At Lenten penance service, pope announces Holy Year of Mercy

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis announced an extraordinary jubilee, a Holy Year of Mercy, to highlight the Catholic Church’s “massion to be a witness of mercy.”

“No one can be excluded from God’s mercy,” the pope said on March 13, marking the second anniversary of his pontificate by leading a Lenten penance service in St. Peter’s Basilica.

I frequently have thought about how the Church can make more evident its mission to be a witness of mercy,” he said during his homily. That is why he decided to call a special Holy Year, which will be celebrated from Dec. 8, 2015, until Nov. 20, 2016.

The biblical theme of the year, he said, will be, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36), an admonition that applies “especially to confessors,” he pope said with a smile.

Traditionally, every 25 years the popes proclaim a holy year, which features special celebrations and pilgrimages, strong calls for conversion and repentance, and the offer of special opportunities to experience God’s grace through the sacraments, especially confession. Extraordinary holy years, like the Holy Year of Mercy, are less frequent, but offer the same opportunities for spiritual growth.

The doors of the Church “are wide open so that all those who are touched by grace can find the certainty of forgiveness,” Pope Francis said at the penance service, which featured individual confessions. It was part of a worldwide celebration of “24 Hours for the Lord,” in which Catholic churches were staying open for prayer, Eucharistic adoration and confession.

St. Peter’s Basilica.

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At each of the dozens of confessionals the pope removed his liturgical vestments and

See MERCY, page 3

Pope Francis

Teacher’s emphasis on drawing out best in students leads to archdiocese’s highest honor for educator

By John Shaughnessy

Competitive by nature, Amy Wilson has always strived to not only get better, but to draw out the best in herself.

That inherent quality guided her as a student and an athlete, and it continues to guide her as a teacher and a coach who works to bring out the best in her students and players, too. And yet, that driving desire seemed to crash into a wall with a former student she calls Bob.

The story of what eventually happened to Bob—and what happened to Wilson as a teacher—helps explain why she was chosen as this year’s recipient of the Saint Theodora Guérin Excellence in Education Award, the highest honor for a Catholic educator in the archdiocese.

“He was exceptionally low both academically and developmentally,” noted Wilson, in recalling Bob’s arrival at St. Roch School in Indianapolis where she teaches. “Having not spoken until reaching 4 years of age, his speech was sometimes indecipherable, making communicating with both his teachers and peers difficult. All of this was further complicated by his inability to focus.”

Everything contributed to “a very difficult situation for all involved,” according to Wilson. Bob’s fellow students didn’t connect with him and excluded him at recess. Overwhelmed by school and underappreciated by his peers, Bob had discipline problems, which led to “a strained relationship” between Wilson and Bob’s mother. By Christmas break, his parents were considering a move to another school.

While Wilson enjoys competition, that trait is exceeded by the care, compassion and hope that she has for her students. Realizing that something had to change with Bob. Wilson started with herself.

Instead of using the same tried and true methods I had used so many times before, I began to experiment with many different types of lesson plans and assignments,” she notes. “If something worked, I tried to find a way to further leverage it across the curriculum. If it did not work, I turned to some Indiana residents face, page 4.

See WILSON, page 2

See CHRISTIANS, page 3

Life for Catholics in Holy Land involves persecution and economic hardship

(Received note: On Feb. 4-15, 51 pilgrims from in and around the archdiocese, including Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, traveled through the Holy Land. Following is a story about the Jerusalem portion of the pilgrimage. A photo essay and quotes from pilgrims can be found on pages 8-9.)

By Natalie Hoefner

GALILEE and JERUSALEM REGIONS OF ISRAEL—The Azraq family roots dig deep into the soil of Old City Jerusalem.

“Our house is about 300 years old,” says Anton “Tony” Azraq, 39, a Melkite Catholic who has lived in Old City Jerusalem his whole life. “It’s built on top of a previous structure that goes back to the 12th century, to the Crusader time.”

His family name, which means “blue” in Arabic, goes back much further, to the

See CHRISTIANS, page 3

Alfred Ra’ad stands inside the door of St. Francis Store, a souvenier shop in Old City Jerusalem, on March 13. A decline in the number of pilgrims visiting the Holy Land—plus a growing sense of persecution—have led to hard times for Ra’ad and his family. (Submitted photo)
Conventual Franciscan is appointed bishop of Lexington

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Pope Francis has appointed Conventual Franciscan Father John Stowe as bishop of Lexington, Ky.

The appointment was announced on March 12 in Washington by Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

At the time of the announcement, Bishop-designate Stowe was serving as vicar provincial for the Conventual Franciscan Province of Our Lady of Consolation, based in Mount St. Francis, Ind., in the New Albany Deanery and also serving as rector of the Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey, Ohio.

At a March 12 bilingual press conference held at Lexington's diocesan headquarters, Bishop-designate Stowe recalled the phone conversation he had two weeks earlier when Archbishop Vigano asked him if he would accept the pope's appointment.

"My answer was, 'I love Pope Francis, and I will do whatever he asks,'" said Bishop-designate Stowe. "So, here I am."

He later spoke about how he looked forward to ministering to the growing Hispanic Catholic community within the Lexington Diocese.

"Pope Francis speaks frequently about the need to open to an encounter, an encounter with the other, an encounter with the poor, an encounter with Christ through them," Bishop-designate Stowe said. "New immigrants provide a great opportunity for that encounter."

"I have learned a lot from this Hispanic community. They have formed me as a priest and a pastor. The enthusiasm and vibrancy with which they live their faith has made a huge difference in my life. So I look forward to continuing to accompany them and celebrate their gifts the life of the Church.

He added that he moved on to this new ministry with mixed emotions.

"As grateful as I am to Pope Francis for this appointment and as enthusiastic as I am to live out my vocation as pastor in this local Church, I must admit that I will grieve the change in my relationship to my Franciscan community, a community that has loved and supported and formed and encouraged me throughout my religious and my priestly life," Bishop-designate Stowe said. "... There are no words to express my gratitude and appreciation for my friers in the Province of Our Lady of Consolation."

In a statement released on the day of the appointment, Conventual Franciscan Father Jim Ken, provincial of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation, both praised Bishop-designate Stowe and expressed sadness of his loss to their community.

"He is a man of deep faith and integrity, with a sharp and inquisitive intellect, all rooted in a pastoral heart," Father Ken said. "We well understand that he will no longer be able to share his many gifts with our Franciscan friars, we know that the Diocese of Lexington will be deeply blessed"

Bishop-designate Stowe was born on April 15, 1966, in Amherst, Ohio. He earned a bachelor's degree from St. Louis University in 1990; a master's degree in divinity from Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, Calif., in 1993; and a licentiate in sacred theology from Jesuit School of Theology in 1995.

He professed solemn profession in the Conventual Franciscans in 1992, and was ordained a priest in 1995.

For seven years, he served as associate pastor (1995-97), administrator (1997-2000) and pastor (2000-03) of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in El Paso, Texas. He served as vicar general (2003-10) and chancellor (2008-10) of the Diocese of El Paso, while also serving as administrator of Our Lady of the Valley Parish.

In 2010, he was elected vicar provincial of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation based in St. Mary's, Ind., and began his ministry as rector of the Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation.

In Lexington, he succeeds Bishop Ronald W. Gainer, who was appointed bishop of Harrisburg, Penn., in January 2014.

News of Bishop-designate Stowe's appointment "brought me great joy," said Bishop Gainer in a statement. "I welcome him as a brother bishop, and wish him every blessing as he prepares to shepherd the wonderful Diocese of Lexington."

"The appointment of a Conventual Franciscan friar is especially significant as the Catholic Church observes the Year for Consecrated Life," he added.

Bishop-designate Stowe's episcopal ordination and installation are scheduled for 2 p.m. on May 5 at the Cathedral of Christ the King in Lexington.efs

NEWS FROM YOU!

Do you have something exciting or newsworthy you want to be considered to be printed in The Criterion?

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Catholic leaders.

"Each of these schools provided a working model of the characteristics necessary to provide a quality education based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and his holy Church," she says. "This model was focused on a faith-driven community that strived to teach its children the meaning and value of traits such as compassion, empathy and hard work to shape the next generation of Catholic leaders.

