

Be explicit about it: Imagine yourself next to Jesus in the desert or imagine him joining you wherever you pray. Jesus is God, so he is outside time and space. Spiritual masters like St. Ignatius of Loyola say we are free to use our imaginations not because it's helpful to envision Jesus with us, but to help our minds acknowledge what is true.

One of the points that Father Mike Schmitz stressed several times in his "Catechism in a Year" podcast is that Christianity is not a "religion of the book," but a "religion of the Word." Faith isn't merely an assent to a proposition; it's a relationship with a person—Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

Think of him this way: God is goodness, truth and beauty itself, such that God's light shines through all we see, as if the surface of the world were a stained-glass window aglow with the presence of God who stands behind it all. Jesus Christ is the light of the world who collects in one place all the greatness we see elsewhere. Spend time next to him in the desert, where he shines brighter than the desert sun.

Lord Jesus, give us the faith that will allow us to see your presence, essence and power everywhere in all the things that you made.

Hope: Fast with Jesus Christ in the desert to learn hope

It is the Holy Spirit, the consoler, which leads Jesus into the desert in the Gospel reading for Mass on the first Sunday of Lent. This reveals what real consolation looks like. The Holy Spirit doesn't console us by telling us that our life here on Earth is just fine. He consoles us by telling us that we have a deeper relationship that keeps us rooted and steady as storms rage.

Lent consoles us the same way. It's true that fasting helps build our self-control while weakening our appetites, and that's good. But the ultimate reason we fast is to connect us with that deeper hope, said Pope Benedict XVI.

"When we attempt to avoid suffering by withdrawing from anything that might involve hurt," he wrote in "*Spe salvi*," his encyclical on hope, "we drift into a life of emptiness, in which there may be almost no pain, but the dark sensation of meaninglessness and abandonment is all the greater. It is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering" that we find hope (#37).



A young woman receives ashes on Feb. 14, 2024, Ash Wednesday, at Sacred Heart Church in Prescott, Ariz. Lent is a time when God invites all his followers to enter more fully into his divine life. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

Fasting takes away our desire to say "Everything is awesome!" and teaches us to say, instead: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me" (Ps 23:4).

Lord Jesus, as we sit with you in the desert, give us a share in the spiritual hope that only grows as our false, material hopes wane.

Love: Give alms to grow in love for the suffering Jesus

One thing you learn as a parent is how unfairly partial you are to your own children. You see your children as more special than others, more beautiful and more deserving of the good things offered in life. This happens because they are yours and share in your image.

The same thing happens with God. Everyone you see is someone he made, in his image and likeness—someone he would become man for; someone he would die for. He loves them each and loves to see you love them, too.

Therefore, to become like Jesus, you have to see Christ in others. Mother Teresa, the saint of charity, shared what she called "The Gospel on five fingers": You. Did. It. To. Me. This is the criteria Jesus will use in judging us at the end of time: "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40).

Lord Jesus, as we give alms this Lent, help us console you in the people with whom you identify so closely that, in serving them, we serve you.

Wisdom: Pray the Stations of the Cross to see with Jesus' wisdom

In addition to the three theological virtues, baptism enables us to receive the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The priest who confirmed me said that if I don't receive faith, hope and love, I should demand them from God. "God promises you these graces," he said. "Hold him to it." It's the same, he said, with wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, fear of the Lord and piety.

To remember the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, I think in terms of my body, starting with the eyes: Wisdom is the gift of seeing things as Christ sees them.

The Way of the Cross prayed in your parish is a great way to gain this grace. Again, use your imagination.

Yes, you are standing in a church, craning your neck to see each station, looking from your book to the tabernacle to the altar server holding the crucifix. But you are also standing in the crowd at Jerusalem that came to see a

spectacle.

Pray to have the vision they lacked, the vision to see through the spectacle to its deepest meaning. And pray to realize you aren't just watching Christ. He is gazing with love on you.

When Jesus Christ sees Pilate on the way of the cross, he sees his dignity and appeals to that. When he sees his mother, he is encouraged by her fidelity. When Simon of Cyrene is seen by Christ, it changes the trajectory of his life. When Veronica is seen by him, he leaves his image with her.

Lord Jesus, help us enter into the Stations of the Cross deeply so that we see with you and are seen by you.

Understanding: Do spiritual reading to think with Christ's understanding

The gift of understanding is the holy insight that lights up your brain. If a passage of the Bible has ever jumped out at you and convicted you, if a homily's words have ever cut you to the heart, if you ever felt like you finally got what life is all about for one fleeting moment—you have experienced the Holy Spirit's gift of understanding.

A sure way to this gift is to share in the understanding of others through spiritual reading.

Catholics in the 21st century have a gift that our predecessors in the faith never even dreamed of: Almost any book we can think of can be delivered to our door this week or appear on our digital devices in electronic form instantly.

We can summon St. Thomas Aquinas to our hand; at any time, we are moments away from reading or listening to the words of C.S. Lewis, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen or Bishop Robert E. Barron. We can deepen our understanding starting now, through a podcast or a spiritual classic.

Lord Jesus, fill our minds with your understanding through our relationship with you and those who came before us in the faith.

In next week's article, I will explore five more ways to cooperate more fully with God's grace during Lent and be more joined to his divine life that he seeks to share with us.

(Tom Hoopes, author of *The Rosary of Saint John Paul II* and *The Fatima Family Handbook*, is writer in residence at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kan., and hosts "The Extraordinary Story" podcast on Ex Corde.) †

Twenty Something/Christina Capecchi

Listening as loving: moving beyond ‘good job’ to ‘tell me more’

I am a compliment-er by nature. Giving sincere, spontaneous compliments feels as comfortable to me as remarking on the weather—and brings me more joy. In high school, friends would quote my catchphrase “way to be.” On my wedding day, I relished the chance to compliment guests on how nice they looked. If I’m thinking a favorable thought about the person I’m talking to, I almost always say it. So the contemporary parenting advice to avoid excessive praise gave me pause. What? Hold off on the “good job”?