"The teaching was always to love others as Christ had come to serve us. It's a way of life that Wilson wants for her students—a way of life she lives every day."

Correction

Gary Bishop Donald J. Hyting's was listed incorrectly among the signatories of "Poverty at the Crossroads: The Church's Response to Poverty in Indiana" in the March 13 issue of The Criterion. ©

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Conventual Franciscan Father John Stowe celebrates Mass on March 13, 2010, at the Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey, Ohio, on the occasion when he was installed as its rector. On March 12, Pope Francis appointed him as bishop of Lexington, Ky. (AP photo)
Gabriel Project executive director honored at Sanctity of Life Dinner

By Natalie Hoefner

When Eileen Hartman and the pro-life committee at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus decided to start a Gabriel Project chapter in 1998, Hartman said she was willing to help but had no interest in leading the group. Seventeen years later, Hartman has received the archdiocese’s Sanctity of Life Award for her tremendous leadership as executive director of Great Lakes Gabriel Project (GLGP) and its many services to help women in crisis pregnancies.

As executive director, she has led the way in expanding the organization’s services to include the 40 Days for Life campaign in the archdiocese, a pregnancy center, a mobile ultrasound unit and a soon-to-launch radio station. The award, from the archdiocesan Office of Pro-Life and Family Life, was presented at the annual Sanctity of Life Dinner on March 11 at Primo Banquet Hall and Conference Center in Indianapolis. Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin delivered the keynote address. He congratulated Hartman “for her work … helping women and families facing unplanned and difficult pregnancies.”

Gabriel Project is a network of congregations providing peer-counseling about abortion, and offering immediate and practical help to women and families experiencing difficult or unplanned pregnancies. Under Hartman’s leadership, the Great Lakes chapter has grown to include congregations in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York and Ohio.

Hartman, now a member of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, admitted being “uncomfortable” when she first heard she had been selected to receive the award.

“I’m receiving it on behalf of all the ‘angels’ and all the folks involved in Great Lakes Gabriel Project,” she said. ‘Angels’ are women involved in the ministry who assist those who turn to GLGP for help during a crisis pregnancy.

“And I especially accept it on behalf of all those women who choose life for their babies,” Hartman added. “They are the real heroes.”

Almost 250 people from around central and southern Indiana attended the dinner in support of Hartman and the pro-life cause.

Cardinal Ritter Jr./Sr. High School senior Alayna Daehler attended with her fellow Ritter Pro-Life Club members.

“It was so good to come and listen to the message of Archbishop Tobin, and to better understand why pro-life and supporting pro-life is so important, especially in today’s society,” she said.

Duane Meyer, father of Father Jonathan Meyer and a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg, made the hour-and-a-half trip to Indianapolis with members of the Dearborn and Ohio County Right to Life group.

“We wanted to come and support the pro-life cause,” he said. “It was a wonderful event. Eileen’s bio is extremely impressive. She is well-deserving of the award.”

The evening also served as a tribute to pro-life accomplishments throughout central and southern Indiana during the last year.

In her address to those in attendance, Rebecca Niemerg, director of the archdiocesan Office of Pro-Life and Family Life, listed many of those accomplishments: the collection of more than 27,000 diapers by the students of Roncalli and Bishop Chatard high schools, both in Indianapolis;

the offering of a conference on decision-making in health care, in cooperation with St. Vincent Health, and the development of monthly faith- and knowledge-sharing gatherings for couples dealing with infertility.

In his keynote address, Archbishop Tobin commented on his recent participation on the archdiocesan pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and how his experience related to the need for respect of all life.

“One of the things that struck me as we traveled throughout Israel was that the Greco-Roman world during the time of Jesus and the years immediately following his death and resurrection weren’t that different from our world today when it comes to how people viewed the sanctity of life,” he said. “In Roman law, abortion and even infanticide were permitted. Jews and the early Christians who believed in the One God—the author of all life—believed that abortion was no different than murder.”

The archbishop touched on other areas in need of respect for the sanctity of life—the sick, the dying, those considering euthanasia and those facing the death penalty.

“We are called to care not only for ourselves, but to care for others,” he said. “When we are discouraged by setbacks in our efforts to foster a culture of life, we need to return to the empty tomb. Death will not have the final word.”

(For information on upcoming Office of Pro-Life and Family Life ministries and events, log on to www.archindy.org/plfl. To donate from the site, click on “Ministries” on the left side menu, then click on donate.)

Mercy continued from page 1

went to confession before putting on a purple stole and hearing the confessions of others.

“God never ceases to demonstrate the richness of his mercy over the course of centuries,” the pope said in his homily, which preceded the confessions. God touches people’s hearts with his grace, filling them with repentance and a desire to “experience his love.”

“Being touched by the tenderness of his hand,” people should not be afraid to approach a priest and confess their sins, he said. In the confessional, one has “the certainty of being welcomed in the name of God and understood, despite our misery.”

“The greater the sin, the greater the love, which the Church must express toward those who convert,” Pope Francis said.

The Gospel reading at the penance service was the story of the sinful woman who washed Jesus’ feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. Every time one goes to confession, the pope said, “we feel the same compassionate gaze of Jesus” that she did.

Jesus’ love, he said, allowed her to draw near, to demonstrate her repentance and to show her love for him. “Every gesture of this woman speaks of love and expresses her desire to have an unshakable certainty in her life, that of having been forgiven.”

“Love and forgiveness are simultaneous” in the story of each person, just as in the story of the sinful woman, he said. “God forgave her for much—for everything—because he loved her much.”

Through Jesus, the pope said, God took the woman’s sins and “threw them over his shoulder; he no longer remembers them.”

Jesus’ encounter with the woman took place in the home of a Pharisee named Simon. Unlike the woman, the pope said, Simon “isn’t able to find the path of love. He remains stopped at the threshold of formality. He is not able to take the next step to encounter Jesus, who brings salvation.”

The Pharisee is concerned only with following God’s law, with justice, which is a mistake, the pope said. “His judgment of the woman distances him from the truth, and prevents him from understanding who his guest is.”

Jesus scolds Simon, pointing out how the “sinful woman” has shown nothing but love and repentance, the pope said. “His judgment of the woman distances him from the truth, and prevents him from understanding who his guest is.”

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How to attract more vocations

Studies and surveys done by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Marquette University in Wisconsin are usually more than interesting. The whole idea of CARA is that the research should be applied in some way for the welfare of the Church.

(Full disclosure: the writer of this editorial served on CARA’s board of directors from 1976-83.)

Since this is the Year of Consecrated Life, it’s both interesting and beneficial to study CARA’s survey of men and women who professed solemn vows in religious orders during 2014. Responses to the survey came from 77 women and 44 men. Some of the men were preparing for the priesthood, but not all.

So what could be learned from the survey that could be applied to efforts to attract more vocations to religious life?

One thing learned was that people who are active in parish ministry can be prime candidates for the religious life. That’s hardly an earth-shattering fact, it should probably be expected. However, the study showed that “Almost nine in 10 [88 percent] had ministry experience before entering those who are most commonly as lector [50 percent], followed by ministry in faith formation [47 percent].” In 10 served as extraordinary ministers of [holy] Communion or as an altar server. Over one-quarter served in a social service ministry, and one in 10 taught in a Catholic school or served in hospital or prison ministry.

The survey might confirm that education in Catholic schools can affect a decision to recognize a religious vocation, but perhaps not. Results showed that 42 percent of those who professed in 2014 attended a Catholic school. However, that means 58 percent did not. So the percentage is smaller than we’d expect.

If we’re applying that research, perhaps we should be doing more in our Catholic schools to promote religious vocations. Doing so is more difficult today because many Catholic schools don’t have professional men or women teaching in them. The CARA survey confirms a trend that has been around for a while: older people are entering religious life. The average age of the 118 people who responded was 37. The youngest was 24, and the oldest was 64.

Those entering religious life are more educated than those of earlier generations. For this year’s class of those who made perpetual vows, 68 percent entered their communities with a bachelor degree (61 percent for the women and 80 percent for the men), and 18 percent already had a graduate degree.

Since older people are entering religious life, it’s hardly surprising that they have work experience before entering. In 2014, 88 percent did, with 61 percent employed full time and 27 percent part time.

CARA’s report said, “Women religious are more likely than men to have been employed in health care, while men religious are more likely than women to have been employed in business and education.”

Obviously, there are a lot of dry statistics, so they have to be interpreted. Sister of Mercy Mary Ann Walsh did so in a column in America magazine. The statistic that stood out for her was that “the survey shows a preponderance of Caucasians in the class of 2014 and a smaller number of Hispanics.”

Fifteen percent of the class identified as Hispanic/Latino(a). Sister Mary Ann wrote, “Young Hispanics need to see their own people in leadership. Hispanic adults need peers to whom they can relate in parish life. Yet two-thirds of this class are Caucasian. One in seven identifies as Asian, and those born outside the United States come primarily from the Philippines and Vietnam.”

Another statistic is also disheartening: CARA said that “58 percent report that they were discouraged from considering a vocation by one or more persons.”

The message that we get from this study is that parishes should renew their efforts to make sure that young adults—whether Caucasian, Hispanic or Asian—have opportunities to become involved in parish life. That seems to be the best way for them to discern a possible call to religious life.

—John F. Finn

Reflection/Sharon Burns

Who are the poor?

Who are the poor?

(Editor’s note: Indiana’s bishops last week issued a pastoral letter on poverty. This column continues discussing the challenges the poor face in our state.)

Did you see the woman at the end of the exit ramp with a sign saying, “Will work for food”? Has a family member recently found their car battery dead and not have the money to get a new one? Perhaps a co-worker could not refill their child’s lunch box because it was just too expensive. Or maybe the child in the checkout lane was wearing only a windbreaker when the weather called for a down-filled jacket.

The most significant myth about poverty is that the poor are “over there,” in society, the poor live among us. If we really “see” the lives of our family, friends and colleagues, we will notice the effects of economic distress. These periods of need may be occasional or short-lived, the result of health or employment downturns. For some, poverty will be an ongoing hallmark of their lives because they suffer from severe mental or health issues.

Poverty is not clearly defined. Because it is often situational, we must consider a variety of definitions that may guide us to appropriate ways to respond.

The federal government defines poverty based on income and family size. The poverty guideline varies by income and the number of people in the family.

For example, the poverty level for a family of four is $24,250. A single person is considered poor if he makes less than $11,770 each year. The federal poverty guideline is a “bright line” measure. One is either in or out of poverty. All families were grouped below the poverty guideline are treated the same, regardless of how deep in poverty they are.

Receipt of benefits such as Supplemental Security Income, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or food stamps) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is dependent upon meeting these income criteria. Many benefits have criteria that allow a family to make a minimal contribution of their federal poverty line—usually 1.5 to two times the federal poverty level.

Beyond these purposes, the federal government uses a measure called a “poverty threshold.” The poverty threshold is also by household size and family size. The poverty threshold for a family will usually be slightly greater than the poverty guideline.

The federal poverty guideline is considered a poor indicator of economic struggle by many researchers, social service providers and advocates. Many families earn above the guideline but still struggle to buy the basics of food, shelter, child care and transportation.

An alternative measure of poverty is called a self-sufficiency wage. It equals the hourly wage required for a family to buy basic life necessities. It does not include the cost of health care or food or housing or education. In essence, this is the working poor—eating out, no sports clubs, no cable television. Income is not the only measure of economic struggle. While families may have a job that pays more than the federal poverty level or even greater than the self-sufficiency wage, they may not have any savings to pay for unexpected bills.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, those whose income places them in the lowest 20 percent of earners have an average of $1,359 in income. They are left with poverty or even greater than the poverty guideline varies by income and the number of people in the family.

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Therefore, some of us will be fasting for as long as 72.5 hours to show support for raising Indiana’s minimum wage. Our temporary discomfort reminds us of the meals of famine that the half- million Hoosiers who work for sub-poverty wages. And we aim for our actions to remind Indiana lawmakers of their moral duty to the poor.

We will fast in the tradition of major religious faiths, and in the tradition of social justice movements ranging from farmworkers’ struggles to the U.S. civil rights movement.

“Join with others in prayer and fasting to experience in some way solidarity with those who suffer the evil of poverty and hunger, and to work toward the elimination of this widespread evil,” says Franciscan Sister Norma Rocklage, one of those who will fast. “The Lord hears the cry of the poor . . . and so must we.”

The Fast for Living Wages includes an interfaith gathering of those who are fasting at 2 p.m. on March 22 at St. Monica Church in Indianapolis, and concludes at 11 a.m. on March 23 at the People’s Assembly at the Indiana Statehouse.

We invite all to participate. If you can give up a single meal, that would mean a lot to someone in need. It could be for the entire weekend.

For more information about the “Fast for Living Wages” or to commit to fasting with us, visit the Pax Christi of Indianapolis page on Facebook or contact Fran Quigley at fquigley79@gmail.com.

The 10 p.m. hour is a hunger wage. As the bishops have reminded us in this groundbreaking report, Indiana workers deserve better.

Par Christi of Indianapolis
El olor a oveja y la voz del pastor

E

l papa Francisco posee un don impresionante para enseñar las verdades universales e intemporales de nuestra fe, de formas nuevas y, a veces, sorprendentes. Por ejemplo, cuando expresó que los matrimonios católicos no tienen que “reproducirse como conejos,” simplemente llamaba nuestra atención sobre la enseñanza acerca del control de la natalidad que profesa la Iglesia claramente en el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica y en la malinterpretada encíclica del Papa Pablo VI Humanae Vitae (“Sobre la vida humana”). La perspectiva tradicional católica sobre la sexualidad humana y la procreación es un vuelo gracios a la imagen tan realista del Papa Francisco de “reproducirse como conejos,” pero no se trata de una nueva enseñanza sobre la fe, sino una manera de expresar de forma nueva y sorprendente una verdad que ha sido profesa por la Iglesia desde sus orígenes.

La imagen favorita—y también asombrosa—del papa Francisco, por lo menos hasta ahora, es la adopción de un niño llamado Juan Pablo II. Esta es una imagen que lo ha hecho ser conocido internacionalmente, a pesar de su pobreza y de su baja condición social. Se apresuraron a Belén, al pesebre donde estaba el niño Jesús, para estar más cerca de él. María y José no les negaron la entrada para quienes eran pobres y humildes. Llegaron a la escena del Nacimiento y, al estar más cerca de Jesús, se acercaron a él y se inclinaron para besarle la frente. Así fue que el niño Jesús les dieron una bendición y esto se ha convertido en una imagen que nos ha enseñado que “el verdadero amor es el que da el primer paso.”

Durante el tiempo de Cuaresma, recordemos acercarnos a Jesús y a todos nuestros hermanos y hermanas, sin importar quiénes sean o cuán distintos sean, a nuestros hermanos y hermanas, sin importar quiénes sean o cuán distintos sean, a nuestro bienestar y a nuestras vidas. Jesús nos llama a ser “el verdadero amor es el que da el primer paso.”

Cuando el ángel apareció ante los pastores que estaban cerca de Belén, a los pastores que cuidaban a sus ovejas, les dijo: “No es esta vez la visión que esperábamos en la historia de la Biblia, sino la realidad que experimentamos hoy en día. La nueva visión que nos ofrece el nacimiento de Jesús nos invita a acercarnos a él, a devolverle el amor que nos ha dado, y a aprender de su amor.”

El buen pastor está cerca de su rebaño; no es indiferente a él, se preocupa por su bienestar y lo quiere de la misma forma que nuestro Dios amóos y quiere a toda su creación.

Durante nuestra peregrinación a Tierra Santa el mes pasado, mis compañeros y yo visitamos muchas ovejas, cabras, ganado e incluso camellos. Nuestro extraordinario guía local, Tony Azraq, un cristiano palestino, nos advirtió que no nos acercaríamos demasiado a los camellos ya que no solamente aparentan sino también muerden. Afrontamos a los camellos con manos vacías, porque no queríamos darles alimentos que este desembarcara en la alegría de la resurrección! 🎆

Traducido por: Daniela Guanipa

Archbishop/Arzobispo Joseph W. Tobin
March 20

St. Joan of Arc Church, 4275 N. Central Avenue, Indianapolis. Rosary, Mass, Cross, Benediction, 6 p.m., Mass, 6:30 p.m. Information: 317-285-5508 or nuuvio@joua.com.

Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. Fish fry, 5-7:30 p.m. Information: 317-687-4478 or info@holysnareindy.org.

St. Lawrence Parish, Fr. Conen Hall, 6944 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Fish fry, 5-7:30 p.m. Information: 317-548-4065.

St. Louis Church, 4650 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Faithful Citizens’ annual spring rummage sale, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 317-638-6860. †

St. Paul Hermitage, 301 N. 17th Ave., Beech Grove. Ave Maria Guild annual rummage sale. 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Information: 317-888-7625 or dlawoller@slake.org.

St. Lawrence Church, 4650 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Catholic Boy Scout Council’s 3rd Annual Youth Min­istries Golf Outing, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Information: 317-888-0873 or kathydenney@holysnareindy.org.

St. Mark the Evangelist Parish, 7577 Holiday Drive East, Indianapolis. Soup supper, “Introduction to St. Catherine of Siena: Walking in the Light of Truth.” Information: 317-529-4373, ext. 256 or diocesanshoes@uk.org.

St. Charles Church, 3354 W. 30th St., Indianapolis. Helpers of God’s Precious Infants, Mass and Divine Mercy Chaplet at 8:30 a.m., followed by prayer at a local abortion center, and continued prayer at the church for those who wish to remain. Motion University, theatre, 3120 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Kevin McIntyre: St. Patrick’s Day, 3 p.m., $27 adults, $4 students, $2 children under 13. Information: 317-354-6888 or tickets@marian.edu.


March 21
Indianapolis Marriott Downtown, 350 W. Maryland St., Indianapolis. Indiana Catholic Women’s Conference, speakers Danielle Bean, Fr. James Blunt, O.L.T., Anne Karo, Yvonne O’Brien. Mass celebrated by Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, confirmation, adoration, lunch included. $50 per person, for groups of 10 or more, $25 per student. Parking $5 at Government Parking Garage, corner of Washington and West streets. Register online at www.indianacatholicwomen.com, or call 317-557-4200 or indynvr@gmail.com.

All Saints Parish, 8044 Yorkridge Road, Yorkville. Fish fry, 4:30-7 p.m. Information: 317-576-4302 or parishoffice@etczone.com.

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King Church, 833 S. Triangule Road. Pauli. Stations of the Cross, 4:30 p.m. Information: 317-936-4568 or ChristinaKinas1948@gmail.com.

March 22
Indianapolis Faithful Citizens, 3 p.m., $7.50 adults, $4 students, $2 children under 13. Information: 317-330-6588 or tickets@marian.edu.


March 23

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All Saints Parish, 8044 Yorkridge Road, Yorkville. Fish fry, 4:30-7 p.m. Information: 317-638-3002 or parishoffice@etczone.com.

March 27-29

New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministries to host Bowl-a-thon on April 4
New Albany Deanery Catholic Youth Ministries will host a Jubilee Bowl-a-thon Celebration at Eastern Lakes, 825 Eastern Blvd., in Clarksville at 1 p.m. on April 4. All proceeds go to local charities, and to help the group’s Appalachian Mission. The event is part of a year of celebrations marking the group’s 50th jubilee.

Members of parishes in the New Albany Deanery can obtain a Bowl-a-thon bank from their parish youth minister or from Catholic Youth Ministries. Fill the bank through Lenten almsgiving, then bring the bank to Eastern Lanes on the day of the event. The bank, plus an additional $5 per person or $20 per family, earns three games of bowling plus shoe rental.

Register online in advance by logging on to www.nadyouth.org, or call the Catholic Youth Ministries office at 812-923-8355. †

Archbishop Tobin to celebrate Asian and Pacific Islander Mass on April 12
Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin will celebrate a special Mass for archdiocesan members of Asian and Pacific Island heritage at St. Joseph the King Church, 833 S. Triangular Road, Pauli. Stations of the Cross, 4:30 p.m. Information: 317-936-4568 or ChristinaKinas1948@gmail.com.

All Saints Parish, 8044 Yorkridge Road, Yorkville. Fish fry, 4:30-7 p.m. Information: 317-638-3002 or parishoffice@etczone.com.

March 27-29
Tour guide Tony Azraq provides an explanation to the pilgrims at the excavation remains of the house of St. Peter in Capernaum in Israel on Feb. 9. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

"CAUGHT holding the stick in the middle," like Bethlehem dropping from an 80 percent population of Christians 20 years ago down to 20-25 percent today. But Azraq has no intentions of leaving.

"As a Catholic, I believe that I am very important in this part of the world because even though we're a minority, that's what keeps the churches open as churches and not museums," he asserts.

Azraq spoke of the Israeli town of Nain, where the Christian population dwindled and the Catholic church was closed due to lack of members.

"We don't want this to happen again in other important sites, specifically in Jerusalem at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and in Bethlehem," says Azraq.

"We call it a mission for us to keep these places open and see the place where Jesus was born and where Jesus was raised from the dead."

'Save our existence in the land of Jesus'

Old City Jerusalem St. Francis Store souvenir shop owner Alfred Ra'ad was warm and friendly when the archdiocesan pilgrims patronized his store just inside the city's New Gate.

But the 56-year-old married father of three seemed tired.

In an e-mail exchange with The Criterion, he explained the reason for his condition.

"I feel very persecuted from Jews and Muslims," the Roman Catholic man admits. "I feel treated as lower class in the city. There is discrimination in religion, social cooperation and jobs, high rent of apartments by Muslims, diverse heavy taxes and low income."

Ra'ad's income didn't used to be so low. He writes that his store owned by his family since 1960, used to bring in more than $500 each day. But in the last four years, he states, daily sales range from $20-$150.

Standing against the decrease in sales to a tramway that was built outside the New Gate, eliminating parking for buses that dropped off the pilgrims so vital to his business.

But the road takes much deeper, writes Ra'ad, back to 1987 with the first Palestinian Intifada, or uprising, against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.

Tour guide Tony Azraq, a Palestinian Melkite Catholic, recites the Our Father in Hebrew at the Church of the Pater Noster on the Mount of Olives as the pilgrims listen on Feb. 10. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

"Most of the Christians are deciding to leave to find a better life somewhere else," says Azraq, resulting in towns

In the 90s, we were more free to show our crosses in the market, wear your cross outside," he explains. "Nowadays, most Christians are hiding their identity when they are outside of the Christian area because they don't want to be persecuted."

Hiding one's Christian identity was not always the practice in the Holy Land, says Azraq, a married father of four.

"Before the [Jews, Muslims and Christians] co-existed in a better way," he recalls. "Up to the 1990s, we didn't feel much of this racism or persecution.

"The last 15 years, since the United States invasion of Iraq, it has been different. When president [George W.] Bush called it a Crusader war by mistake [at Camp David, Md., on Sept. 16, 2001], most of the Muslims started looking at us as Crusaders and that we shouldn't be here. Since then started more of the fanaticism.

"And before, in the Jewish side, they look at us like we are Gentiles."

Azraq says Christians are "caught holding the stick in the middle," being easy targets to side with Muslims because "the Islamic movement is becoming more terrorist."

According to Azraq, Christians in Israel simply "ask to be left alone, to keep our freedom of worship without having to be converted."

But being Christian is costly—literally.

"In my time, elementary school for Catholic kids used to be free," Azraq says. "Nowadays, public schools are expensive, he admits.

But Christian schools are now expensive, he admits.

"Most cannot afford to educate more than one or two children on the other side are having fewer children.

The high cost of education—and high cost of living in Israel in general—is exacerbated by the lack of income coming by only part time jobs and businesses operated by those of their own faith, says Azraq. In a land boasting a mere 2 percent population of Christians, the financial strain is often too much.

"Most of the Christians are deciding to leave to find a better life somewhere else," says Azraq, resulting in towns

His insights on the history, archaeology and culture of the region provided the pilgrims a new perspective on Scripture.