Dial back the compliments? It felt counterintuitive. I decided to dig deeper. Sure enough, there is solid logic behind the advice. Excessive praise can make a child reliant on external validation versus intrinsic motivation. What seems to grease the wheels best is to emphasize effort, not outcome. Rather than compliment the perfect score on a spelling test, praise the decision to study every day. Instead of gushing over how realistic a drawing is, credit the amount of time it took to complete the background. The former sparks panic. “Can I re-create this excellent drawing or was it a one-hit wonder?” The latter

feels like something that can be replicated. “Yes, I can control how much time I spend shading in this sketch.” I accepted this bit of advice. I still say, “It looks great!” But now I’m quick to shift the focus. “I love how you took your time on the grass.” Or, “You chose such interesting colors.” It wasn’t until recently when I read an article quoting a clinical psychologist on the topic of praise, that it finally clicked—and I began to see it in a new light. Saying “good job”—my go-to two-syllable compliment—is a conversation ender, explained Dr. Becky Kennedy. It teaches kids to “gaze out” for acceptance rather than “gaze in” on the process they used to accomplish the feat. Over time, Kennedy said, it can lead to “fragile” and “anxious” kids. Replacing a conversation-ending compliment with a conversation-starting question builds confidence, she said. “How did you come up with that topic?” “What was it like drawing that?” These questions encourage a child to gaze in and evaluate a process that was, hopefully, enjoyable in its own right—regardless of the outcome. Kennedy’s final point resonated the most. She applied the approach to adults. Would you like your boss to simply say “good job” after a strong month of sales or would you prefer an open-ended question inquiring about what had worked well that month? Imagine visiting a friend’s house who just redecorated. “I love it! Good

job!” initially sounds positive but ends the conversation. How much more fun would it be for your friend to hear: “I love it! How did you choose that paint color?” There’s likely a story about that paint color, and an open-ended question shakes it out in a way that a straightforward compliment never will. Suddenly, a question like that, posed with genuine interest, struck me not only as an effective reporter’s tool but as an innately Catholic response. As Catholics, we believe in the inherent dignity of each person. Everyone, all walks of life, made in the image and likeness of God. This is a bedrock belief. What we do with that belief is the interesting part—where we can exercise creativity and boost confidence. How we can make a difference. When we ask about someone’s process or uncover their thinking, we dignify them. We tell them they are worthwhile. We aren’t tossing out a quick compliment and moving on. We’re getting to know them better—and, perhaps, helping them recognize something in themselves. Listening is indistinguishable from loving. It works with your child, your cashier, your great aunt and your barista. A tilt of the head, a twinkle in the eye and a three-word request: “Tell me more.”

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

Catholic in America/Jason Adkins

Catholic social scientists are shaping conversation around marriage, family

Catholic social scientists are doing some of the most important work in the public square making a reasoned case for both state and society to promote marriage and stable two-parent families as important public goods. I invited three of them—Melissa Kearney, Catherine Pakaluk and Brad Wilcox—onto OSV’s “Catholic in America” podcast to share more about how their recent books draw together mountains of research to make the case for why people should ignore the lies our culture tells us and get married, stay together and have big families. We know by our Catholic faith—and the commonsense borne from plenty of human experience—that the natural family founded on marriage between a man and a woman is the building block of society.

Yet today we are too often having to defend the goodness of both marriage and family life. And we are fighting for every inch in the public arena to ensure family law does not get completely transformed into the government’s solemnization of contractual romantic partnerships that treat children as consumer goods. It is true that, as Pope Paul VI said, our age requires witnesses rather than teachers. Living the beauty of family life will be the most effective testament to its goodness in law and culture. But we also need to defend the family in words, not just deeds. Today we live in a culture of empiricist skepticism, meaning that we do not believe that we can know things definitively unless they can be measured using statistics and the modern scientific method. So, to reach people effectively, we must often employ the sciences to make the case for things we know by faith and other forms of reasoning. Social sciences, in particular, can help us understand more deeply how and when certain phenomena occur when different variables are present, as well as how those phenomena may change or stay the same when the variables are changed. Fortunately, there are some outstanding Catholics making excellent use of social science in their work as public intellectuals. The secret of their success is that their Catholic worldview helps them formulate the right questions to explore—questions often ignored by others. In his book *Get Married*, University of Virginia sociologist Brad Wilcox gathers the evidence together to push back on the cultural myths about marriage, particularly that it is an obstacle to personal happiness. Wilcox highlights how the evidence shows that married people are almost twice as likely to be happy than singles. Other data underscore the

benefits of marriage to each spouse, the good news of which is critical in countering the decline in marriage rates that have fallen 60% in the last 50 years. After marriage, couples typically have children. But birth rates are declining, and some married couples are foregoing children altogether, as having children is increasingly seen as inhibiting one’s freedom and fun, not to mention costing a lot of money. Some women, however, in the face of this “birth dearth,” are braving the occasional rude comments and having five or more kids. Catherine Pakaluk, an economist at The Catholic University of America, interviewed 55 of these women in her book *Hannah’s Children*. She found that if we want more babies as a society (because we need them for all sorts of practical reasons), then the state has to be supportive of religion and religious subcultures with people who value children as goods in themselves and gifts from God. Once we have children, we need to help them flourish. Still-prevailing cultural myths describe how child well-being is dependent upon the individual happiness of parents, and that kids are better off after divorce rather than with parents in an unhappy marriage. But the data shows that kids are not alright. University of Maryland economist Melissa Kearney describes in her book *The Two-Parent Privilege* why children who are raised in stable, two-parent families (particularly with a married mother and father) have a tremendous advantage in life. Child outcomes across a whole range of measures significantly improve, including educational attainment, long-term earning potential. And there is less likelihood of being involved in the criminal justice system. Professors Wilcox, Pakaluk and Kearney offer us examples of how Catholics can effectively use social science research methods to make the case for the good, the true and the beautiful. We can be confident that, guided by the wisdom of our faith, we can effectively and fearlessly tread into the sciences in the search for truth. More Catholics doing so will help bring sound reasoning to acrimonious public debates and hopefully generate better public policy.