Below are some of those insights to help readers of The Criterion share in the knowledge gained on the pilgrimage:

- **During the time of Christ, Caesarea Philippi was a large city built upon a bluff with a rock face about 500 feet long and 100 feet wide. According to Matthew 16:13-18, this is where Christ declared that Peter was ‘rock’ and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld will not prevail against it.'**

- **Standing against the base of the rock in the time of Christ was a temple built to the god Pan where children were sacrificed. Azraq believes knowledge about this location can shed light on Jesus’ statement.**

- **‘So Jesus said Peter was like the huge rock of Caesarea Philippi, but no gate of hell would stand against the rock of Peter like the evil temple that stood against the rock [of Caesarea Philippi].’**

- **At the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth that houses the underground room where it is believed the Annunciation took place, Azraq explained that one of the uses such rooms was for women during times when they were considered ritually impure once a month. He offered an explanation as to why Mary was “troubled” at the words of the angel Gabriel, as stated in Luke 1:29.**

- **Forget about angel wings and halos. There was only one way into these underground rooms. Imagine you have a basement, and there’s only one set of stairs leading to it, and they lead from the kitchen. And you go up the stairs, leaving the basement empty, to get a drink from the fridge. You’re the only one there. And you go back downstairs, and you see a man standing down there, and he says, ‘Hi!’ A woman alone in that room, you would be terrified!”**

*According to Azraq, springs existed in Jericho in the time of Christ, making the land fertile and plentiful. Indeed, Jericho is a stretch of green in an otherwise barren area. Looming over Jericho is the Mount of Temptation, an almost lifeless desert mountain. Azraq explained why, if this was indeed where Christ was tempted for 40 days, his suffering would have been greater on the mountain than in a flat desert.

‘You hear Jesus went to the desert and you think there isn’t much there to tempt him. If you’re locked in a room with no food, there is nothing to tempt you. But he came to this desert mountain with all that he could not have lying right below him in full view, like locking yourself in a room full of everything you like to eat while trying to fast. This would be the hard temptation.”

- **Azraq explained a custom during Roman times in which tears would be collected in a small vial throughout one’s life and placed in their tomb upon death. Azraq attested to finding such vials in excavated tombs. He believes this could shed light on Luke 7:38, which describes how a sinful woman washed Jesus’ feet with her tears.**

- **‘She likely used the vial of her tears, giving all her sorrows and joys in life to Christ, giving her life, herself, to Christ.’**

Next week's story will look at the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL). The organization, whose public relations arm is operated through Tekton Ministries in association with the FFHL, “They gave my daughter a full scholarship [to college], which helped to have less expenses,” writes Ra'ad. "Truly, they help students to learn, to obtain a career for future life and to serve the Christian community here.”

He supports the work of the FFHL not just because of the scholarship, but because they "help financially to save our existence in the town of Jerusalem in the land of Jesus," adding that "only about 6,000 Roman Catholics [remain] in Jerusalem.”

Ro’ad hopes to meet more members of the archdiocese face to face in the Holy Land. He encourages priests who [visit] to direct pilgrims to the “last 40 Christian souvenir shop, which helps to be left alone, to keep our freedom of worship without having to be converted.”

"They need direct help and support so as not to emigrate more [to the point of no more Christians in the Holy Land."

(For more information about the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, log on to www.ffhl.org Last week’s story and previous stories about the Holy Land can be found online at www.archdiocese.org/criterion/local/2015/03-1/holyland.html)
Jerusalem portion of the 2015 Archdiocese of Indianapolis pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Pilgrims reflect on visit to Jerusalem

“When we had Mass at the Garden [of Gethsemane], when I went in and saw all the sites, the whole thing just overwhelmed me.”
—Anne Kuhn, a member of St. Barnabas Parish in Indianapolis

“Looking at the stones that Jesus actually walked on, I stared and marveled at the fact for a very long time, just knowing that he walked those stones. It was very powerful.”
—Elizabeth “Lizzy” Maher, a member of Immaculate Conception Parish in Wanatah in the Diocese of Gary, Ind.

“Seeing the Our Father written in so many languages was just amazing. Our guide Tony read the Our Father in Hebrew and the Chaldean, the oldest language. That was so impressive.”
—Father Joseph Newton, sacramental minister for the Indianapolis Archdiocese’s Office of Liturgical Services and priest in residence at St. Joseph Church in Fishers in the Diocese of Lafayette, Ind.

“I think the celebration of the Eucharist on the top of Golgotha was a moving experience for all of us. It could have been among the people, and I could certainly feel it myself.”
—Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin

“This whole pilgrimage we were witnesses to the archbishop, and Father Joe [Newton], too, on our leader and servent, both leading and serving us. I think it is important our leaders were there with us in the whole pilgrimage.”
—Natalie Hoefer, a member of St. Lawrence Parish in St. Joseph, Ind.

“Most inspiring was just going into the churches, sitting and meditating. They’re all so beautiful. I’m so thankful I was able to come.”
—Cathy Flood, a member of St. Malachi Parish in Resources

“The last week has been amazing. I was unsure about coming —I thought, ‘What am I thinking? I can’t even go home.’ But it’s been awesome, especially getting time to spend with my family.”
—Elizabeth “Lizzy” Maher, a member of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis

“With experts we were going into the choir, sitting and meditating. ’I’m so thankful I was able to come.’ ”
—Joann Pierret, a member of Sacred Heart Parish in Worthing in the Diocese of Gary, Ind.

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“We are in a holy place, to know that we stood on the place where Jesus was crucified. I just keep thinking, ‘If I had lived then, would I have been able to do what the cross there with the woman, or would I have fled?’ ”
—Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, a member of SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish in Indianapolis

“The Way of the Cross was not what I expected. It was just a wonderful experience hearing people talking through. People were looking out of us, and some people were amazed that we were there and interacting with them. I was just amazed because people were smiling at me and saying, ‘Hi!’ ”
—Joyce Dougherty, a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Indianapolis

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Budget bill boosts school choice for state’s children

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

Children in Indiana stand to benefit in two ways from a boost to two existing school choice programs contained in the state budget bill.

House Bill 1001, the state budget bill, passed the House in late February and received a hearing in the Senate School Funding Subcommittee on March 10. The school choice portion of the budget bill removes the cap set on March 10. The school choice portion assists low-income families is the tax voucher program. The tax credit voucher program per student was $1,000. The tax credit scholarship is a line item in the state budget that limits Indiana to only a certain amount of tax credits per fiscal year. The current limit is set at $7.5 million. School choice advocates are requesting a $5 million increase. Tebbe said donations last year that kid walks into each school building that kid walks into each school. The only thing that changed was the state. “No matter where that student goes, that family’s income didn’t change. The only thing that changed was the school building that kid walks into each morning.”

Andrew Currier, principal of St. Albaret’s School in South Bend, testified before the Senate panel in support of House Bill 1001. “One of the benefits of this job is I get to travel around the state and talk to families who are benefiting from this program,” he said. “These lives have been changed by this program.”

Stewart said that parents would not be able to select a private school were it not for the voucher program.

House Bill 1001 is expected to pass the Senate before the end of April. Tebbe said he is hopeful the school choice portions of the bill will remain intact, and become law before the April 29 adjournment deadline of the Indiana General Assembly.

(For more information about the Indiana Catholic Conference, its Indiana Catholic Action Network and the bill it is following in the Indiana General Assembly this year, log on to www.indianaccc.org. Brigid Curtis Ayer is a correspondent for The Criterion.)

Budget bill boosts school choice for state’s children

Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes

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

Batesville Deanery
March 21, 10 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m. at St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Bright
Bloomington Deanery
March 24, 7 p.m. at St. Martin of Tours, Martinsville
March 25, 6:30 p.m. at St. Jude, Spencer

March 26, 6 p.m. at St. John the Apostle, Bloomington
April 1, 4 p.m. at St. Paul Catholic Center, Bloomington
Connorsville Deanery
March 24, 6 p.m., Richmond Catholic Community at St. Mary, Richmond
Indianapolis East Deanery
March 24, 7 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle, fortress
March 25, 7 p.m. at St. Mary

St. Patrick, Salem
Tell City Deanery
March 22, 2 p.m. at St. Paul, Tell City
Terre Haute Deanery
7:30 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle (individual confession available every Monday during Lent)
7 p.m. at St. Joseph University Parish, Terre Haute (individual confession available Wednesday during Lent)
7:30 p.m. at St. Joseph University Parish, Terre Haute (individual confession available every Wednesday during Lent)
March 25, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart, Clinton
March 25, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph University Parish, Terre Haute

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One of the benefits of this job is I get to travel around the state and talk to families who are benefiting from this program. “These lives have been changed by this program.”

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

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Faith

Listening to God can make our good works more effective

By Effie Caldarola

Among the many cards I received this past Christmas season, I opened one from a group of German Benedictines, and it graced me with the following quote: “Prayer does not replace any deed. But it is a deed that cannot be replaced by anything.”

The author of that quote was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor who was a leader within the segment of his faith community that opposed Adolf Hitler. Bonhoeffer also was a theologian, a scholar, and a writer, not a spiritual director.

Even though he had an opportunity to leave Germany while it was under Hitler’s Nazi regime, Bonhoeffer remained in the country. And like so many great Jewish, Protestant and Catholic religious leaders who stood up to Hitler, he paid dearly for his courage.

Even as Allied bombs could be heard approaching the city of Berlin, Bonhoeffer stayed. He was executed by the Nazis, leaving behind a grieving family and his young fiancée.

About once a year, I try to write about prayer. It certainly isn’t because I am an expert in the field. It’s more because I need to remind myself of the central role that prayer should play in my life. As Bonhoeffer’s words remind me, it is a deed that cannot be replaced by anything else.

The Lenten season is a perfect time to return or to enter more deeply into this essential part of our spiritual nourishment. But prayer isn’t easy. It isn’t even easily defined.

It is an opening to God, a “doorway into thanks,” as the poet Mary Oliver says, “a silence in which another voice may speak.”

Although prayer seems to bring us to another realm, it’s rooted in our practical lives. First, spiritual writers tell us that we must choose a specific time and place for prayer and stick with it.

For many years, and even occasionally today, I postpone prayer with the vague promise to “do it later.” The day passes, and I find myself neglecting something that would have guided and enriched my day.

For me, first thing in the morning is a good time for prayer. I also need a special place. For over 30 years, and in two different homes, for me it’s been the dining room table. I’ve tried other spots, places that seemed more intrinsically “mine”—my office or bedroom—but I’m always drawn back to the spot by the window, with my candle and journal.

So the first thing to do is to choose your best time and space and make a commitment. Sometimes, prayer can seem dry and frustrating, almost fruitless. This is when I’m glad I’ve made the decision to stay in my chair. Eventually, I see the fruit of this commitment, and even on the days when I seem to fight a losing battle with my wandering thoughts, I at least know I’ve made the effort and God will do the rest.

A spiritual director once told me to pray with the scriptural readings for the day’s Mass. They are read by the universal Church, she said, and within them I would find the jewel that would inspire my prayer. Having a spiritual director to guide you in prayer can be very helpful.

There are many good publications that provide guidance and inspiration for prayer. Sometimes I read a short piece as I begin my prayer time. But I remember that this is meant to lead me into prayer. It doesn’t replace prayer.

When I see the world’s woes, I often think how better life would be if people really knew how to pray. When Bonhoeffer said prayer does not replace any deed, I think he was telling us that we still need to do good works, to fight for justice and to live our lives fully.

But how much better would our deeds and our lives be if we listened to the God who inspires our action?

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

Sacrifice can help us bear the ‘fruit of selflessness’ in Lent

By Marge Fenelon

We think a lot about sacrifice during Lent. Generally, we think of it in terms of giving up something. Then there are the days of fasting and abstinence, which can be a difficult time for many of us accustomed to a comfortable way of living.

But there’s a kind of sacrifice that we might not think about, and that is the sacrifice that is part of giving of ourselves to God and to others. It’s a type of sacrifice that requires us to abandon our will and seek to serve God’s will.

St. Paul speaks of self-sacrifice in his Letter to the Romans.

"I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect." (Rom 12:1-2)

The Apostle encouraged us to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, which means behaving in ways pleasing to God.

Making of ourselves a living sacrifice requires putting aside our selfish desires and habits, and allowing ourselves to be formed in Christ. The penances, fasting and almsgiving that we do during Lent help this process to a great degree. It helps shift the focus from the “me, me, me” that can absorb us on a daily basis toward a way of being that helps us think first and foremost: “What can I do for others and for the world?”

Many of us can go through the season of Lent as if by a reflex. We give up things here and there, year after year, but we do it more out of habit rather than having this habit produce the fruit of selflessness that Lent is supposed to yield. More important than giving is the attitude with which we approach the act of giving.

For example, we can choose to give up sweets or television or take an extra dollar out of our wallets at the offertory during Mass, but those actions won’t lead us closer to Christ if we do it simply because we feel obligated to follow the Church’s guidelines for Lent or if we do it simply so that others will see our generosity (a selfish act).

"Prayer does not replace any deed. But it is a deed that cannot be replaced by anything." –Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"Truly giving and emptying ourselves will lead us closer to Christ when we do it consciously, when we don’t do it to call attention to ourselves or seek to be lauded for it. We have to be aware that we are called toward the noble things of heaven, not the superficial rewards of Earth."

As Christians, we are members of the mystical body of Christ, and in that regard, all that we do affects the rest of the body. When we live in the spirit of sacrifice, of denying ourselves, we help to strengthen all others. When we live selflessly, we help to weaken others.

Lent is a remarkable, grace-filled time to join our sacrifices, our suffering, to the suffering of Christ and also to the suffering of all members of the Church. Together, we can strengthen each other.

It can change our perspective if we learn to see Lent as an opportunity to become a living sacrifice, to make every moment of every day a holy and pleasing offering to God.

St. Paul tells us that when we do that, our minds will be renewed in order to better discern God’s will. Along the way, we’ll develop not only an eye but a desire for all that is good, pleasing and perfect.

Our Lent can be a half-hearted, even superficial, giving up of things, or it can be an instrument of transformation, an opportunity to become what God asks of us.

(Marge Fenelon is a freelance writer from Milwaukee and author of Imitating Mary: Ten Marian Virtues for the Modern Mom.)
Reflection on the raising of Lazarus back to life

One of the Gospel options for the Fifth Sunday of Lent is St. John’s account of the raising of Lazarus back to life after he was dead for four days.

Karen Osborne

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Reflection on the raising of Lazarus back to life

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Reflection on the raising of Lazarus back to life
Sunday Readings
Sunday, March 22, 2015

• Jeremiah 31:31-34
• Genesis 5:7-9
• John 12:20-33

The Book of Jeremiah is the source of this Lenten weekend’s first scriptural reading. Jeremiah ranks among the greatest of the ancient Hebrew prophets. He wrote at a very difficult time for his people.

Outside pressures had come to be so strong that the very future existence of the nation, and indeed of the covenant, was at risk. Nervous and uneasy, many blamed God for all the misfortune.

Jeremiah insisted that God had not delivered the people into peril. Rather, they had decided for themselves to pursue policies, and to move along paths that inevitably led to their current plight.

These policies were dangerous because they were sinful. They ignored God, and they rebelled against him. Nothing good could come of them. Great trouble was inevitable.

Through all these acts of rebellion, God was true to his covenant with his people. The people broke the covenant. God, forever merciful, forgiving and life-giving, promised them a new covenant, so that people would be faithful to this new covenant, and if they would sin no more, they would survive.

Being faithful to the new covenant and sinning no more meant more than verbal pledges, more than vague, impulsive good intentions. It meant living in accord with God’s revealed law.

For its second reading, the Church offers us this weekend a selection from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

This reading looks ahead to Jesus’ passion, which will be the centerpiece of next Sunday’s liturgy of Palm Sunday. It will surround the Church as it celebrates Holy Thursday. It will envelope the Church on Good Friday. The Church will rejoin at the victory of Jesus’ death in the Easter Vigil and on Easter Sunday.

Jesus was perfectly obedient to God. He was the teacher, therefore, of perfect obedience. Because of this obedience, Jesus attained life after death. He pledge his life after death to us, if we are obedient ourselves. St. John’s Gospel provides us with the last reading.

Virtually every verse in John’s Gospel is a masterpiece of eloquence and instruction. These verses are no exception. Indeed, quoting Jesus, they are no less than jewels of literary and theological exegesis.