(Jason Adkins is the executive director of the Minnesota Catholic Conference and host of a new *Our Sunday Visitor* podcast called “Catholic in America,” which explores topics related to the missionary imperative of faithful citizenship in our time. You can find “Catholic in America” on the major podcast platforms or visit catholicinamerica.osvpodcasts.com.) †

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Guest Column/Richard Etienne

Like Peter and Paul, approach differences with others with an open mind

I recently heard a homily about the early Church and how St. Paul and St. Peter had to reconcile their different concepts of their fledgling Christian religion. The homilist pointed to three key issues to ponder, like these earliest leaders of the Church approached the key roadblocks in their newly formed community. First, there had to be an environment of prayer. When approaching these issues of disagreement, the most important starting point had to be one of prayer. It could not be about personalities or competition, about producing winners and

losers. It had to be a spirit of listening for God’s message in a situation. Prayer is about surrender, not success. Next, there had to be a spirit of inclusion. Every person involved should feel that their opinion was being considered in the process. The recent synodal process of listening utilized in our universal Church is a wonderful example of this concept. Every member of the Church was invited to share their vision of the specific direction that God is calling our Catholic community as we move into the future together. The more people are included in designing a strategy in any project, the more ownership each person will feel in the overall plan. Lastly, there must be a spirit of mercy. The goal can never be to “beat another over the head” with one’s personal opinion. All sharing should be done within this

spirit of mercy to one another. It requires an openness to first listening, but continues with an understanding that each person’s ideas will be handled very gently. At this point, one might reflect on these ideas when considering any recent exchange of ideas in his or her life. Does this describe the approach that you have experienced in most of the personal interchanges in your own recent experience? Would there be a benefit in changing the approach to dialogue when interacting with others who have different viewpoints? (Richard Etienne has a degree in theology from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad and resides in Newburgh, Ind.) †

First Sunday of Lent/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, March 9, 2025

- Deuteronomy 26:4-10
- Romans 10:8-13
- Luke 4:1-13

The Book of Deuteronomy provides the first reading for Mass on this First Sunday of Lent. Deuteronomy recalls the flight of the Hebrews from Egypt, where they had been slaves. This journey, called the Exodus, was filled with risks and hardships. The Egyptians pursued them. The Sinai Peninsula, through which they passed, was unforgiving, harsh



and sterile. Even so, Deuteronomy is not a story of doom and gloom. It is hopeful. Always ahead is the promised land. God always intervenes with mercy, provisions and guidance.

The people were often unfaithful to and rebelled against God despite his constant mercy toward them. They doubted God. Nevertheless, God came to their aid again and again.

For its second reading this weekend, the Church provides us with a reading from St. Paul’s powerful Epistle to the Romans. The Apostle wrote this letter to the Christians living in Rome, the imperial capital and the center of the Mediterranean world in the first century.

These Christians in Rome, a group of converts from Judaism and former pagans, lived in a culture that was utterly at odds with the Gospel. The conflict was decidedly more pronounced since Rome literally was the center of everything. It had become a dangerous city for Christians when the politics and the law turned against them.

Paul urged the Romans to be strong by uniting themselves to God through faith in Jesus. Strong with his own faith, Paul told the Romans that if they trusted in the Lord, no one would be put to shame. Paul expressly mentioned the resurrection, the miracle by which Jesus, crucified and dead, rose again to life.

Paul finally insisted that God’s mercy and life given in Christ are available to all—Greeks or foreigners, as well as to Jews, who were the chosen people.

St. Luke’s Gospel gives us a scene also seen in Mark and Matthew, namely a story of the temptation of Christ by the devil.

Two figures, Jesus and the devil, stand in bold, dramatic contrast. The devil, so often depicted as very powerful, as indeed the devil is, comes across as indecisive and struggling in this passage. For instance, the devil realizes the identity of Jesus, but he cannot fully grasp what it all means. So, Satan seeks to tempt Jesus not to be faithful to God but to succumb to the lure of material things.

Jesus, “filled with the Holy Spirit,” is serenely in control (Lk 4:1). He is the Son of God. He also is human, however. The devil uses food to tempt Jesus, who had been fasting as a spiritual discipline.

Defeated for the moment, the devil did not relent but only waited for another opportunity to frustrate the Lord’s mission of redemption.

Reflection

Several days ago, on Ash Wednesday, the Church invited us to use the season of Lent to strive toward holiness through the help of God’s grace.

In so doing, it was not asking us to begin a walk along an imagined primrose path. Always frank, honest and direct, the Church tells us what holiness requires. Being holy means turning to God, entirely. We must avoid sin. We must recognize our human vulnerability in the face of temptation.

Evil happens because people sin. The devil is real. Sin is alluring. Falling for its seeming appeal is part of being human. We need the Lord’s perception and strength when temptation comes.

The Gospel reading from Luke reveals to us the fact that the devil is no match for Jesus.

In Lent, the Church calls us to turn to Jesus. If we have strayed from God, as did the Hebrews in the Sinai, God welcomes our return and embraces us.

We must return to God, without qualification, and with the help of his grace, repel sin as the Lord put Satan in his place. †

Daily Readings

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

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

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

Thursday, March 13
Esther C:12, 14-16, 23-25
Psalm 138:1-3, 7c-8
Matthew 7:7-12

Friday, March 14
Ezekiel 18:21-28
Psalm 130:1-8
Matthew 5:20-26

Saturday, March 15
Deuteronomy 26:16-19
Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 7-8
Matthew 5:43-48

Sunday, March 16
Second Sunday of Lent
Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18
Psalm 27:1, 7-9, 13-14
Philippians 3:17-4:1
or Philippians 3:20-4:1
Luke 9:28b-36

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Church law and teaching restrict who may receive holy Communion

We know that Our Lord loves everyone and thus would want to be as close to each person as possible.

Can non-Catholics receive holy Communion since this would help achieve the Lord’s ultimate desire to be within the heart and soul of every human being? My spouse is an Episcopalian and refuses to receive holy Communion with me at Mass because she feels the Church prohibits it. I have been unable to convince her otherwise. Is her position the prevailing one within the Catholic Church? (Florida)



Your wife is correct. Under ordinary circumstances, the Church does not allow non-Catholics to receive holy Communion. But this discipline is not meant to “keep people away from Jesus.” Rather, it is intended to safeguard the integrity of the Church’s teaching on the Eucharist and to respect the conscience of everyone involved.

Starting with the root of the issue, the Catholic Church believes in the doctrine of the “real presence,” meaning that we

sense or in a less defined way than the Catholic teaching.

As practicing Catholics know, the Church has many laws and customs designed to reverence and safeguard the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and in the reserved Blessed Sacrament. For instance, we genuflect before the tabernacle when we enter a church, and we fast an hour before receiving Communion. And in the Latin Catholic Church (commonly referred to as the Roman Catholic Church), children are generally not admitted to holy Communion until they are old enough to understand what and who it is that they are receiving.

Reasoning along these lines, it is common sense that the Church would not want to administer holy Communion to an individual—even another baptized Christian—who was not aware or did not believe that they were receiving the actual, literal body and blood of Christ. This would not be respectful to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, even if such a person approached holy Communion in a spirit of goodwill.

And on the other side of the coin, the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is a fairly radical belief, and it would be unfair and ultimately un-pastoral to “force” this on someone who was not ready to accept it.

Looking more concretely at the Church’s law on the subject, Canon 844, 1 of the *Code of Canon Law* plainly states that “Catholic ministers [e.g. priests and deacons] may lawfully administer the sacraments only to Catholic members of Christ’s faithful.”

Yet this same canon does go on to carve out a few limited exceptions. Most relevant to your question, Canon 844, 4 tells us that Protestants may potentially receive Communion or the other sacraments if they are “in danger of death” or if the local bishops discern that there is some “grave and pressing need.” But this is only “provided that they demonstrate the Catholic faith in respect of these sacraments.”

This sort of situation, where a Protestant actually believes fully in our Catholic teaching on the Eucharist and is also at the point of death or in some similarly extreme circumstance, is certainly not the scenario you would see in an average Sunday Mass.

But if a Protestant did believe fully in the real presence and wished to receive Jesus in holy Communion in their ordinary everyday life, logically it would seem that the best thing for them to do is to begin the process of being received into the full communion of the Church.

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.) †

My Journey to God

Love Ever-present

By Natalie Hoefer

From a still ravine
the late-winter scene
embodies a low point in life:

Barren trees rise
toward metal-gray skies
Like sharp edges of a knife,

While high loom the hills,
Silent and still,
casting a gloom-laden pall—

Not even is heard
From the forest birds
a song or a chirp or a call.

But in silence deep,
life merely sleeps,
for God works in mysterious ways:

Quiet, unseen,
sap flows through trees,
just waiting for sun-lengthened days,

And soon in nests
Where winter birds rest,
eggs will be ready to hatch,

While ’neath brown leaves
begin to reach
green stalks of a lily patch;

Squirrels scamper ’round,
digging the ground
for gifts of last fall’s harvest,

While trees long dead
on the forest bed
offer safety, warmth and respite.

Silent He seems,
like winter streams
waiting for ice to be thawed.

But nature shows
how His care overflows—
trust in the ever-present love of God.



(Natalie Hoefer is a member of St. Monica Parish and a reporter for The Criterion. Photo: In a ravine in Brown County State Park in Nashville on Feb. 24, the heart-shaped hollow of a downed tree serves as a reminder of God’s ever-present love.) (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

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Rest in peace

Please submit in writing to our office by 10 a.m. Thursday before the week of publication; be sure to state date of death. Obituaries of archdiocesan priests serving our archdiocese are listed elsewhere in *The Criterion*. Order priests and religious sisters and brothers are included here, unless they are natives of the archdiocese or have other connections to it; those are separate obituaries on this page.

BOND, Roy A., 67, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Feb. 21. Husband of Gloria Bond. Father of Rhonda, Dr. David, Raymond and Roger Bond. Brother of Linda and Dr. Robert Bond. Grandfather of five.

BURGENER, Beatrice, infant, St. Rose of Lima, Franklin, Feb. 20. Daughter of Philip and Zohie Burgener. Granddaughter of Don and Yolanda Burgener and Glenn and Beth Biren. Great-granddaughter of Marvin and Sally Hattabaugh and Dorothy Brown. Niece of several.

CAHILL, Elizabeth, 98, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Feb. 19. Mother of Mary Mayberry, Cathy Morrow, Jim and John Cahill. Sister of Joan Hopkins. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of six.

DANNEMILLER, David R., 90, SS. Francis and Clare

of Assisi, Greenwood, Feb. 4. Father of Linda Bielawski, Julianne Diller, Jane Stipp, Laura Troiano, Gregory, Jeffrey and Martin Dannemiller. Grandfather of 19. Great-grandfather of 11.

FEDOR, Jody, 76, St. Luke the Evangelist, Indianapolis, Jan. 5. Father of Brian and Christopher Fedor. Grandfather of four. Great-grandfather of one.

GRONOTTE, Rosemary, 90, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Feb. 18. Mother of Cynthia Fleming, Jane Ann Wright, Daniel and John Gronotte. Grandmother of 12. Great-grandmother of 20.

HIATT, Martha, 92, Prince of Peace, Madison, Feb. 18. Mother of Cindy Gardner, Karen Narramore, Bradford Smith, Aimee Walters and Timothy Hiatt. Grandmother and great-grandmother of several.

IAMS, Andrew J., 47, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Jan. 25. Son of Mary Iams. Brother of Amy and Timothy Iams. Nephew of several. (*correction*)

MORAN, David P., 95, St. Mary, Rushville, Feb. 16. Father of Dawn Trent and David Moran. Grandfather of one. Great-grandfather of two.