Jesus is clear: His hour is approaching. It will be the hour of his passion. The cross meant intense suffering for Jesus. He was a human, after all, as well as the Son of God.

Yet, Jesus accepted the cross. He died, as all humans must die. It also will be the moment of resurrection. In glory, Jesus rose! He lives!

All believers must walk in the Lord’s footsteps. All must die, literally, but also all must die to sin. Death in either case will be hard in coming. If confronted in the love of God, resurrection will follow.

Reflection
The Church directs us toward the remaining two weeks of Lent. For four weeks, we have been living through this season. It may have become dreary. The Church gives us these readings to inspire us and to encourage us.

As inspiration, and as encouragement, the Church reasures us that eternal life await us if we are faithful to God. There is more at stake here than the simple observance of a liturgical season. Lent, and our response, merely reflect human life. Life can be dreary. Life can mean for any of us, often for many of us, a daily carrying of crosses to personal Calvaries.

The Church this weekend therefore speaks to us about life, not only about endurance. If we follow Jesus all the way to Calvary by obediently consenting to God’s will, and by putting God first, the glory of eternal life await us.

Lent has been a time so far to focus ourselves. We must be faithful to God. The Church urges us today to recommit ourselves to God, and to scrutinize the sincerity of our intentions.

My Journey to God
I am the Key
By Roseanne Miller

I am the Key to salvation. I am the Key to eternal life. Open the door of your heart. Let my spirit come in. Open the door of your heart.

And a new life will begin.

Then read my word.
Get it down deep inside of you. Read my word. Let it become a part of you. Walk with me—
Talk to me.
For I am the Key.
Yes, come, come follow me.

(With thanks to Roseanne Miller of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, a member of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, a detail of the papacy with the image of the key icon，“CNS photo/Marcin Mazur. Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales”)

The Criterion
Friday, March 20, 2015

Daily Readings

Monday, March 23
St. Turibius of Mogrovejo, bishop
Psalm 23:1-6
John 8:1-11

Tuesday, March 24
Numbers 21:4-9
Psalms 2:2-3, 16-21
John 8:21-30

Wednesday, March 25
The Annunciation of the Lord
Isaiah 7:10-14, 8:10
Psalm 40:7-11
Hebrews 10:1-10
Luke 1:26-38

Thursday, March 26
Genesis 17:1-5
Psalms 105:4-9
John 8:51-59

Question Corner / Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Church approves of the fruitful use of adult stem cells in medical research

A have a child with Type 1 diabetes. Currently the research being done toward a cure for this disease, it involves embryonic stem cells. Should I refuse to hope for a cure that comes through this method? And if a cure does happen to come from this research, am I barred from using it for my child? (Virginia)

A I certainly understand your deep concern for your child’s health and your strong desire to do everything morally permissible to help. The Catholic Church sometimes portrayed as opposing all stem-cell research. That is incorrect. What the Church opposes is the particular type of research that involves the destruction of human embryos.

As the Vatican indicated in #32 of “Dignitas Personae,” a 2008 document “On the Dignity of the Human Person,” the destruction of even one human life can never be justified in terms of the benefit that it might conceivably bring to another.

The Church, on the other hand, does strongly support research using adult stem cells. In fact, the Vatican in 2013 hosted a conference of medical experts to promote that research.

I have seen no reports to date of any lasting and verifiable cures from the use of embryonic cells. However, stem cells from adult tissue and from umbilical cord blood are already providing healing treatment, particularly for victims of strokes and vascular disease.

So I would think that your stronger hope for a cure for diabetes might lie in the type of research that is morally permitted and encouraged by the Church.

As for your hypothetical question, whether you might morally use a cure discovered from embryonic research, I have not done a definitive answer to that from Catholic moralists, but I think I can deduce one.

In 2005, the Pontifical Academy for Life released a study regarding the use of vaccines derived from aborted human fetuses. The academy felt that the use of such vaccines was permissible, but only in the absence of ethical alternatives.

However—and this is probably a telling difference—the academy noted that those particular fetuses had been killed for reasons entirely unrelated to the production of vaccines. The exceptions to the nexus is remote.

By contrast, embryonic stem-cell research involves the ongoing destruction of human embryos for the very purpose of medical research. So it seems to me that the use of the fruits of such research would be morally permissible, since it would offer tacit support to such harmful experimentation.

A Catholic neighbor of mine who is very involved in her parish and is very helpful to me insists that all Muslims are jihadi.

When I tried to tell her that the only two Muslims I’ve known were good people, she was vehemently dismissive. I would like to tell him that her belief is that of the Catholic Church. (City of origin withheld)

A You should introduce your neighbor to the insights of Pope Francis.

In his 2013 apostolic exhortation “The Joy of the Gospel,” he very clearly stated the following: “Faced with disconcerting episodes of violent fundamentalism, our respect for true followers of Islam should lead us to avoid hateful generalizations, for authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Quran are opposed to every form of violence” (253).

In November 2014, Pope Francis was asked by reporters about the violence against Shiites Muslims and Christians in Syria and Iraq at the hands of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS. He said once more that he was urging to unite Islam itself with violence, called the action of ISIS “a profoundly grave sin against God” and invited Muslim leaders to issue a global condemnation of terrorism to help dispel the stereotype.

Readers may submit prose or poetry for faith column

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

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

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, 1414 N. Morris St., Indianapolis, IN 46206 or e-mail to ghofler@archindy.org.

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By Roseanne Miller

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And a new life will begin.

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Talk to me.
For I am the Key.
Yes, come, come follow me.

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Historic Vatican cemetery

The ninth Station of the Cross and graves are seen in the Teutonic cemetery at the Vatican on March 6. The history of the cemetery dates to Pope Leo III’s eighth-century grant of land to Charlemagne to build a hospice for pilgrims, a church, and a burial ground for German and Flemish pilgrims who died in Rome. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Provide Sister Joanna Mary Valentino ministered in Catholic education for three decades

Providence Sister Joanna Mary Valentino, formerly Sister Marie Dominic, died on March 4 at Providence Hall at St. Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 70. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on March 10 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse. Burial followed at the sisters’ cemetery.

Joanna Mary Valentino was born on Feb. 27, 1945, in Chicago.

She entered the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods on Sept. 12, 1963, and professed final vows on Oct. 26, 1969. Sister Joanna earned a bachelor’s degree in education at Indiana State University in Terre Haute. During her 51 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Joanna ministered for 31 years in Catholic education, serving in schools in Illinois, primarily in the Chicago metropolitan area.

She later served from 2009-2010 as the manager of The Meadows of Guerin, Inc., a housing facility for low-income senior citizens in Georgetown, Ind., operated by the Sisters of Providence. In 2010, Sister Joanna joined the Ministers of Care Team for Providence Health Care at the motherhouse. She became the administrator of the team in 2012, and retired earlier this year.

Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876.

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:

- All 12 classes for a Certificate in Lay Ministry are available online.
- 30% discount for all employees, volunteers, and parishioners
- Employees also receive reimbursement upon course completion.

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

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Regular Data Rates Apply unless in WIFI area
circle of Grace teaches children their safe boundaries

By Michaela Raffin

Kindergarten students in the Catholic school raise their arms over their heads, form a circle, and bring the circle down around their bodies. The children are being taught that this is their “Circle of Grace,” a personal space given to them by God that others may not violate without permission.

This activity is part of the Circle of Grace religious education program that is being implemented in schools and parishes throughout the archdiocese. The program is designed to educate children and youths about the value of positive relationships, and protecting themselves from negative ones.

“The program empowers children to understand their sacredness, and gives them the skills and language to protect themselves in situations that might be risky,” said Providence Sister Cindy Campbell, coordinator of the Circle of Grace program for the archdiocese.

“Children have to be able to recognize who they are in the eyes of God, and then to be able to protect themselves by knowing what are safe boundaries and unsafe boundaries.”

Circle of Grace is a direct response to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.” The curriculum combines safety tips and relationship building with the teachings of the Catholic faith. It is meant to be taught in conjunction with schools and religious education curricula.

Circle of Grace has become an integral part of the Tell City Deeney’s religious education program. Benedictine Sister Mary Emma Jochum is the director of faith formation at St. Paul Parish in Tell City. She has been helping her catechist teachers familiarize themselves with the lessons.

“Walking through the lessons with each grade-level catechist helped them understand that there is a lot that the kids need to know and understand when it comes to safe and unsafe secrets, safe and unsafe adults,” Sister Mary Emma said.

“The kids now realize that there are adults you can go to, and adults that are not safe to go to.”

Each Circle of Grace lesson is designed to build upon the previous one. Wherever children encounter the program, they learn some key concept about the Circle of Grace.

“The only level requirement is that the kids are old enough to understand the information. By fourth grade they are old enough to understand the information,” said Cindy Ehrlich, a sixth-grade catechism teacher at St. Paul Parish.

“The kids have to try them using what they have learned. It’s a good thing, and that’s who we wanted them to be taught. You can just see from the beginning to the end how much they like that.”

Lessons cover a variety of topics, such as positive self-image, Internet and social media safety, and relationship building with trusted adults. Each lesson is tailored to the appropriate age group. The program has received positive feedback from children, parents and teachers.

“Some of my teachers say they get better interaction with the kids teaching Circle of Grace than they do with the religion textbook,” said Sister Mary Emma. “I think because they’re a little bit more knowledgeable about what we’re talking about.”

Circle of Grace has also been successful in archdiocesan Catholic schools. Yolanda McCormick, principal of St. Lawrence School in Indianapolis, believes the program fits in well with her school’s existing religion curriculum.

“The teachers have found it to be useful and user friendly, and it serves its purpose,” she said. “I’ve encouraged the teachers to find a way to incorporate it with other religion lessons.”

While adhering and relating to Catholic teachings, Circle of Grace highlights important issues that children face today with digital and personal relationships.

“In this day and age, with so many issues out there in the world, the more knowledge the kids have about it, the better they are,” said McCormick. “I think it’s a step in the right direction to prepare our children for the future and for the present as well.”

At the core of the Circle of Grace curriculum is the idea of personal relationships, healthy boundaries and God’s unending love.

“The whole thing is a sense of how very close God is to us, and how he has provided us this environment of grace that no one has a right to violate without our permission,” Sister Cindy said. “And if we’re well-informed, we will not give them that permission because we know what a healthy boundary is, and we know that God loves us and God wants us to be loved and to be safe.”

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Circle of Grace has become an integral part of the Circle of Grace program for the archdiocese. The program empowers children to understand their sacredness, and gives them the skills and language to protect themselves in situations that might be risky.

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As part of the archdiocese’s Circle of Grace program, Amy Shields uses a stoplight to explain to children how they should approach safe and unsafe touching. For example, if a parent hugs a child, that’s a green light situation (it’s OK for the child to hug back because the child is comfortable with the person). If a friend at school hugs a child, it may be a yellow light situation (the child is uncomfortable, then the hug is fine). If the child doesn’t want a hug, it’s not. If a stranger were to hug a child, it would be a red light situation where the child would need to tell a trusted adult. A kindergarten catechism teacher at St. Paul Parish in Tell City, Shields explains the concept to her son, Griffin. (Submitted photo)

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Employment

**RELIGIOUS COORDINATOR**

St. Matthew Catholic Church is seeking a full-time coordinator of religious education to implement and maintain parish faith formation programs beginning on July 1, 2015.

Applicants should be passionate, energetic, and committed to feeding the spiritual needs of our community. Successful candidates will have a love for the Catholic faith, strong doctrinal knowledge, a commitment to the Archdiocesan Faith Formation Curriculum and the ability to work together with catechists, youth ministers, a faith formation commission, school personnel and pastoral staff.

The role includes non-standard work hours that may require extended hours during programs and the ability to work together with catechists, youth ministers, a faith formation commission, school personnel and pastoral staff.

The position is available immediately.

Applicant’s resume will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

Applicants should send their resumes to ray@churchindy.org

Deadline for applications will be April 9, 2015.
What was in the news on March 19, 1965? Archdiocesan clergy report from Selma, and hints of the dropping of Friday abstinence

By Brandon A. Evans

This week, we continue to examine what was going on in the Church and the world 50 years ago as seen through the pages of The Criterion.

Here are some of the items found in the March 19, 1965, issue of The Criterion:

• Early action pledged to voting rights plea
• Eyewitness report: Archdiocesan clergy on Selma firing line
  “You have never known the experience of being hated, unless you have walked through the city of Selma, Alabama, with people jeering, shouting obscenities and making menacing gestures at you. Because you are a “white agitator.” Because you are a “meddling” clergyman. Because you came to show support and moral encouragement for the civil rights of American Negroes. This was part of the firsthand commentary of Father Stephen Hay, one of three diocesan priests who spent last Monday in Selma, Dallas County, Alabama. … Father Hay, who also serves as assistant pastor of Our Lady of Greenwood Parish, Greenwood, drove to Alabama late Sunday evening with another Indianapolis priest, Father David Lowery, assistant pastor of St. Joan of Arc Parish. They arrived there on Monday at noon to join Father Donald Schmidt, archdiocesan director of Catholic Charities, who had flown down the previous day. Eight Benedictine monks from St. Meinrad Archabbey also visited the beleaguered city over a period of several days. The Benedictines included: Father Camillus Ellisperman, Father Cyprian Davis, Father Brian Betz, Father Basil Muttingly, Father Laurence Lynch, Father Xavier Mundian, Father Alban Berling and Father Terrence Gerken."

• Pope cites Vietnam, U.S. race conflict
• Help needed of world, pope urges
• $1 million collected in drive
• ‘Acts’ set this Sunday
• Cardinal Macinrca dies; Pope’s vicar general
• Interfaith effort set for migrants
• Clergy “witness” issue is probled
• Vatican sources reported unaware of “ecumenical services” directive
• More than 100,000: Many Catholics among refugees fleeing from Viet Cong Reds
• Cardinal Cushing still on the mend
• Saint’s relics to be returned
• Permission given for epistle change
• Start wing on Marian dormitory

BURNS
continued from page 4

public transportation systems.

One can’t consider poverty without examining the plight of children. Twenty-two percent of children in Indiana are in poverty. More than 800,000 children in Indiana are enrolled in Medicaid or receive benefits from the Child Health Insurance Program. In Indiana, almost 50 percent of children are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch programs. In the Evansville, Ind., Diocese, these rates range from 31.5 percent to 59.1 percent. They have increased significantly since 2010.

The poor are not only the working poor or those under the age of 65. A great number of our seasonized citizens suffer from economic distress. About 7.9 percent of Indiana seniors are in poverty. On average, a married couple over the age of 65 in the U.S. holds $92,238 in non-residence assets. (Including home equity, married couples own an average of $284,790. Consider, however, that a home produces no income and costs money to operate.) Contrast these amounts with a single, female, older person—the she has an average of $8,480 in non-home assets. Single men over age 65 own just a bit over twice the amount of an older, single female.

Poverty cannot be defined by a line in the sand. Rather, it may be a temporary or long-term state of economic distress defined by an inability to provide food, housing, health and other essentials of daily living. Economic distress is experienced by working people as often as those who are unemployed. It is the inability to feel a level of stability about one’s economic situation.

Addressing poverty requires us to offer corporal care for short-term needs while focusing efforts on eliminating the root causes of long-term economic distress: broken families, lack of education and employment opportunities, and mental and physical health care. Our charity and care should be concentrated in these areas in order to reduce economic struggles over generations.

To see how the United Catholic Appeal supports the ministries throughout central and southern Indiana, watch the Ministry Minute videos found here: http://www.archindy.org/UCA/video.html

United Catholic Appeal
Christ Our Hope

Investing in Our Future
One teacher and one student at a time.

No one faces cancer alone here.

At St. Vincent we are continuously finding new ways to prevent, detect and treat cancer through the latest technology, innovative treatment options, clinical trials and personalized therapies. But the real difference is in our cancer specialists; the highly skilled physicians, nurses, technicians, researchers, patient and survivorship navigators dedicated to helping cancer patients through their journey, all focused on a single purpose—No one faces cancer alone here.

www.stvincent.org/CancerCare

Read all of these stories from our March 19, 1965, issue by logging on to our archives at www.CriterionOnline.com.†