NIEHUS, Michael T., 75, St. Michael the Archangel, Indianapolis, Feb. 22. Husband of Cindy Niehus. Father of Kathryn Martin, Stacy Smith, Andy Passwater and Kevin Niehus. Brother of Margaret Coker, Mary Ann McGarry, Jim and Kevin Niehus. Grandfather of five.

Fund aims to optimize pro-life movement’s approach, use of resources

(OSV News)—A new \$30 million fund, begun with donations from just three men, is intended to represent the future of pro-life philanthropy. The Pro-Life Venture Fund—founded with donations from Catholic philanthropist Ray Ruddy, political activist Leonard Leo and Princeton University professor Robert P. George, the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence there—comes under a venture called the Life Leadership Conference. The executive director, David Bereit, is the founder of the pro-life effort 40 Days for Life and former head of the American Life League. “I’ve always felt there are more opportunities and obligations to expand the philanthropic base,” Bereit told OSV News.

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:

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

Celebrating a future saint



Thousands take part in a procession in Caracas, Venezuela, on Feb. 26 in honor of Blessed José Gregorio Hernández, known as the “Doctor of the Poor,” after Pope Francis approved his canonization, making the doctor the South American nation’s first saint. The 88-year-old pontiff approved the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints’ decision for canonization on Feb. 24, while continuing treatment for double pneumonia at Rome’s Gemelli Hospital. (OSV News photo/Gaby Oraa, Reuters)

OBERLE, Eleanor, 88, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Richmond, Feb. 23. Mother of Kathleen Oberle Bateman, Rebecca and John Oberle. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of two.

PECK, Doris, 84, Holy Angels, Indianapolis, Jan. 7. Mother of Christopher and Ronald Peck. Sister of Bernadette Easton, Nellie Simpson, Missionary of Our Lady of Africa Sister Demetria, Joseph and Holy Cross Brother Roy Smith. Grandmother of two.

RICHERT, Donald, 85, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Feb. 4. Husband of Loretta Richert. Father of Chanda Daily and Deron Richert. Brother of Linda Schmidt. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of six.

RICHERT, Loretta, 84, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany, Feb. 18. Mother of Chanda Daily and Deron Richert. Sister of Evelyn Stark. Grandmother of six. Great-grandmother of six.

SCHLOTTER, Jerry L., 82, St. Bartholomew, Columbus,

Feb. 14. Husband of Phyllis Schlotter. Father of Rebecca Payton, Karen Stumpf and Todd Schlotter. Brother of Kenneth Schlotter. Grandfather of three.

SHOCK, Joan E., 93, St. Roch, Indianapolis, Feb. 20. Mother of Cynthia Meier, Patrick and Thomas Shock. Sister of Therese Bisesi and Patricia McKeon. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of six.

STARKS, Estelle E., 88, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis, Feb. 20.

Wife of Donald Starks, Sr. Mother of Donald Starks, Jr. Grandmother of two.

WATSON, Sr., Thomas, 82, Holy Angels, Indianapolis, Jan. 9. Father of Ashley Hall, Traci and Thomas Watson, Jr. Brother of LaDonna Mitchell and Dennis Johnson. Grandfather of 10.

WEIMER, Ronald R., 79, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood, Feb. 10. Husband of Lorraine Weimer. Father of Kathryn DeRossett. Brother of Bernard Weimer. †

The announcement gave the venture’s goals as “uniting fragmented efforts, focusing our movement’s approach, optimizing how we deploy resources—and trusting God to lead us.” It also said it “marks a new era of uncompromising resolve, coordinated action, and strategic innovation.” It is not intended to replace fund-raising by other organizations, Bereit said, but rather to fund new targeted pro-life activities at both national and state levels. One of his initial tasks is to find additional donors. Leo, a lawyer and the co-chairman and former executive vice president of the Federalist Society, George and Ruddy did not respond to queries from OSV News. Bereit did not provide a breakdown of the amounts each man contributed. At the Federalist Society, Leo was an adviser to President Donald J. Trump, during Trump’s first term, on the nominations of Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court. Years earlier, he was also involved in promoting the confirmations of Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts. The announcement credits Leo as “widely regarded as the chief behind-the-scenes architect of the U.S. Supreme Court that overturned *Roe v. Wade*” in 2022. Leo, a prolific fundraiser, was also responsible for raising \$30 million to rename the law school at George Mason University after the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. In 2001, Ruddy, a retired businessman, along with his wife, founded the Gerard Health Foundation, which also offers grants to pro-life ventures. St. Gerard Majella is the patron saint of pregnant women. Past recipients of foundation grants include Richard Doerflinger, then associate director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities; activist Lila Rose, who has focused her activities on opposing Planned Parenthood; and Kay Coles James, founder of both the Gloucester Institute and Black Americans for Life. In 2022, George and professor John Finnis of Oxford University filed an *amicus curiae* brief, as the Supreme Court was considering the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, which

argued, as he said in a 2024 speech, that the court “should not only reverse *Roe*, but recognize unborn children as persons who, as such, are entitled to the equal protection of the laws.” “Ideally, we’ll land on two or three major projects to commence,” Bereit told OSV News, with an emphasis on “greater collective impact.” This includes recognizing “the youth and younger generation being targeted by the abortion industry,” and recruiting online influencers. Some ideas of new directions for the pro-life movement were provided in a Feb. 27 Americans United for Life webcast by former U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan. “The battle doesn’t end,” he said. “It just goes to hand-to-hand combat.” Brownback, a former ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, suggested that the movement join with a worldwide effort to renew Western civilization with Judeo-Christian values and an effort to make it easier for women to bear children. “Most of the developed world is in a demographic winter right now,” he said. “We need more kids.” This effort should include reminding women that motherhood “is a noble calling.” Brownback also suggested that the pro-life movement align with groups opposing the death penalty with an emphasis on human dignity. And that emphasis on dignity should include preventing abortions of Down syndrome babies, he said. “God calls us not to judge anybody. He knows their hearts. We really need to ... talk about the nobility of being a person, no matter who you are.” Another locally based goal, Brownback said, should be “to reduce abortions in the African American community by 50% over 10 years.” The message should be “we are here to remove this blight on your community.” The pro-life movement has seen recent setbacks in state elections. In the 2024 elections, voters in seven of 10 states with ballot referendums on abortion voted to codify abortion as a right in their state constitution. “We’ve had 50 years of a pro-abortion culture. And you just don’t overturn that overnight,” Brownback said. †

Border bishops: Gospel values, common good and reform key to immigration

(OSV News)—Catholic bishops along both sides of the Texas-Mexico border are affirming their support for the common good amid the U.S. immigration crisis, while calling for reform of the U.S. immigration system.

The bishops issued a statement during a Feb. 28 press conference that capped a Feb. 26-28 meeting, held biannually for 40 years “to coordinate efforts in our shared mission to proclaim the Gospel,” according to the statement.

This year’s gathering, which took place at Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, focused in particular on “the situation of migrants and refugees,” an issue that “has taken on new relevance with the new federal administrations” in both the U.S. and Mexico, said the statement.

The chairmen for their respective episcopal conferences’ migration committee, Bishop Eugenio Andrés Lira Rugarcía of Matamoros-Reynosa, Mexico, and Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, gave a joint lecture on what the statement called “a pastoral response to the current migration crisis from the border.”

In their statement, the bishops said, “We want to make it clear that the Catholic Church has always been a reliable partner of our governments, of our peoples and especially of all those in need, through processes to welcome, protect, promote and integrate the vulnerable, including collaboration in the resettlement of refugees to achieve their self-sufficiency.”

The declaration comes as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has filed suit against the Trump administration for abruptly suspending its contract with the federal government for refugee resettlement. The long-running agreement was in place under the congressionally established U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

The administration later terminated the arrangement altogether, and filed a “notice of material change” to have the USCCB suit dismissed on the grounds the agreements no longer existed.

In addition, the Trump administration has sought to strip federal funds from nongovernmental organizations, including Catholic Charities, as part of its effort to enforce its immigration policies. A judge temporarily blocked the freeze on Jan. 28. Catholic Charities agencies in general provide humanitarian aid for immigrants, help them reunite with family and obtain employment authorization, prepare them for naturalization and also provide legal counsel to those in the country illegally.

In their Feb. 28 statement, the Texas and Mexico border bishops said, “We are all together responsible in promoting the common good, simultaneously safeguarding the dignity of all by finding the right balance between various human rights, such as the right



Participants in the Texas-Mexico border bishops’ biannual meeting worship during a Mass at Our Lady’s Chapel at Assumption Seminary in San Antonio on Feb. 26. (OSV News photo/courtesy Archdiocese of San Antonio)

of workers and their families to have their situation regularized, the right not to be exploited, the right to migrate, the right not to need to migrate, and the right of all to have their government guarantee security in their own country.”

They added that “for decades, we have expressed our concern that in the United States we have a broken immigration system, which does not correspond to the present reality. We hope and strongly urge our political leaders to fulfill their duty to reform it.”

The bishops also said, “To our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters, we want to say that the Church and its agencies remain committed to the mission of announcing the Gospel, providing living witness to the charity of the Lord Jesus by serving all people with dignity and compassion.”

The bishops cited Pope Francis, who “encourages us and unites us as a Church and as a society to be inspired by the parable of the Good Samaritan.

“In this task that concerns us all, we need God’s help, and we count on the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe,” they said.

In response to a media question at the press conference, Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller of San Antonio said that Pope Francis, in his Feb. 10 letter to the U.S. bishops on immigration, “was encouraging us to continue doing all in our possibilities to support migrants and refugees.

“And particularly, he invited us to accompany [them] properly, knowing that they are brothers and sisters, that they are holding the human dignity and that our relationship to them has to be always with the values of the Gospel,” said Archbishop García-Siller.

Noting the pope had in his letter cited the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), the archbishop said, “We are called to do good always, as we serve God’s people—not only people from a particular country, but God’s people.”

Archbishop García-Siller also pointed out that Pope Francis in his letter had called for “comprehensive immigration reform,” something the archbishop said the Texas-Mexico bishops were “all for,” having expressed the same concern “for the last 40 years.”

Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, responding in Spanish to a media question, said, “The first thing is to try to invite the entire community to recognize the usefulness of people in the parishes, for example, and to offer support.

“I think it is important to point out the importance of spiritual support, the resources of the sacraments and the accompaniment of the community in difficult times, because the immigrant community sometimes goes through moments of great fear and insecurity,” said Bishop Flores, who also stressed “the support of families, accompanying them so that they know they are not alone.” †

New Iowa law defines male and female, removes gender identity protections

(OSV News)—Iowa has enacted a law defining “sex” as male or female, with “gender” as a synonym, while removing gender identity protections from its code, making that state the first to do so.

The move follows a Jan. 20 executive order from President Donald J. Trump for the federal government to recognize human biological sexuality as either male or female.

On Feb. 28, Iowa Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds signed the bill into law, which is set to take effect on July 1.

The Iowa law defines “sex” as “the state of being either male or female as



Gov. Kim Reynolds

observed or clinically verified at birth.” The terms “woman” or “girl” refer to females, and the terms “man” or “boy” refer to males.

“Female” is defined as “an individual who has, had, will have through the course of normal

development, or would have but for a developmental anomaly, genetic anomaly, or accident, a reproductive system that at some point produces ova.”

Similarly, the law defines “male” as one whose reproductive system “at some point produces sperm.”

The law also defines “mother” as “a parent who is female” and “father” as “a parent who is male.”

In addition, the law states that “gender,” when used alone in reference to males and females or their natural differences, “shall be considered a synonym for sex and shall not be considered a synonym or shorthand

expression for gender identity, experienced gender, gender expression or gender role.”

The law also requires the sex at birth to appear on birth certificates, allowing an extension of “no more than six months” for parents to obtain a diagnosis or testing if a medical determination of sex cannot be immediately determined at birth.

The law also strikes the term “gender identity” from the state’s civil rights code.

Under the law, school districts are prohibited from providing any program or curricula relating to “gender theory” or sexual orientation to students in kindergarten through grade six.

In a social media video, Reynolds noted that the law represented “a sensitive issue for some,” but said, “It’s common sense to acknowledge the obvious biological differences between men and women.

“In fact, it’s necessary to secure genuine equal protection for women and girls,” said Reynolds. “It’s why we have men and women’s bathrooms, but not men and women’s conference rooms; girls’ and boys’ sports, but not girls’ math and boys’ math; separate men and women’s prisons, but not different laws for men and women.”

Reynolds said the law was necessary to uphold these distinctions because the state’s civil rights code since 2007 had previously “blurred the biological line between the sexes.” Reynolds said the civil rights code was being used to make the state pay for gender reassignment surgeries, which she said was “unacceptable” to her and most Iowans.

In March 2023, the U.S. bishops’ doctrine committee issued a 14-page statement declaring that surgical, chemical

or other interventions that aim “to exchange” a person’s “sex characteristics” for those of the opposite sex “are not morally justified,” as they counter the “fundamental order and finality” of “the human person, body and soul, man or woman.”

The doctrine committee acknowledged that “many people are sincerely looking for ways to respond to real problems and real suffering,” but affirmed that “any technological intervention that does not accord with the fundamental order of the human person as a unity of body and soul, including the sexual difference inscribed in the body, ultimately does not help but, rather, harms the human person.”

LGBTQ+ advocacy groups in Iowa, such as One Iowa, protested the bill, arguing it would negatively affect people who identify as transgender or non-binary.

Max Mowitz, One Iowa’s executive director, said Reynolds was on the “wrong side of history.

“By signing this bill into law, she has made it legal to discriminate against transgender Iowans in nearly every aspect of life—where they live, where they work, and where they go to school,” Mowitz said in a statement on Feb. 28. “This law sends a devastating message: that transgender Iowans are not worthy of the same rights, dignity, and protections as their neighbors.”

Reynolds argued the state law brings Iowa into line with the federal civil rights code, and is simply meant to strengthen protections for women and girls.

“We all agree that every Iowan without exception deserves respect and dignity,” she said. “We are all children of God and no law changes that.” †

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Future saint? Pope declares Father Emil Kapaun ‘Venerable’

(OSV News)—A Kansas military chaplain who served during two wars is a step further along the path to possible sainthood, thanks to a declaration made by Pope Francis.

On Feb. 24, the pope authorized the Vatican’s Dicastery for the Causes of Saints to promulgate a decree naming Father Emil J. Kapaun as “Venerable.”

Ordained in 1940 as a priest of the Diocese of Wichita, Kan., Father Kapaun served as a U.S. Army chaplain in World War II and in the Korean War with the rank of captain.

The priest’s tireless ministry, marked by constant danger to his life, culminated in a prisoner of war camp at Pyoktong, North Korea, where he blessed his communist captors before dying of pneumonia and a blood clot in 1951 at age 35. His cause for canonization was opened in 1993, giving him the title “Servant of God.”

Bishop Carl A. Kemme of Wichita said in a statement that he joined “indeed every one of faith in giving thanks that Pope Francis has advanced his [Father Kapuan’s] cause by declaring him to be Venerable.

“I encourage everyone to continue to pray for his intercession in every situation so that many more graces and divine favors will be received because of his powerful prayers. Venerable Emil Kapaun, pray for us!” said the bishop.

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, who is president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that “it was a great joy to read the news this morning of the approval by the Bishop of Rome that Father Kapaun indeed sacrificed his life here in order to give life to others.

“At the Archdiocese [for the Military Services], we are looking forward to the next steps in this process to offer another witness of faith for the Church universal,” said Archbishop Broglio.

In its decree—which also addressed

the canonization causes of six other individuals—the Vatican said it recognized Father Kapaun’s “offering of life,” a criterion for sainthood established by Pope Francis in a 2017 *motu proprio*.

Distinct from the criteria for martyrdom and heroic virtue, the “offering of life” (“*oblatio vitae*”) represents a voluntary sacrifice of one’s life in the face of certain, untimely death, accompanied by the exercise of Christian virtues unto death. In his *motu proprio*, Pope Francis described the offering as “inspired and sustained by charity” and expressing “a true, complete and exemplary imitation of Christ.”

Father Kapaun entered the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps in July 1944, and in March 1945 was sent to Burma and India, where he logged thousands of miles by jeep to visit troops on the front lines. He was promoted to captain in 1946.

Four years later, he found himself among the first troops responding to communist North Korea’s invasion of democratic South Korea. He shared the hardships of combat while offering Mass, often using the hood of his jeep as an altar. Father Kapaun also administered the sacraments to the dying at the risk of his life, while retrieving wounded soldiers. In 1950, one such rescue, conducted under intense enemy fire near Kumchon, South Korea, earned him a Bronze Star Medal for bravery in action.

The priest also wrote to the families of troops, assuring them that their fallen soldiers had received last rites from him.

Father Kapaun and his fellow troops were surrounded in November 1950 after Chinese forces entered the war. He initially escaped capture, but then chose to remain and tend to the wounded with an Army medic. As a result, he was taken prisoner, but still managed to intervene to prevent the execution of a wounded soldier.

He encouraged his fellow captives along the arduous march to the Pyoktong prison camp. Once there, he continued to sustain them through his ministry, which



Father Emil Joseph Kapaun, a U.S. Army chaplain, is pictured celebrating Mass from the hood of a jeep on Oct. 7, 1950, in South Korea. While he continued treatment at Rome’s Gemelli hospital, Pope Francis issued a series of decrees regarding several sainthood causes on Feb. 24, including for Father Kapaun, who died in a prisoner of war camp in North Korea in 1951. The pope recognized his sacrifice as an “offering of life,” a category distinct from martyrdom that the pope established in 2017. (OSV News photo/courtesy U.S. Army medic Raymond Skeehan)

was forbidden by the communist guards—for whom he prayed, leading the prisoners to do the same.

Father Kapaun also refuted the guards’ attempts at communist indoctrination, responding to one taunt with, “God is as real as the air you breathe but cannot see; as the sounds you hear but cannot see; as the thoughts and ideas you have but cannot see or feel.”

In 1951, Father Kapaun fell ill, and was forcibly moved to the camp’s hospital, where patients were left to die. He stilled the protests of his fellow POWs, saying, “Don’t worry about me. I’m going where I always wanted to go, and when I get there, I’ll say a prayer for all of you.”

Father Kapaun died on May 23, 1951. The 2021 return of his remains

to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Wichita capped a sequence of seemingly providential events. His body was buried by a fellow prisoner near the Pyoktong prison camp infirmary and repatriated to the U.S., along with the remains of some 560 Americans from the camp, in 1954 at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.

However, the priest’s body—which for years lay under an “Unknown” marker with about 70 soldiers—was not identified until a fellow prisoner saw a picture of Father Kapaun in a Knights of Columbus magazine at a Veteran Affairs clinic in Florida in 2003. In 2021, DNA testing confirmed that the remains were those of Father Kapaun, and in September 2021, he was reinterred in Wichita’s cathedral. †

Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

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

Batesville Deanery

- March 11, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Greensburg
- March 18, 7 p.m. at Holy Family, Oldenburg
- March 21, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora
- March 21, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Joseph, Shelbyville
- April 1, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
- April 4, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Martin campus of All Saints Parish, Dearborn County
- April 8, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Michael, Brookville
- April 8, 6:30 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist campus of St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Decatur County
- April 9, 6:30 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul, Shelby County
- April 9, 6-8 p.m. at St. Maurice, Napoleon
- April 10, 6-8 p.m. at Immaculate Conception, Millhousen
- April 10, 7 p.m. at St. Louis, Batesville
- April 11, 6-8 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Osgood
- April 11, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Aurora
- April 16, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at St. Peter, Franklin County

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the Batesville Deanery are as follows:

- Wednesdays 5-6 p.m. and Saturdays 4-5 p.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, Milan
- Saturdays after 8:30 a.m. Mass at St. Nicholas, Ripley County

Bloomington Deanery

- March 20, 6-7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
- March 26, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude the Apostle, Spencer
- April 1, 7-9 p.m. for St. Mary, Mitchell, and St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, at St. Vincent de Paul
- April 6, 6:30 p.m. at St. Agnes, Nashville
- April 16, 6-9 p.m. for St. Charles Borromeo, St. John the Apostle and St. Paul Catholic Center, all in Bloomington, at St. Paul Catholic Center

Connersville Deanery

- March 19, 6:30 p.m. at St. Bridget of Ireland, Liberty

- March 20, 6 p.m. at St. Mary, Rushville
- April 11, 5:30 p.m. at Holy Family campus of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Richmond

Indianapolis East Deanery

- March 20, 7 p.m. for St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) and Our Lady of Lourdes at Our Lady of Lourdes, sacrament in English and Spanish
- March 27, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, sacrament in English and Spanish
- April 10, 7 p.m. at Holy Spirit, sacrament in English and Spanish

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the East Deanery are as follows:

- Second and fourth Sundays after 10 a.m. Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

Indianapolis North Deanery

- March 23, 2 p.m. at St. Matthew the Apostle
- March 24, 7 p.m. at St. Pius X
- March 25, 7 p.m. at St. Joan of Arc
- April 14, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., no appointment needed

Indianapolis South Deanery

- March 12, 7 p.m. for St. Jude and St. Mark the Evangelist at St. Mark the Evangelist
- March 22, 8:30-10 a.m. at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
- April 1, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
- April 3, 6:30 p.m. for Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove, and Good Shepherd at Holy Name of Jesus
- April 8, 6-7 p.m. at St. Ann
- April 9, 6:30 p.m. at St. Barnabas
- April 16, 6-9 p.m. at Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

Indianapolis West Deanery

- March 27, 6:30 p.m. at St. Malachy, Brownsburg
- April 9, 6 p.m. at St. Thomas More, Mooresville

- April 12, 7 p.m. for St. Gabriel the Archangel, St. Michael the Archangel and St. Monica at St. Monica

Additionally, recurring opportunities for reconciliation in the West Deanery are as follows:

- Wednesdays of Lent (excluding Holy Week), 6-7 p.m. at Mary, Queen of Peace, Danville
- Fridays of Lent (excluding Good Friday): 4-5 p.m. at St. Christopher; 5-6 p.m. at St. Monica; 6-7 p.m. at St. Gabriel the Archangel

New Albany Deanery

- March 12, 6:30 p.m. at St. John Paul II, Sellersburg
- March 13, 7 p.m. at St. Mary, Lanesville
- March 18, 6 p.m. at St. Michael, Bradford
- March 26, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany
- April 3, 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs, Floyd County
- April 7, 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist, Starlight
- April 10, 7 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua, Clarksville

Seymour Deanery

- March 26, 7 p.m. at St. Bartholomew, Columbus
- April 1, 6:30 p.m. at St. Ambrose, Seymour
- April 2, 6 p.m. for Most Sorrowful Mother of God, Vevay, and Prince of Peace, Madison, at Prince of Peace
- April 4, 4 p.m. at American Martyrs, Scottsburg
- April 9, 6 p.m. at Holy Trinity, Edinburgh

Tell City Deanery

- March 19, 6:30 p.m. at St. Boniface, Fulda
- March 30, 2 p.m. at St. Paul, Tell City

Terre Haute Deanery

- April 4, 1-7 p.m. at St. Benedict, Terre Haute
- April 8, 6 p.m. at St. Joseph, Rockville
- April 8, 6-8 p.m. at Annunciation, Brazil
- April 9, 6 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton †