Pope Francis says Year of Mercy will be time to heal, to help, to forgive

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Mercy is what makes God perfect and all-powerful, Pope Francis said in his document officially proclaiming the 2015-16 extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

"If God limited himself to only justice, he would cease to be God, and would instead be like human beings who ask merely that the law be respected," the pope wrote in “Misericordiae Vultus,” (“The Face of Mercy”), which is the “bull of indiction” calling a Holy Year to begin on Dec. 8.

Standing in front of the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica on April 11, Pope Francis handed copies of the document to the archpriests of the major basilicas of Rome and to Vatican officials representing Catholics around the world.

Portions of the 9,300-word proclamation were read aloud before Pope Francis and his aides processed into St. Peter’s Basilica to celebrate the first vespers of the Holy Year of Mercy.

In his homily at vespers, the pope said he proclaimed the Year of Mercy because “it is the favorable time to heal wounds, a time not to be weary of meeting all those who are waiting to see and touch with their hands the signs of the closeness of God, a time to offer everyone the way of forgiveness and reconciliation.”

The boundless nature of God’s mercy—his willingness always to forgive anything—has been a constant subject of Pope Francis’ preaching, and is explained in detail in the document, which outlines some of the specific projects the pope has in mind for the year.

The Old Testament stories of how God repeatedly offered mercy to his unfaithful people and the New Testament stories of See MERIT, page 20

‘A Love So Strong’

By John Shaughnessy

For a long time, she had dreaded the first anniversary of the death of the love of her life.

On the day before that anniversary, all the heartbreak overwhelmed Jennifer Trapuzzano once again as she thought of her husband Nathan.

Just a year before—on March 31, 2014—the couple had been looking forward to their first wedding anniversary, the birth of their first child, and Nathan’s 25th birthday.

Then, a day later, Nathan was shot and killed during a robbery as he took a morning walk through their Indianapolis neighborhood.

So much of the past year has been a heart-wrenching blur of thoughts and emotions for Jennifer—thoughts and emotions she has occasionally shared in her blog called, “A Love So Strong.”

On March 31, 2015, those emotions poured from her again as she wrote another entry that included this thought: “I can still feel him. I can see him when I close my eyes, feel his love and warmth. It doesn’t feel possible that he has been gone for one year. That in less than 24 hours I will no longer be able to say “last year Nate and I were doing this together…”

I have a voicemail from him on March 31st last year. I have listened to it over and over and over again. His voice sounds so familiar still, like it was yesterday. I miss him. I miss everything about him. In so many ways, it feels like he has only been gone for 10 seconds. And yet it feels like 100 years.

Shortly after those words appeared online, Jennifer received a text message of support from a woman who knows that same pain, a woman who has become one of her closest friends.

“I sent Jennifer a text telling her I was praying for her and offering up my heartache for her,” says Cristina Buerkle, who is also a young Catholic widow. “I wanted to let her know that she wasn’t in that pain alone, that we are in this together.”

Touche s of hope and humanity

As Jennifer’s recent blog entry shows, the loss of Nathan still haunts her heart and her soul.

At the same time, the past year for her has been marked by touches of help.

Sisters of Providence keep ties to history, extend Mother Theodore’s mission of faith

ST. MARY-OF-THE-WOODS—Oct. 15, 2006, was a bright sunny Sunday in Rome. Tens of thousands of Catholics gathered in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican for a Mass in which Pope Benedict XVI declared four men and women saints.

One of them was Mother Theodore Guerin, the foundress of the oldest religious community in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

The canonization Mass was celebrated at the geographic heart of the Church. But much of the life of faith that led to Mother Theodore’s growth in holiness took place on the margins of the Church—both literally and figuratively.

She was truly in mission territory on the American frontier when she and five religious sisters arrived from France in 1840 in a vast wilderness in western Indiana to begin their life and ministry in the fledgling Diocese of Vincennes.

They soon founded a school on the grounds of their motherhouse at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, and then spread across the state to teach in parish schools, often populated by the children of immigrant Catholics.

Mother Theodore and her sisters also cared for orphans, and operated a pharmacy which dispensed medicine free of charge to the poor.

The congregation continued to grow and spread after Mother Theodore’s death.

See SISTERS, page 2.
in 1856. Less than a century later, its members were ministering across the country and as far away as China. Providence Sister Marcelline Mattingly, who will celebrate her 100th birthday in November, has been a member of the order for almost half of its 175-year history, joining it in 1933.

Experiencing a connection to her community’s long history, and especially Mother Theodore, through her many decades of teaching high school biology in Illinois, Indiana and Washington, D.C., has been important for Sister Marcelline.

“It’s what gives us life,” she said. “[Mother Theodore] has given us the legacy. We lean on Providence. We go to God. No matter what happens, God is going to take care of us. And even though it might not seem that he’s taking care of us, eventually that’s it. That’s how we’ve taken care of.”

Sister Marcelline was in St. Peter’s Square when Pope Benedict declared Mother Theodore a saint.

“It was a wonderful, rewarding affirmation,” she said. “I think every Sister of Providence, from the time of Mother Theodore, shared in the joy of the canonization.”

Also in attendance was Providence Sister Denise Wilkinson, who, as general superior of the Sisters of Providence, is the 18th successor of Mother Theodore. She had only recently been elected to the position when the canonization Mass was celebrated.

“It was challenging and comforting at the same time,” said Sister Denise of the canonization. “… It was very clear to me how she related with her sisters, the Church, neighbors [and] those who opposed her. Her strength, courage, compassion and kindness stood out very clearly in what the Church recognized in her.

“She once said to one of the sisters, ‘No one will ever love you as your old Mother Theodore does.’ I count on her love daily—a million times a day.”

Mother Theodore’s continued love for the Sisters of Providence extends as broadly as its current ministries, which still include education, but also involve service to the elderly and poor, parish pastoral ministry and care for the environment.

But no matter how many ministries members of the order might undertake and how spread out they may become, Sister Denise says there is a close tie to the Woods, where they were formed in religious life and are often where they left religious life in death.

“It’s where those women walked, where they were taught, where they were formed in religious life and often where they left religious life in death. “I look around and see all those tombstones. There’s a sense that these women have walked it before me. There’s definitely a spirit there. If you can listen and be still, you can tap into it.”

For more information about the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, visit www.spsmw.org.

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

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[caption] Providence Sister Marcelline Mattingly sits in prayer during a March 5 Mass at the Church of the Immaculate Conception on the motherhouse grounds of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods. (Photo by Sean Gallagher) [caption] Providence Sister Arrianne Whittaker reads a book on March 12 to Victoria Dillinger, left, and Ari Monroe at an Early Learning Indiana day care center in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher) [caption] Providence Sister Theophane Fauslich teaches music at St. Patrick School in Terre Haute in the 1950s. She died in 1997 at age 81. (Photo courtesy of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods) [caption] Providence Sister Mary Lowry helps a student at an Early Learning Indiana day care center, in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher) [caption] Providence Sister Arrianne Whittaker joined the congregation in 2012 and professed temporary vows last year. She currently helps extend the mission of the Sisters of Providence by serving at an Early Learning Indiana day care center in Indianapolis. She also hopes to minister as a physician in the future, and is currently in the process of applying to medical school.

“We’re just following where God is calling us to be—geographically and ministerially,” Sister Arrianne said. “I’m kind of an example of that flexibility of just letting the Spirit take us where we need to go. I’ve discerned [applying to medical school], but the community has also been supportive of this path.”

Although she joined the Sisters of Providence only three years ago, she values its long history much like Sister Marcelline does. That history is made tangible for Sister Arrianne when she visits the order’s cemetery at St. Mary-of-the-Woods.

“There’s a spirit there,” she said. “Maybe that’s why the Woods is so sacred, why there’s such a connection with the land. It’s because that’s where we lived. It’s where those women walked, where they were formed in religious life and often where they left religious life in death.

“I look around and see all those tombstones. There’s a sense that these women have walked it before me. There’s definitely a spirit there. If you can listen and be still, you can tap into it.”

(for more information about the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, visit www.spsmw.org)
John E. Etling led Catholic Charities Terre Haute for 32 years

By Sean Gallagher

John E. Etling, who led Catholic Charities Terre Haute for 32 years before retiring in 2005, died on April 6. He was 85.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on April 11 at St. Patrick Church in Terre Haute. Burial followed at Calvary Cemetery, also in Terre Haute.

Born on June 28, 1929, in Terre Haute, Etling earned degrees in education at his hometown’s Indiana State University and at the University of Cincinnati in Cincinnati. He also served in the U.S. Navy from 1951-53 during the Korean War.

During his teaching career, Etling taught in public schools in and around Terre Haute and at the Gibault School for Boys, which is sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

Etling’s oldest child, John C. Etling, was in eighth grade when his father helped start Catholic Charities Terre Haute. He took over from his father as agency director in 2005.

“He didn’t like meetings a lot,” said Etling of his father. “He wanted to get things going and see action take place.

“I think my dad understood a lot of the ways to get things done, who to call, who to make a compelling case to, who would be moved and accept that call to action.”

Sometimes it was the younger Etling and his siblings that were called into action as what he described as “reluctant volunteers.”

Etling said that the burgeoning services of Catholic Charities Terre Haute that his father spearheaded “became part of our family, a common thread, a part of our DNA.”

He recalled a story when he was a college student in 1980 to describe how his father served—and continues to serve—as an inspiration to him in reaching out to people in need.

“He asked us to help him find a group, to help out in the community, to help care for Cuban refugees who were part of the Mariel boatlift, which saw as many as 125,000 Cubans flee the communist country for the U.S. that year.

“A couple of county and city officials came to the younger Etling to protest the welcoming of the refugees. John E. Etling then came and spoke to the officials and convinced them, in part by ‘getting in their faces,’ to allow the refugees to stay.

“He stood up for the little guy, the underdog,” Etling said of his father. “He told me that when you know you’re on the side of God, you can’t lose. When you really know that God’s on your side, what else do you need?”

In addition to being an advocate to people in need, John E. Etling was always ready to lend a hand to persons who asked for help.

In the days before cell phones, Etling kept on his phone at home stand at home through which he could take phone calls to Catholic Charities Terre Haute at all hours.

“He knew that a crisis, a trauma, a house fire didn’t know what time it was,” Etling’s son said. “A crisis just doesn’t have a clock. It happens when it happens.”

Etling said that his father showed kindness to all the many fathers, where he was working at the Gibault School for Boys.

“Not many people have had that many kids and got to be a very selfish,” said his father. “He certainly put others before his own.

“I think he knew that, for a lot of people, their only chance was going to be through some of the programs that Catholic Charities could provide in this community.”

Among the programs that John E. Etling helped establish were Bethany House, an emergency shelter for women, Terre Haute Catholic Charities Foodbank, Ryves Youth Center at Etling Hall and Terre Haute Catholic Charities’ Christmas Store.

“John’s passion for serving some of the most vulnerable people in and around Terre Haute was a ‘beautiful passion,’” said David Siler, executive director for the archdiocesan Secretariat for Catholic Charities. “My first introduction of the agency with John lasted from 1987 until 1992. I was able to accomplish, and my own passion for our work took a quantum leap forward.

“Many people in need across central Indiana continue to be served through the programs that John E. Etling was critical in starting and which are open to everyone who makes application and volunteers.

“The legacy that he left is a legacy of starting, a legacy of providing help,” said Etling of his father. “When you do that, you make everybody better.”

John E. Etling’s survivors include his wife, Patricia Jeanne (Carlin) Etling, children: Pamela Devine, Patty Beddow, Paige Devine-Harshbarger, Miranda Goodale and James, John, Joseph, and 31 grandchildren.

Etling, who was received into the full communion of the Catholic Church years after beginning his service with Catholic Charities Terre Haute, was a longtime member of St. Patrick Parish and the Knights of Columbus.

Pope was religious against ‘crisis of quality’ in consecrated life

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Despite fewer vocations to consecrated life, those responsible for formation in religious institutes must know how to say “no” to unhealthy or unhealthy individuals, Pope Francis said.

The pope described consecrated life as “a privilege” to be in formation work, and “one of the most precious treasures of the Church.” He called it “beautiful,” and “one of the most precious treasures of the Church.”

He said “young people, who unconsciously demand” in every phase of formation, “failures” as part of their own formation.

At the same time, there will not be vocations. This is the discernment: knowing how to say no, the pope said.

Just as formation experts accompany candidates upon entering institutes, so too sometimes they must “accompany the exit, so that he or she will find a life path, with help, and the necessary help,” he continued.

Those involved in formation also must imitate God in exercising the virtue of the pope, the canonical virtues.

“God knows how we wait. You, too, must learn this attitude of patience, which many times is a little martyrdom,” he said.

The pope said religious who work in formation may live their charge as a burden. “But this is a lie, a temptation,” he said.

When they feel their work is not appreciated, he said, they should “know that Jesus follows you with love and the entire Church is grateful.”

Some say consecrated life is heaven on Earth, the pope said. “No. If anything it is purgatory! But go forward with joy.

The pope also said he is “confident” there is no vocations crisis where consecrated people witness to “the beauty of consecrated life.”

If there is no witness, if there is no coherence, there will not be vocations. This is the testimony to which you are called. This is your ministry, your mission. You are not only ‘teachers.’ You are all with the discipleship of Jesus within your proper charism.

—Pope Francis

The concept of an archdiocesan pastoral council stems from a Second Vatican Council document, the “Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church.” The document states that it is “greatly desirable that in each diocese a pastoral commission be established over which the diocesan bishop has the last word and which is composed of clergy, religious, and lay people will participate. The function of this council will be to investigate and weigh matters which bear on pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them” (#27).

In a future article, we will report on the first APC meeting, its members and its goals. 

Catholic Charities Terre Haute: a true living faith

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has established the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council to begin its first meeting on April 18 in Columbus.

The council will be charged with developing a pastoral planning document for the archdiocese, which includes meetings and a focus on mission.

The APC, the group that will form the council, will be composed of representatives from 13 archdiocesan departments, parish pastoral councils and the faithful of the archdiocese.

It will function as a consultative pastoral planning team for the archdiocese with a focus on mission and pastoral planning—investigating, considering and proposing practical conclusions about those things which pertain to the pastoral works in the archdiocese.

The recently formed council of 19 includes members representing the broad spectrum of the faithful in the archdiocese. Members hail from the entire central and southern Indiana region and include men and women, lay, clergy and religious from various races and ethnicities, and a broad range of ages.

Criticism of council raises questions

After two years of shepherding the faithful of central and southern Indiana, Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin has decided to re-evaluate a consultative body known as the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC). The group will hold its first business meeting—preceded by a welcome and blessing—at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus on April 18.

The APC serves as a forum for discussion and dialogue on issues of pastoral significance in the archdiocese, providing a link for communication and unity between more than 120 archdiocesan departments, parish pastoral councils and the faithful of the archdiocese.

The concept of an archdiocesan pastoral council stems from a Second Vatican Council document, the “Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church.” The document states that it is “greatly desirable that in each diocese a pastoral commission be established over which the diocesan bishop has the last word and which is composed of clergy, religious, and lay people will participate. The function of this council will be to investigate and weigh matters which bear on pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them” (#27).

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By Joseph W. Tobin

Archbishop
Understanding ISIS's beliefs

Back in our Feb. 20 issue of The Criterion, we published an editorial about the condemnation of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) by moderate Muslims for the barbarism it has perpetrated against Christians. By other Muslims, including crucifixions and beheadings. To understand why ISIS is really a religious group with a sincere commitment to returning civilization to a seventh-century legal environment, and ultimately to bringing about the apocalypse. It’s almost book-length, but well-researched. It is.

It’s clear that ISIS wouldn’t have the ambitions of moderate Muslims because it believes that only it has the true Muslim faith, and moderate Muslims are apostates. Wood writes, “That means roughly 200 million Shia are marked for death. So too are the heads of state of every Muslim country, who have elevated man-made law above Sharia by running for office or enforcing laws not made by God.” ISIS is committed to eradicating the world by killing vast numbers of people, above Shia by running for office or enforcing laws not made by God.

In the video showing the beheading of Peter (Abdul Rahaman Kassig), the masked executioner said, “Here we are, burying the first American crusader in Dabiq, eagerly waiting for the remainder of your armies to arrive.” Of course, they expect to win the battle. Now that ISIS has been declared a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union, among others, and create the conditions of that community, through the churches and local charity programs have done a fantastic job of helping people lift themselves out of poverty. If we continue down the path we’re on, these vital safety programs will go bankrupt and cease providing any services.

The March 27, 2015, article in The Criterion, “Catholic advocates push Congress for budget that protects poor people,” alleges that potential reductions to some social service programs demonstrate a failure to meet the needs of the poor and vulnerable people. These sentiments are misguided. Why are Christians being asked by the government to do what we are called to do as individuals under the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Our challenge is to show that our religious sisters that more government programs and more money spent on them are better for the poor. Rather, a system that lifts people out of poverty instead of perpetuating a permanently poor citizenry is needed.

It was President Lyndon B. Johnson that first declared a “War on Poverty” in 1964, stating our national goal to “not only relieve the symptoms of poverty, but to cure it and, above, all, to prevent it.” Fifty years and $21.5 trillion later, the poverty rate has only fallen 2.3 percent, from 17.3 to 15 percent. Today about 22 percent of children live in poverty. Americans live in households near or below the poverty line. The federal government now administers at least 92 federal programs designed to help lower-income Americans, including dozens of education and job training programs, 17 different food aid programs, and more than 20 separate housing programs. It is clear that the approach of simply spending money at more programs is not working. If insanity can indeed be defined as doing the same thing over and over expecting different results, then it may be past time to try something different.

Rather than the failed approach offered by the subjects of the article, the budget proposed by the Republicans in Congress offers a different approach to the age-old problem of poverty. It proposes to reform federal programs so they can continue to serve the poor, while empowering them to find work and incentivizing Church and other groups to help people lift themselves out of poverty. If we continue down the path we’re on, these vital safety programs will go bankrupt and cease providing any services.

Even President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, arguably the father of modern welfare programs, stated repeatedly that the federal government must be the last resort in providing for social needs. That responsibility should be employed only after the family, churches and local charity programs have done what they can.

In words that may now seem prescient, Roosevelt warned, “If human needs, we can’t do everything. There is a limit to what he can do. If we continue down the road we’re on, these vital safety programs will go bankrupt and cease providing any services.”

He added that relief is the primary responsibility of the family and citizens of that community, through the churches and the community center of social and charitable organizations of the community.

With FDR’s admonition in mind, we have crafted a budget that balances in 10 years—meaning a healthier economy today and greater economic opportunity for tomorrow. Rather than ignoring the needs of the poor, as was suggested in the article, the House of Representatives offered an alternative plan to reform these programs for the long term. Our budget speaks to the dignity of work, empowering people away from public assistance.

As noted in the article, “the budget is a major step toward making government immoral to hand every child born today a bill for $30,000 to pay the debt left them by parents who failed to work and pay taxes to help cover the cost of living in poverty. I fail to see how the immoral status quo of spending more to help than we make every day is helping the poor.”

What does follow the Gospel is helping someone realize the dignity of work and earning rather than living on government welfare. I believe it is immoral to hand every child born today a bill for $30,000 to pay the debt left them by parents who failed to work and pay taxes to help cover the cost of living in poverty. I fail to see how the immoral status quo of spending more to help than we make every day is helping the poor.

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Forgiveness is preached to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

The Gospel reading for the Third Sunday of Easter (Lk 24:35-48) begins immediately following the wonderful story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus who encountered Jesus on the road, walked with him not knowing who he was, and then finally recognized him “in the breaking of the bread” (Lk 24:35). Eager to tell the other disciples how their hearts were burning within them, they hurried back to Jerusalem to the place where the other disciples were hiding behind closed doors. While the two disciples “were still speaking about this,” Jesus “stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ But they were startled and terrified and thought they were seeing a ghost” (Lk 24:36).

Jesus assures them he is no ghost by showing them his hands and feet, and by eating with them a piece of baked fish. “The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord...” (Lk 24:41). And he said to them again, “Peace be with you.” Jesus is not a ghost. He is a real flesh-and-blood human being who has been raised from the dead. This is a great mystery of our faith. The humanity of Jesus was not a temporary occurrence.

Standing there in front of their faces is the man they knew and loved, the one who was mocked, scourged and crucified—while most of them fled and hid beyond locked doors like these. He is really with them now, comforting them (“Peace be with you”), but also challenging them to accept that he is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets.

“This is written,” says the risen Lord to his fearful friends, “that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day” (Lk 24:46). But there’s more—much more. Jesus reminds the disciples that they are witnesses to the mystery of redemption. As witnesses, they will be called to testify to the truth about the forgiveness of sins, which will be “preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Lk 24:47).

I was in Jerusalem for the first time a little more than a month ago, and I shared many of my first impressions of this ancient and holy city in my columns for the season of Lent. It’s amazing to me that Jerusalem was the place where our Church’s evangelizing mission began. It’s an unlikely place in many ways. Jerusalem, which means “city of peace,” has been, and continues to be, anything but a peaceful city. This city has known more than its share of war, religious and racial intolerance, hunger (both physical and spiritual) and inhumanity.

But Jerusalem is also a holy city revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims everywhere. There is no peace in Jerusalem today, but the longing for peace is so intense that you can feel it in the air. Jews, Christians and Muslims who are true to their scriptures and faithful to the best of their traditions share a desire for peace (and, with it, unity) that is almost palpable in Jerusalem, the city of peace.

Where can we find peace? How can we ever achieve an authentic and lasting peace that guarantees the end of all violence and hatred, but includes much more, including the recognition that we are all sisters and brothers, members of the one family of God with equal rights and dignity?

Recently, Pope John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and now Francis—insist that peace is possible through repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Only by letting go of past wrongs (no matter how egregious), and by the recognition of equal rights and responsibilities on all sides, can we ever achieve lasting peace. Only by recognizing that we are brothers and sisters (the indispensable first step), and then forgiving each other for the sins we have committed against God and one another (the second step), will we ever hope to find peace. Everyone has its hurts and disagreements. Some are very serious. Some tear families apart. Only repentance and forgiveness can heal the wounds that divide families, nations and religious, racial or ethnic groups. Peace is indispensably the work of justice and charity, but above all it is the fruit of genuine, heartfelt forgiveness.

When the risen Lord appeared to his disciples, he wished them peace (twice!). But he challenged them (and us) to find peace through preaching, and practicing, repentance and the forgiveness of sins to all nations—beginning from Jerusalem, the city of peace.

May the God of mercy open our hearts to repentance and the forgiveness of sins this Easter season and always! ✝

El perdón se predica en todas las naciones, comenzando por Jerusalén

L a lectura del Evangelio de este tercer domingo de Pascua (Lc 24:35-48) comienza inmediatamente con la maravillosa historia de los discípulos que iban camino a Emmaús y quienes encontraron a Jesús por el camino, caminaron junto con él sin saber quién era y finalmente lo reconocieron cuando partió el pan (Lc 24:35). Años más tarde por relatar a los otros discípulos cómo ardían sus corazones, se apresuraron a volver a Jerusalem, al lugar donde los demás discípulos estaban escondidos a puertas cerradas.

Mientras los dos discípulos “todavía estaban hablando acerca de esto,” Jesús “se puso en medio de ellos y les dijo—La paz sea con ustedes.” (Lc 24:36). Jesús les asegura que no es un espíritu y para ello les enseña sus manos y sus pies, y con ellos un trozo de pescado asado. Los discípulos “no acababan de creerlo a causa de la alegría y del asombro” (Lc 24:41). Y les repitió—La paz sea con ustedes.

Jesús no es un espíritu; es un ser humano de carne y hueso de verdad que ha sido resucitado. Este es uno de los grandes misterios de nuestra fe. La condición humana de Jesús no era una situación temporal; no se trataba de un holograma ni era obra de la imaginación eufórica de los discípulos. De pie allí, delante de ellos, se encontraba el hombre al que conocían y amaban, aquel que fue azotado y crucificado, mientras la mayoría de ellos huyeron y se escondieron a puertas cerradas como estas. Ahora realmente se encuentra con ellos, consolándolos (“la paz sea con ustedes”), pero también los reza a aceptar que en él se han cumplido las leyes y las profecías.

“Esto es lo que está escrito”—les dice el Señor resucitado a sus testimonios amigos—que el Cristo padecerá y resucitará al tercer día (Lc 24:46). Pero hay más, mucho más. Jesús les recuerda a los discípulos que ellos son testigos del misterio de la redención y que como tales, estarán llamados a declarar la verdad sobre el perdón de los pecados pues “en su nombre se predicarán el arrepentimiento y el perdón de pecados a todas las naciones, comenzando por Jerusalén” (Lc 24:47).

Hace poco más de un mes estuve en Jerusalén por primera vez y durante mis columnas de la temporada de Pascua compartí muchas de mis impresiones iniciales acerca de esta antigua y sagrada ciudad.

Me resulta maravilloso pensar que Jerusalén fue el lugar donde comenzó la misión evangelizadora de nuestra Iglesia. Se trata de un lugar peculiar por muchos motivos. Jerusalén, cuyo nombre significa “ciudad de la paz,” ha sido y continúa siendo todo menos una ciudad pacífica. La ciudad ha sufrido varias guerras, intriga religiosa y racial, hambre (tanto física como espiritual) y actos inhumanos.

Pero Jerusalén también es una ciudad sagrada, reverenciada por judíos, cristianos y musulmanes de todas partes. Hoy en día la paz no existe en Jerusalén, pero las ansias de paz son tan intensas que casi se sienten en el aire. Judíos, cristianos y musulmanes fieles a sus escrituras y a sus tradiciones comparten el mutuo deseo de alcanzar la paz (y, junto con esta, la unidad) de una forma que resulta casi palpable en Jerusalén, la ciudad de la paz.

¿Dónde podemos encontrar la paz? ¿Cómo podemos alcanzar la paz auténtica y duradera que garantiza el fin de toda la violencia y del odio, pero que abarca mucho más, incluso el reconocimiento de que todos somos hermanos, miembros de una sola familia de Dios con iguales derechos y dignidades?

Los papas recientes—Juan XXIII, Pablo VI, Juan Pablo II, Benedicto XVI y ahora Francisco—insisten en que la paz solo es posible a través del arrepentimiento y el perdón de los pecados. Solamente al deslazarnos de las acciones erróneas del pasado (sin importar cuán egregias sean), y al reconocer igualdad de derechos y de responsabilidades para todos los involucrados, podríamos alguna vez alcanzar la paz duradera. Solamente al reconocer que somos seres humanos y hermanos (el primer paso indispensable) y posteriormente perdonarnos por los pecados que hemos cometido contra Dios y contra nuestros mismos (el segundo paso), tendremos esperanza de encontrar la paz.

Todas las familias sufren sus dolores y sus desacuerdos; algunos de ellos son muy graves, otros destruyen familias. Solamente el arrepentimiento y el perdón pueden curar las heridas que dividen a las familias, las naciones y los grupos religiosos, raciales o étnicos. La paz es indisputablemente la obra de la justicia y de la verdad, pero por encima de todo es fruto del perdón genuino y sincero.

Cuando el Señor resultado se le apareció a sus discípulos, les deseó la paz (“dos veces!”) Pero también los desafió (y a nosotros también) a hallar la paz predicando y practicando el arrepentimiento y el perdón de los pecados para todas las naciones, comenzando por Jerusalén, la ciudad de la paz.

¿Qué significa para el misionero la visión de muertos corazones al arrepentimiento y el perdón de los pecados durante esta temporada de Pascua y siempre?

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Events Calendar

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

April 17
Northside Knights of Columbus, 2110 E. 71st St., Indianapolis.
For Further Information: 9 a.m., $15 members, $21 non-members.
Catholic Business Exchange will include Reservations and information www.catholicbusinessexchange.org

May 1
Saint Thomas More Parish, 1200 N. Indiana St., Mooresville. Indoor Garage Sale benefiting youth programs, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Memorial Day Weekend.

May 4
Benedict Inn Conference and Retreat Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove.

April 18
St. Thomas More Parish, 1200 N. Indiana St., Mooresville. 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 for those who wish to remain.

April 21
St. Matthew the Apostle School, 4100 E. 50th St., Indianapolis. School tours, 9:45 a.m. to 2 p.m.

May 2
Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. First Friday devotion and lunch, 11:45 a.m. Information: 317-345-3447 or lumen.dei@comcast.net.

May 8
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosemary Parish, Priory Hall, 520 Stearns St., Indianapolis. Pro-Life ministry and the Sacramity of Life. Committee of St. John the Evangelist Parish, Pro-Life film, “Testimony.” 6:30-8:30 p.m., admission, free, simple supper will be served. Registration: 317-226-4412 or hbrad@msi.net

May 9
The Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish, Priory Hall, 520 Stearns St., Indianapolis. Pro-Life ministry and the Sacramity of Life.

April 24
Caedmon United Methodist Church, 7160 Shadeland Station, Indianapolis.

May 2
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, White Violet Center, 1400 Fairman Lane N.E., Greenfield. Dessert card party, 6-9:30 p.m., $.55 per person.

May 3
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. Introductory workshop, “Immersive Weaving,” Marcia Johnson. www.archindy.org/retreats †

May 4
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, White Violet Center, 1400 Fairman Lane N.E., Greenfield. Half-day workshop, 8 a.m. check-in, 9 a.m. winds, $15 per person, $30 or more from the same congregation.

April 25
On the 9th of May, WSJ/WSM 90.9 FM, Faith in Action radio show, “Catholic Aviation Association,” Tom Beckbauer.

April 30
St. Paul Hermitage, 501 N. 17th Ave. Beech Grove. Ave Maria Guild, devotions and quilt raffle, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

May 1
Marcia.johnson@archindy.org.

May 6
St. Boniface Parish in Fulda will celebrate the 150th anniversary of its historic church building with a two-day festival, June 6-7. In Fulda.

May 17
The St. Boniface Church building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on Oct. 30, 1980.

May 22
St. Boniface Parish, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. First Friday celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass, 5 p.m. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 10 p.m., sonority of Reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or marion.dei@comcast.net.

May 23
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, White Violet Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence, 4100 Fairman Lane N.E., Greenfield.

May 24
Center of Divine Mercy, 3020 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. Lumen Dei Catholic Business Group, Mass and monthly meeting, 7-8:30 a.m., breakfast, $15 per person.

May 25
The Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove.

May 26
The Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove.

April 22
Archbishop Edward T O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Parish Nurse/ Health Ministry annual meeting, 6-8:30 p.m. Information: 317-236-1475 or deb@archindy.org.

May 26
At 9 a.m., Mass and monthly meeting, 7-8:30 a.m., breakfast, $15 per person.

April 25
Caedmon United Methodist Church, 7160 Shadeland Station, Indianapolis.

May 27
On WSPM 89.1 FM/WSQM 90.9 FM, Faith in Action radio show, “88.3FM’s Letter to President Obama,” Maria Fernandez, 10 a.m. April 27 and 30, 4 p.m. May 1 and 3, 9:30 a.m.

May 28
Haiti Mission,” Wendy Braun and “Worry,” Thomas Lamb, 4 p.m. April 27 and 30, 10 a.m. April 29 and May 1, 9:30 a.m.

May 29
A native of Rushville, shows off her “alebrijes,” or Mexican folk art sculpture, at 30 S. 3rd St. for prayers, the ongoing care and preservation of the historic church building with a two-day festival, June 6-7.

May 30
The Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Event will offer garden tour, live entertainment, and more.

April 20
On the 9th of May, WSJ/WSM 90.9 FM, Faith in Action radio show, “Catholic Aviation Association,” Tom Beckbauer.

April 24
Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. First Friday celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass, 5 p.m. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, following Mass until 10 p.m., sonority of Reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or marion.dei@comcast.net.

April 25
Caedmon United Methodist Church, 7160 Shadeland Station, Indianapolis.

April 26
Stephen Ministry Introductory workshop, half-day workshop, 8 a.m. check-in, 9 a.m. winds, $15 per person, $30 or more from the same congregation.

Information: 317-436-2600 or stepministry@archindy.org/workshop.

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, White Violet Center, 1400 Fairman Lane N.E., Greenfield. Half-day workshop, 8 a.m. check-in, 9 a.m. winds, $15 per person, $30 or more from the same congregation.

Information: 317-436-2600 or stepministry@archindy.org/workshop.

St. John the Evangelist Parish, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Parish Nurse/ Health Ministry annual meeting, 6-8:30 p.m. Information: 317-236-1475 or deb@archindy.org.

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Benedict Inn will open Peace and Nature Garden with ceremony on April 29

The Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove will celebrate the grand opening of their new Peace and Nature Garden from 6-8 p.m. on April 29.

Together with Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, the Benedict Inn has created a meditative place that is quiet, safe and accessible per American with Disabilities Act standards.

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

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Featuring shaded and open portions, sitting areas, walls and art, the space highlights the native plant palette to further the bio-diversity of the local environment.

The grand opening event will offer garden tours, light hors d’oeuvres and a blessing ceremony.

There is no admission cost—the Peace and Nature Garden is free for all to enjoy.

Mexican folk art sculpture

Sophie Kemple, a fourth-grade student at St. Mary School in Rushville, shows off her Mexican folk art sculpture, that she made in the school’s Spanish class A & B, 4th-grade students at St. Malachi School in Rushville. Students at St. Mary’s school and preschool in Rushville take a weekly Spanish course, and those in third through sixth grades can choose to participate in an extracurricular Spanish Club. (Submitted photo)
The path of mercy ... creates new relations of fraternal solidarity among human beings.

—St. John Paul II

Devotion to Divine Mercy is a reminder of God's love for humanity

By Daniel S. Mulhall

Divine Mercy Sunday is celebrated each year on the Second Sunday of Easter. This designation was established by St. John Paul II in the jubilee year 2000 on the canonization of St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun who had visions in the 1930s of Jesus as the Divine Mercy.

People pray near a 10-foot-tall Divine Mercy image in Chicago’s Daley Plaza on April 29, 2011. The image was being displayed for the annual Divine Mercy novena. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Catholic New World)

On this day, the Church remembers and celebrates that Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s love for the world. There are many people who have a special devotion to Divine Mercy, following in the practice begun by St. Faustina. There are numerous websites related to Divine Mercy, and there are national and international conferences held in conjunction with this feast. There is a Divine Mercy chapel, which is prayed like the rosary, and a Divine Mercy novena, which is prayed for the nine days prior to the feast.

All of these celebrations and prayers are designed to help us remember and reflect upon the mercy that God has shown us in our lives, especially in giving us his only Son for our salvation.

In speaking about the revelations to St. Faustina and in declaring the feast day, St. John Paul made one point abundantly clear: This is not new revelation. The Church has always been aware of God’s loving mercy for us, and Jesus has always been present to us as an embodiment of that mercy.

St. Faustina’s visions and the feast serve the purpose of focusing our attention on this fact, and encouraging us to remember God’s great love for us. The feast day serves as a clarion call for us to hear and believe the good news, and to intentionally turn to God to accept the divine mercy that is always being offered to us.

One of the things Catholics are asked to do on Divine Mercy Sunday is to reflect on how they experience God’s mercy in their own lives, and to consider how they have been the vehicle for God’s other vessels. Reading the Gospels is a good place to find stories that illustrate how Jesus had mercy upon those in need of healing. The story found in John 5 seems particularly appropriate for this reflection, for it shows Jesus helping, without being asked, a man he comes upon who is infirm.

In our reflection on this story, we might ask ourselves when we have noticed someone in need and reached out to help them. We might also ask ourselves about times when we have not cared enough to notice, or when we noticed and chose not to get involved.

One of the things Pope Francis is frequently asked about is the Holy Father’s compassion and concern for the poor. This is a point he insists upon in all of his papal exhortations and homilies. It is a reminder of how we are called to live as Jesus did, to live lives of compassion and mercy.

In our reflection on the story of John 5, we might ask ourselves how we have responded when we have been asked to help someone in need. We might also reflect on how we have responded when we have been asked to help someone in need.

One of the things we can do on Divine Mercy Sunday is to reflect on how we have responded to the mercy of others. We might ask ourselves how we have responded to the mercy of others, and how we have responded to the mercy of God. We might also reflect on how we have responded to the mercy of others.

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From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Early Church: What we know about St. Peter

(Second in a series of columns)

About 14 years after Jesus ascended into heaven, in the year 104, King Herod Agrippa II had the Apostle James, the brother of John, beheaded. Then he had Peter arrested, reportedly planning to have him executed, too. This was despite the fact that the Acts of the Apostles tells Peter’s story of miraculous release from prison by an angel. He went to the home of Mark’s mother, where people were praying for him. The maid Rhoda answered the knock at the door. When she saw Peter, instead of letting him in, she rushed to tell the people that Peter was there, leaving Peter to continue knocking. When they finally opened the door, he quickly explained what had happened and told them to report it to James, the cousin of Jesus. Then Peter “left and went to another place.” (Acts 12:17), leaving James in charge of the community in Jerusalem. Although it’s disputed, scholars believe that this James was the son of Alpheus, the Apostle usually called James the Less by some of his Gospel writers. It’s believed that his mother was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. I’ll write more about his next week.

Where did Peter go when he went to another place? We don’t know. After the episode mentioned above, Acts concentrates on Paul’s missions rather than Peter’s. We know that he was in Antioch while Paul was there because Paul uprighted him for eating only with Jewish converts and not with Gentiles, too, as he had been doing before the Jewish converts arrived (Acts 15:11-14). However, Peter was back in Jerusalem by the year 50, when the Council of Jerusalem agreed that Gentile converts did not have to practice all of the Law of Moses. He spoke on behalf of the Gentiles, saying, “We believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they.” (Acts 15:11) This is the last mention of Peter from Acts.

From other sources, we learn that Peter then embarked on an extensive preaching tour of Asia Minor, apparently accompanied by his wife, whose name might, or might not, have been Perpetua. Peter mentioned her in his First Letter to the Corinthians when he was defending himself, saying that he should have the same rights as other Apostles: “Do we not have the right to take along a Christian wife, as do the rest of the ministers, and members of the Lord, and Cephas?” (1 Cor 9:5).

Peter ended up in Rome, but we don’t know when he arrived there. Tradition holds that he was imprisoned for nine months in the Mammertine Prison before he was set upon by a mob (Acts 12:1-4). However, the Catholic Encyclopedia says that there is no reliable evidence that he was imprisoned there. Of course, there is reliable evidence that he was buried where St. Peter’s Basilica now stands.

The Human Side/John F. Fink

The missionary spirit that moves the Church

It is one thing to read history, yet more impressive to touch it. Recently, I had the pleasure of visiting the Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Rincón de La Punta in Carmel, Calif. The mission, which was founded in June 1770, is where Blessed Junipero Serra worked and died. As I viewed the cell in which he slept, it brought back memories of his life.

He was born in Spain and joined the Franciscans. Even though he was a brilliant student and could have remained in Spain, he opted instead to embark for the missions of Mexico. Early on, he was stricken with an injury that would plague him throughout his life. The injury, however, did not deter him from establishing missions and making long journeys on foot to baptize and confirm thousands of indigenous people.

I viewed an old saddle used by the early missionaries. I wondered what it was like to come from the Spanish countryside to a foreign country and learn its customs and how easy it is to violate a custom. For example, in one case I read about, many of the indigenous children the missionaries encountered were undernourished. As was customary in Spain, milk was given to children to bolster and improve their strength. However, the indigenous children couldn’t tolerate milk. It was one of many hard lessons the Franciscan missionaries had to learn.

As I viewed the old kitchen, sitting rooms and crude tools of the times in the museum, I wondered what it was like for the missionary spirit in our Church. Why do men and women opt for a foreign culture, learn its customs and literally forsake family and the comforts of home? No doubt a sense of youthful adventure is one of the driving forces in missionaries. But we learned, when I visited Guatemala, wasteland fades quickly when you get amebic dysentery or your hand is cut and you have to make a bandage. I don’t need you more than a sense of adventure to survive.

Ultimately, the drive behind the missionary spirit is the spirit of Christ who taught that the purpose of life is to serve others, especially those who need it. It is to live the Golden Rule: “treat others as you want to be treated; to keep the heart rule over yourself by allowing it to warm another’s heart.”

Come September, Blessed Serra will be canonized. Yes, we will extol his virtues, but it will also be a time to extol the missionary spirit upon which our Church is founded.

(Father Eugene Hemrick writes for Catholic News Service.)

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Spirit will lead eccumenical participants to fulfill Jesus’ call for unity

Acronyms abound in our world today. When once was Kentucky Fried Chicken now KFC? The same is true in the Church. We have RCTA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults), DRE (director of religious education) and TCA (United Catholic Appeal). In ecclesiastical work, acronyms also abound.

Take ARCIC: “Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission” created in 1969, which seeks to make eccumenical progress between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. For more than four decades, ARCIC has sought to focus on the differences between the Anglican and the Catholic faiths. Their meetings have been worldwide, with more than 300 participants.

In the first phase of the commission from 1970-81—known as ARCIC I—the group produced documents on topics as mixed religion marriages, eucharistic doctrine, ministry and ordination, and universal Church. ARCIC II spanned from 1983 to 2011. Their published works from this time covered issues such as the question of salvation and the Church, the Church as communion, the gift of authority, Mary, and other documents.

The documents from both ARCIC I and II resulted in follow-up comments and criticisms by the Anglican Church and the Pontifical Commission. For a complete listing and access to the documents produced, log on to http://bit.ly/1NDu2y.

The International Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultative Committee (ARCIC) was established in 2002. Their focus is to find ways to put into practice the agreements which ARCIC has reached and which have been accepted by the two communions. Already, partial work has been ongoing in the United States and Canada through ARCCUSA (Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation USA). Dialogue between the United States of America, sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. For example, Anglican USA’s’s website has the following document, “Five Affirmations on the Eucharist as Sacrifice,” is directly connected to the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission dialogue. (For the text, log on to http://bit.ly/1Nd09h).

The results of dialogue have been impressive. Nonetheless, some Catholics and members of the Anglican Communion have found them less than satisfactory. Challenges to the dialogue do exist. For instance, the Anglican ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopacy in the U.S. and in the United Kingdom (Episcopalian), and the Anglican ordination of a man in a committed gay relationship in the U.S. led then Pope John Paul II to suspend the international dialogue from 2003-05.

Later, a stumbling block for the Anglican, whose voice Pope Benedict XVI established the personal ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter in England and Wales in 2011, and in the U.S. in 2012. The ordinariate allows Anglicans to be received into the full communion of the Church while retaining aspects of their spiritual patrimony.

But ARCIC resumed its work in 2005 when the dialogue again in 2005, thus beginning the group’s third phase. They are looking at the Church in local and universal communion, and how the local and universal Church comes to discern right ethical teaching.

Dialogue is a massive undertaking requiring years of patient work, rooted in charity and a common longing for unity. Though there are obstacles and challenges, the Holy Spirit will guide the participants to fulfill Jesus’ call for unity.

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism. He is also dean of the Terre Haute deanery and pastor of St. Patrick and St. Margaret Mary parishes, both in Terre Haute.†)

Catholic Education Outreach/Gina Fleming

We are called to serve as God’s instruments in building his kingdom

“I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is doing a wonderful work on the earth.”

These words were written in 1934 by Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, and are considered to be her role as Christian stewards. Our mission as stewards is that we are disciples of Lord Jesus Christ, who consciously decided to follow him no matter what. In a sense, we are called to be the “little pencils” or “writing utensils” with which God can continue his love letter to the world.

“In the source of all goodness, the Creator of life, God simply invites us into relationship with him. There is no better way to show our love and appreciation for the gifts with which we have been blessed—including one another—to follow the teachings and example of Jesus Christ and to serve joyfully knowing that “all things work together for good for those who love God” (Rom 8:28).

The work of Christian stewards throughout centrum of Indiana is seen as a partnership with God—a collaborative endeavor in which we, the artist, and we are enriched, are enabled and are served as the tools used to create and develop masterpieces.

The work of Christian stewards when planning festivals, fundraisers and social events. We witness it through the charities and the organizations that are provided through our Church ministries—retreats, book studies and other internal events. We are to experience these joyful encounters with our Father in heaven, as we say “prayers” and are shown in the drafting of his beautiful love letter to the world.

Our church stewardship does not come without its struggles. We often busy ourselves with daily expectations at work, and with tasks and chores at home. We can become complacent as we look around and see that there are many others who can serve in our place.

Yet Jesus calls each of us by name to join him in the building of God’s kingdom, to bear his grace, our hands, hearts and minds can be used to honor and glorify him. When we remain open to his service, the struggles are simply heightened opportunities to be guided by the palm of his writing hand.

We have the same role as Christian stewards. God has entrusted us to work carefully, lovingly and faithfully, and by saying “yes,” our Catholic Church is stronger and more equipped to spread God’s love to the world. Our Catholic education in our schools, faith formation, youth ministry and young adult ministry comes to discern right ethical teaching.

As God’s stewards in the beautiful masterpiece that only he can create, we shall come to know him more deeply, love him more fully, and serve him completely.

(Gina Fleming is superintendent of Catholic schools for the archdiocese.)
**Friday, April 24**

St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, priest and martyr
Acts 9:1-20
Psalm 117:1-2b, 2
John 6:52-59

**Saturday, April 25**

St. Mark, evangelist
Psalm 5:3-5b, 14
Psalm 89:2-3, 6-7, 16-17
Mark 16:15-20

**Sunday, April 26**

Fourth Sunday of Easter
Acts 4:8-12
Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29
1 John 3:1-2
Psalm 10:11-18

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**My Journey to God**

By Dr. C. David Hay

(From the Easter series)

We each have a guardian angel.
Blessed by the peace she brings
And although we cannot see her
We feel the brush of wings.

No heavenly clash of thunder,
Nor vision of golden throne,
Just the faithful certitude
That we are not alone.

She brings us light in darkness,
Gives calm in times of fear;
Hope lives in the knowing
That she is always near.

Compassion for our tears
Comfort with each nod;
Her mission is her presence of fate—
She is a gift from God.

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** Angels**

By Dr. C. David Hay

(From the Easter series)

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That we are not alone.

She brings us light in darkness,
Gives calm in times of fear;
Hope lives in the knowing
That she is always near.

Compassion for our tears
Comfort with each nod;
Her mission is her presence of fate—
She is a gift from God.

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**Daily Readings**

**Monday, April 20**

Acts 6:8-15
Psalm 119:23-24, 26-27, 29-30
John 6:22-29

**Tuesday, April 21**

Acts 7:51-8:1a
Psalm 31:3cd-4, 6, 7b, 8a, 17, 21ab
John 6:30-39

**Wednesday, April 22**

Acts 8:1b-8
Psalm 66:1-3a, 4-7a
John 6:33-40

**Thursday, April 23**

St. George, martyr
St. Adalbert, bishop and martyr
Acts 8:26-40
Psalm 66:6-8, 16-17, 20
John 6:44-51

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**Third Sunday of Easter/Msg: Owen F. Campion**

**Sunday Readings**

**Sunday, April 19, 2015**

- 1 John 2:11-14

The Acts of the Apostles furnishes the first biblical reading for this weekend’s Mass readings. Almost every Sunday in the Easter season features a reading from this book of the New Testament. In this reading, Peter preaches to crowds in Jerusalem. Americans are very accustomed to impassioned preaching. They hear it in their own churches, hear it on the radio or see fiery preachers on television. Preaching about salvation and God’s mercy is common. Actually, to preach is to assume a mighty role and a great responsibity. Preaching, after all, by definition is not simply lecturing or speaking aloud. It is speaking in the very name of God. Those who preached, by ancient Jewish standards, were privileged people in society. None chose to be a preacher. Rather, God selected each preacher. Peter stood before this Jerusalem crowd after having been called to preach. Most importantly, he spoke in the place of Jesus. He preached the words of Jesus, on behalf of Jesus. This reading makes three points. First, it establishes the identity of Peter. He is an Apostle, Second, he is the chief of the Apostles. He speaks in the names of them all. Finally, through Peter and the other Apostles, the salvation given by Jesus still reaches humanity. They continue the Lord’s work.

Those who have been called to preach see themselves as part of the Lord’s Church, a Body of Christ, and therefore, ambassadors of Jesus. The role of the preacher is that of a shepherd: to gather the flock and protect them from harm. The Church calls this to the saintly and divinely appointed. The Bible is by definition the word of God. All people, even all believers, must die. But as Jesus rose, they too will rise from death, from the living death of sin and hopelessness, from eternal death. All people, even all believers, must die. But as Jesus rose, they too will rise from death, from the living death of sin and hopelessness, from eternal death.

In these readings, the Church calls us to the fact that our redemption is in Jesus. He rescues us from death, from the living death of sin and hopelessness, from eternal death. All people, even all believers, must die. But as Jesus rose, they too will rise from death, from the living death of sin and hopelessness, from eternal death.

We reach and learn of the risen Jesus through Peter and the other Apostles. We hear Peter’s preaching. They hear it in their own churches, hear it on the radio or see fiery preachers on television. Preaching about salvation and God’s mercy is common. Actually, to preach is to assume a mighty role and a great responsibility. Preaching, after all, by definition is not simply lecturing or speaking aloud. It is speaking in the very name of God. Those who preached, by ancient Jewish standards, were privileged people in society. None chose to be a preacher. Rather, God selected each preacher. Peter stood before this Jerusalem crowd after having been called to preach. Most importantly, he spoke in the place of Jesus. He preached the words of Jesus, on behalf of Jesus. This reading makes three points. First, it establishes the identity of Peter. He is an Apostle, Second, he is the chief of the Apostles. He speaks in the names of them all. Finally, through Peter and the other Apostles, the salvation given by Jesus still reaches humanity. They continue the Lord’s work.

The First Epistle of St. John provides the second reading. The epistles of John are alike in their eloquence and splendid order and peace of life in God. St. Luke’s Gospel provides the last reading. It is another resurrection narrative, and it looks back to the Emmaus story, which describes two disciples walking to a small town outside Jerusalem encountering the risen Lord and then recognizing him as the “break of the bread,” or Eucharist (Lk 24:35). As this pair of disciples recounted their story to fellow believers in Jerusalem, Jesus stood in their midst. He was no longer bound by location or time. Risen from earthly life, victorious over sin, Jesus now lived in the fullness of eternity—still in the Incarnation, true God and true man. They showered the disciples with favour and feet. The disciples were indeed encountering the Crucified. But the Crucified had overcome death and had lived!

Reflection
The Church continues to summon us to the joy of Easter celebration. Christ lives!
The readings once more this week exclaim about the resurrection. As St. Paul said, the resurrection is the bedrock of our belief. In these readings, the Church calls us to the fact that our redemption is in Jesus. He rescues us from death, from the living death of sin and hopelessness, from eternal death.

We feel the brush of wings. We each have a guardian angel. Blessed by the peace she brings And although we cannot see her We feel the brush of wings.

No heavenly clash of thunder, Nor vision of golden throne, Just the faithful certitude That we are not alone.

She brings us light in darkness, Gives calm in times of fear; Hope lives in the knowing That she is always near.

Compassion for our tears Comfort with each nod; Her mission is her presence of fate— She is a gift from God.

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**Angels**

We each have a guardian angel.
Blessed by the peace she brings And although we cannot see her We feel the brush of wings.

No heavenly clash of thunder, Nor vision of golden throne, Just the faithful certitude That we are not alone.

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**Question Corner**

**Fr. Kenneth Doyle**

**Use of tobacco products is not inherently evil, but has negative moral effects**

During the 1970s, at least in our part of the country, there were many priests who smoked cigarettes or cigars. Some of them were effective in their ministry, and obviously loved God greatly. But when they died, as some of them already have, can they still go to heaven? Does Jesus’ admonition, “Nothing that goes into one’s mouth can harm him, but only that which comes out of him—avarice, greed, etc.” (Mark 7:21)?

Yes! Can’t penitents have the option of confessing their sins either face to face or in a traditional confession? Since some find it uncomfortable to sit directly in front of the priest and be identified, why do some churches force that method? (City of origin withheld)

Catholic penitents do, in fact, have the right to anonymity in confession if they so desire. The Church’s Code of Canon Law says: “The conference of bishops is to establish norms regarding the confessional; it is to take care, however, that there are always confessionalists with a fixed grate between the penitent and the confessor in an open place so that the faithful who wish to can use them freely” (#964.2)

Many people do feel comfortable sitting in front of a priest and confessing face to face.

When I hear confessions each Saturday afternoon, probably 85 percent of penitents choose the face-to-face option, while the others kneel or sit behind an opaque screen—and the choice seems to bear no relationship to the age of the penitent.

Still, care must be taken to accommodate those who prefer the traditional manner of confessing, and so confessional rooms are typically constructed to allow either option. And at a penance service, when there are several individual confessors, at least one of the priests should be seated behind a screen or grate to allow for the choice of anonymity.

*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 are also appreciated. Please include name, address, parish and telephone number with submissions.

Send material for consideration to “My Journey to God,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202 or e-mail to nhoefer@archindy.org.
We are dealing with human beings, and human beings do not respond to anything more than as technicians properly care. They need human kindness, not just respect. [A woman’s] heart swells when love is not only understood (Part 1: #418).

Women realize that a pure and generous love is not being loved in this world by the people we believe, and by whom we are driven to love (Part 1: #418).

[Woman knew] when it is time to speak of God in the church, but not to use language (Part 1: #418). You must get rid of the idea that anyone who is spoken of can do that of which they care.

Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Father James Blome's talk on the gift of spiritual healing.

St. John Paul the Great said that mankind is living in the greatest battle of light and darkness since the flood of Noah” (reference to a talk given by Cardinal Karl Woywiat at the Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia in 1976). ‘We live in a time of extraordinary change, both religious and social. But you know in truth—you know the end of the book, right?’

The Bible says Jesus was here for us, this spiritual blessing in the heavens. His sons and daughters don’t often know about or make use of the many gifts he has given to us. Even our youth programs can be such a gift for glory. ‘You were made for heaven.’ ‘Loving until it hurts’

I believe that every woman of God can be a priest and be in her family and be in her community. The Holy Spirit will work through any woman who is open. ‘At the heart of Catholicism is a relationship with Jesus Christ. He is everlastingly loving and everlastingly loving in his love for you. Tell him you want to know him. ‘Always be ready to give an answer. [Women know] when it is time to speak of God in the church, but not to use language (Part 1: #418). Women are up to this task as all women are up to this task. ‘I believe that every woman of God can be a priest and be in her family and be in her community. The Holy Spirit will work through any woman who is open.

‘I thought it would be a wonderful opportunity to share with other women our Catholic faith—and it has been. The Holy Spirit is alive here.’

I am so happy to be here, so blessed. The conference is the best ever. I would do it again. ‘There are parts of this vineyard where only your voice will be heard, certainly in your families, possibly in your workplace, with some of your friends. And knowing the Lord, you’ll be given what to say, and you will touch people in a way that no priest or bishop can ever touch.’

‘We get so many messages saying that what we believe is wrong or evil. It’s nice to be with so many other people who believe and think like you do. It’s good to get the inspiration and see other people be inspired, too.’

I would do it again. ‘There are parts of this vineyard where only your voice will be heard, certainly in your families, possibly in your workplace, with some of your friends. And knowing the Lord, you’ll be given what to say, and you will touch people in a way that no priest or bishop can ever touch.’
FAITH
continued from page 1

humanity and hope—and even small steps toward healing.
The 26-year-old member of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Indianapolis has known the help and the humanity of her friends, her family and the Catholic community.

She feels hope and a living connection to Nathan every time she holds and looks into the eyes of her daughter Cecilia, who will celebrate her first birthday on April 25.

She continues to strive toward the promise of a future as she works to earn a master’s degree to become a physician’s assistant—a goal she is scheduled to complete in November, a goal that will help her fulfill her longtime dream of helping people in need.

Then there are the small steps she has made toward healing emotionally, including her unexpected, close friendship with Cristina Buerkle and the support group they have started for young Catholic widows.

A heartbreakingly connection

In truth, the friendship between Jennifer and Cristina started from a shared heartbreak that both of them desperately wish they could have been spared.

They both knew the joy of finding the right person to marry.

They both felt blessed in being married to someone who shared their deep Catholic faith.

They both knew the excitement of becoming pregnant with their first child during the first year of their marriage, and sharing that anticipation with their husbands.

So Cristina was struggling with her own grief and heartache when a friend told her about the details of Nathan’s death, and suggested that Cristina should reach out to Jennifer.

Two weeks later, Cristina did. In mid-April of 2014, she sat down in her Florida home and wrapped a special gift that she sent to a young widow in Indiana that she had never met.

“We are in this together”

Cristina’s present to Jennifer was modeled after a gift she had made for her son—after James had died and she was still pregnant with their son, who would be named James Paul and be called “JP.”

“There’s a kids’ board book version of Heaven is for Real.” Cristina says. “I was just 12 weeks pregnant when James passed away, and I just want JP to get to know his dad as much as possible. I’m sure James is in heaven, and I printed pictures of my husband and pasted them throughout the book. I read the book to JP at night.”

She made a similar version of the book for Cecilia, using baby shower photos of Nathan and Jennifer from their Facebook page. Jennifer was touched when she received the book in the mail.

“She included a message, telling me her story and that we were in this together,” Jennifer recalls. “It touched me. I had other people reach out to me, and I appreciated that, but with Cristina, it was even deeper from the beginning because of our Catholic faith, and being able to talk about things, and because there were so many similarities between us.

“There aren’t that many newlyweds who are pregnant who lose their husbands, and who are also deep in their Catholic faith. I think we both gave each other the inspiration we needed. I was never to widowed than she was, but I also had my baby before she did. When she was getting ready to deliver her son, I was able to tell her, ‘You will get through this. I’ve gotten through this.’ ”

Jennifer also came to visit her new friend for the first time during a difficult period in Cristina’s life.

“She’s my sister now”

“She came to visit in November which was a hard time for me, with James’ birthday and the first anniversary of his death,” says Cristina, a member of St. Luke Parish in Palm Springs, Fla. “By then, we had gotten to know each other through e-mails back and forth.

“It was good to meet each other and hug each other. We stayed up late one night talking about things that were on our hearts. We talked about James and Nate, our marriages, our struggles and what we’ve been missing.”

We talked...
about how we don’t want to grieve forever. We want our family to see us happy and strong and faithful.”

During that visit, Jennifer arranged for a surprise for Cecilia. She contacted a Florida photographer to do a sunrise photo shoot with the two of them and their children. When photographer Melissa Ashley learned their stories, she did the photo session free of charge.

“It was just fun to smile and laugh and take pictures,” Cristina recalls. “Later in the evening, we had a little bit of a hangout.”

The two friends met again in Florida in March, this time during an emotionally difficult period for Jennifer. When she turned 26 on March 17, it was her first birthday since Nathan’s death. She missed having him by her side. There was also the approaching anniversary that she dreaded.

“Cristina was there on my birthday so that was nice,” Jennifer says. “Our friendship has been a strong gift to me. I didn’t realize I needed it. I knew we had this connection, but I didn’t know how important it would be. She’s my sister now. Our lives are so interwoven. She’s one of the few people who can really understand what I’m going through.”

Jennifer takes a deep breath and adds, “There are times when I just feel like I’m going crazy. I can call her up and tell her what’s going on, and she’ll say, ‘I’m going through the exact same thing’ or ‘I’ve been there.’ And I don’t feel so crazy anymore.”

“When you lose your spouse, you lose a part of yourself. I’m trying to learn how to live in this new life, but half of me is gone. So finding someone else who has an understanding and, sharing that grief, it’s just fulfilling.”

That understanding led Jennifer and Cristina to form a Facebook page called the St. Paul’s Young Catholic Widow Group, in honor of the patron saint of widows.

“There are 15 of us,” says Cristina, during a phone conversation from her home in Florida. “It’s been really nice to have that sisterhood with women who have been in our shoes and have our faith in common.”

Jennifer notes, “Because we felt that need between each other. We knew that after your husband dies, you can pray for them and also ask them to intercede for you. That’s just a different, special relationship that we as Catholics believe in.

“It’s nice to have other women who believe in that perspective, who are using their faith rather than turning away from it. It’s nice to have that connection with them. It’s nice to know that you have someone else who is walking surrounding you who could demonstrate that it could still be a rock.”

The bond between a dad and a daughter

As Jennifer talks, she sits at a table in the home of her parents, Ann and Karl Swihart. Behind her, on the wall, is a sign that was given to her by her mother’s family, a sign that says, “Because someone else loves you is heaven, there’s a little bit of heaven in your home.”

On Jennifer’s lap, Cecilia smiles, squirms and laughs as she eats a snack. Holding their daughter, Jennifer naturally thinks of Nathan—her connections to him, and his connections to the child who has his name.

“She looks like Nate, which helps. She has her own mind. She’s a stubborn girl. She is free-spirited. She gets that from me,” Jennifer says with a laugh. “She’s free-spirited. She gets that from me, and his connections to the child who has his name. She’s one of the few people who can really understand what I’m going through.”

Jennifer notes, “Because we felt that need between each other. We knew that after your husband dies, you can pray for them and also ask them to intercede for you. That’s just a different, special relationship that we as Catholics believe in.”

“It’s nice to have other women who believe in that perspective, who are using their faith rather than turning away from it. It’s nice to have that connection with them. It’s nice to know that you have someone else who is walking surrounding you who could demonstrate that it could still be a rock.”

Prayers for help

“But I didn’t even have the energy to pray in the beginning,” she says. “It was difficult. But I never doubted God. I feel like, so I don’t know how to describe it, but she’s 19 weeks pregnant now.”

As she does, she calls upon Nathan to intercede for her. She admits that her reasons for those requests aren’t always faith-directed.

“Sometimes, I’m selfish and ask Nate to help Cecilia sleep through the night so I can get a good night’s sleep,” she says with a smile. “I feel like that’s his shift sometimes.”

Jennifer pulls Cecilia toward her as she adds, “She is what keeps me going. I don’t know how to describe it. He had a role, he had a purpose in our family. He had the motivation to finish school or just get out of bed in the morning, especially in the beginning. But to provide a future for her motivates me to get up every morning and get going. There are still days when I want to stay in bed, but she wakes us up talking. And I just want to see her and see what she is doing. I don’t want to miss a moment of it.”

One moment that stands out to Jennifer occurred during a recent Sunday Mass when Cecilia repeatedly said, “Da Da.”

“I don’t know if it’s a coincidence, but I like to think she’s talking to her dad. I want her to know that he loves her and he’s watching over her. I want her to know just how good of a man he was. One of the things that upsets me the most is she’s not going to have that father role model that little girls need, that so important—and that role model of how a husband should treat his wife.

“Nate was a wonderful husband, and he would have been a wonderful dad, too. I want her to know those characteristics about him—and how important his faith was to him. I want her to grow up being just as faith-filled.”

Nathan’s faith has also helped Jennifer in the past year.

“Nate was a wonderful husband, and he would have been a wonderful dad, too. I want her to know those characteristics about him—and how important his faith was to him. I want her to grow up being just as faith-filled.”

Prayers for help

“Sometimes, I’m selfish and ask Nate to help Cecilia sleep through the night so I can get a good night’s sleep,” she says with a smile. “I feel like that’s his shift sometimes.”

She pauses before adding, “I actually have stories of people who have asked Nate to intercede for them as well. And they told me about it, and I was like, ‘Man, I just want to cry, and I just want to talk to him—’

“A mom was struggling in labor, and she got into a terrible situation. She was like, ‘I don’t know what to do, and whenever I think of seeing Nate again in heaven are really real that I think I just times better about meeting Jesus—and that there’s something I ever really felt. So it almost gives a more realistic view on that love that God has for us—and what that can mean. I’m still working on that.”

As she does, she calls upon Nathan to intercede for her. She admits that her reasons for those requests aren’t always faith-directed.

“Sometimes, I’m selfish and ask Nate to help Cecilia sleep through the night so I can get a good night’s sleep,” she says with a smile. “I feel like that’s his shift sometimes.”

When I die, I want my friends and family—and you especially—to know that I left this world in God’s friendship and so await you in heaven for when your own time should come. And I thought about this, it struck

me that the only way to pass on such assurance (to myself) not least of all is to love radically at every moment. For death does not pre-announce itself not for most people at all. What a terrible thing it would be to die after an argument with you or after sinning against God! To die unconfessed is surely the worst thing that can happen to anyone.

I must continue drinking from the source of love Himself (I am to become a flowing spring to others. Please pray that God will teach me how to love like Him. I love you.

Love, Nate

After sharing Nathan’s letter, Jennifer finished her blog entry with a message that was part a reminder for herself, and part a reminder for everyone else who read it:

“Let us all remember to have faith and love like Nate.”

Fundraisers to benefit foundation that supports children who have lost a parent

The family of Nathan Trapuzzano has established The Nathan Trapuzzano Memorial Foundation to honor the life of the 24-year-old newlywed father-to-be who was murdered on April 1, 2014, near his home in Indianapolis.

The foundation’s purpose is to provide financial relief and support to children who have lost a parent.

Two fundraisers in May in central Indiana will benefit the new foundation.

The second annual Trapuzzano Benefit Ride will begin at 10 a.m. on May 16 at Haye’s Bar & Grill in Camby with kickstands up at noon.

On May 17, NateWalk is scheduled to start at 1 p.m. at Edna BaiL Lacy Park in Indianapolis.

Activities will include a memorial walk, auction, 50/50 raffle, food, vendors, live music and games.

Online registration and donation forms are available at www.thenathanfoundation.org/get-involved.html.
Child care bill would minimize ‘cliff effect’ for low-income families

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

A bill to assist low-income families by providing a graduated phase-out of their child care subsidy is moving through the Indiana General Assembly and is eligible for conference committee negotiation. The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) supports the legislation.

The proposal, House Bill 1616 authored by Rep. Ed Clere, R-New Albany, addresses the economic phenomenon known as the ‘cliff effect’ by providing a tapering off of child care benefits rather than an automatic cut off. The ‘cliff effect’ phenomenon occurs when a family begins to earn above the limits set by the state, and becomes ineligible for various government subsidies for food, housing, child care and other benefits. For some low-income families, this means earning more income creates a more serious financial hardship for them.

Glen Tebbe, executive director of the ICC, who represents the Catholic Church in Indiana on matters of public policy, said, “Helping low-income families become self-sufficient is good public policy. The legislation would have a big impact on families in need while having a minimal impact on the state’s budget.”

Clere said, “It’s a very simple bill, and I hope the beginning of a larger conversation about this concept of the ‘cliff effect’ and how we might apply this with other assistance programs where we want to help transition people off of assistance and to self-sufficiency.”

Clere added that currently the child care benefit is eliminated at 170 percent of the federal poverty level. “Someone can make just a little bit more money and lose their entire benefit. These individuals are doing better, yet are worse off financially due to the loss of their child care benefit,” he said. “This affects thousands of Hoosiers who rely on this benefit who are trying to improve themselves through education.”

Clere explained that the bill increases the phase-out for the child care subsidy from the current 170 percent of the federal poverty level to 250 percent of the federal poverty level. He added the legislation also helps families of five or more to be able to continue to receive the subsidy. “As families get higher and higher on the income scale, they would make higher and higher co-pays to their child care subsidy,” Clere said. “The bottom line is we ought to be structuring programs such as this to encourage families to gain more skills to advance in the workforce and become self-sufficient.”

Sen. Vaneta Becker, R-Evansville, a Senate sponsor of the bill, said, “I think it’s important for us as legislators to be reminded that 69-71 percent of all jobs in Indiana do not pay a living wage. We are always talking about how great we are at economic development and job growth, but when I hear these statistics, it’s extremely alarming because it really means that these families can work all they want, and they’re still not going to have enough money. We need to be doing more about providing and incentivizing good paying jobs, not just jobs that are below the federal poverty level.”

Derek Thomas, senior policy analyst for Indiana Institute for Working Families, a program of the Indiana Community Action Agency, testified in support of the legislation.

“We’ve been researching benefit cliffs. We hear stories from families who are turning down raises and full-time work, or not gotten married in order to keep their benefits,” he said. “Poverty is still growing in Indiana. The middle class is still shrinking by even the most generous of estimates. This is just one small way that we can allow access to the middle class and reward hard work.”

Tebbe said, “This bill received strong support in the House, passing 94-0, and by a Senate panel. Even though it got held up in the Senate Appropriations committee and failed to pass the full Senate, because it passed one chamber it is eligible to be part of a conference committee process.

“We are going to continue to work to get it passed before the April 29 session adjournment deadline.”

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

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May 5, 2015 • 9 am – 3 pm
Grieving Gracefully... Into a Future Full of Hope
with Sr. Connie Kramer, SP

Grief, like the natural rhythm of the waves at the ocean’s edge, is a natural part of one’s life journey. However, like the rocks that are at the shore which can often stop or hinder the flow of water, unexpressed grief can stop the natural flow of the grief process and leave one with a broken heart unable to be healed. Choosing to embrace the grief process as a sacred journey, often’s one up to new life in totally unexpected ways.

Join Sr. Connie for this day-long retreat which will focus on understanding the grief process and embracing it. In this group setting, there is hope and healing awaiting those willing to share their sacred grief journey with God and others.

Sr. Connie Kramer, SP is a member of the Sisters of Providence and has ministered within the archdiocese for many years. She is a professionally trained certified group counselor, grief specialist and spiritual director.

s40 per person includes two meals, the program and materials.

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Summary of Financial Status

The Catholic Community Foundation, Inc.

This summary of the financial status of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis ("Archdiocese") reflects activities of the Chancery and certain affiliated agencies with direct accountability to the Most Reverend Joseph Tobin, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. The information presented has been derived from the audited financial statements and does not include the activities of parishes, missions and schools of the Archdiocese. All significant transactions among entities detailed in this summary have been eliminated. The complete audited financial statements are available for public inspection at www.archindy.org/finance/archdiocese.html.

Chancery and Certain Entities of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, net</td>
<td>3,479,504</td>
<td>3,853,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total receivables, net</td>
<td>$49,848,152</td>
<td>$50,624,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other assets</td>
<td>2,514,174</td>
<td>707,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total assets</td>
<td>$298,541,995</td>
<td>$274,194,337</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chancery and Certain Entities of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Combined Statements of Activities for the years ended June 30, 2014, and 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORT AND REVENUES</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>$10,593,348</td>
<td>$10,387,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service fees</td>
<td>25,288,118</td>
<td>23,425,777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital campaigns and contributions</td>
<td>11,487,228</td>
<td>10,394,658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ Our Hope Appeal</td>
<td>5,214,070</td>
<td>4,957,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales of goods and services</td>
<td>4,910,700</td>
<td>4,684,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program service fees and other</td>
<td>7,186,827</td>
<td>6,565,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other public support</td>
<td>5,632,213</td>
<td>5,362,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest income and investment return</td>
<td>26,040,499</td>
<td>18,600,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total support and revenues</td>
<td>$96,753,063</td>
<td>$84,379,792</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chancery and Certain Entities of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Cash and Investments in Millions of Dollars
The Chancery provides leadership, guidance and support to the Catholic community to proclaim the word of God, celebrate the sacraments and exercise the ministry of charity. The following accountability report reflects that the Archdiocese operates under the Archbishops’ definition of stewardship and continues to be good stewards of the Church’s resources in leading the Catholic Church of Central and Southern Indiana. For fiscal year 2014, the chancellor and the archdiocese of the Archdiocese continue to operate at a balance or surplus as compared to budget. The financial results were benefitted by a very generous bequest, lower parish bad debt expense, and the reversal of an uncertain tax liability. The parish bad debt expense continues to trend down as we proactively identify and work with parishes experiencing negative financial issues. Our foundation’s net assets increased to $170 million with $7.1 million distributed to parishes, schools, cemeteries and ministry agencies this past year. The Archdiocese and lay retirement plans continue to show improvement from the underfunding during the 2008-2010 time periods due to the positive trends in the equity markets.

The Archdiocese welcomes students and their families who are committed to the mission and vision of our Catholic schools to choose Catholic education. In the 2013-2014 school year, the Archdiocese accepted 5,144 Indiana Choice Scholarships, which is 29.8% of our total enrollment, an increase from 3,724, 24.6% of total enrollment in the 2012-2013 school year. As a participant in the Indiana Choice Scholarship program, we continue to comply with the policies and procedures required under the program as good stewards of any resources we have received. In conjunction with parish charitable ministries, Archdiocesan Catholic Charities works with individuals, families and communities to help them meet their needs, overcome their obstacles, eliminate oppression, and build a just and compassionate society in central and southern Indiana. Our five agencies, located in Bloomington, New Albany, Indianapolis, Tell City and Terre Haute provide 35 programs, including homeless shelters, food banks and pantries, pregnancy and adoption services, counseling, adult daycare and support services, and disaster relief assistance. In fiscal year 2014, the agency provided help and created hope for over 181,000 people within the state of Indiana with a budget of $12 million utilizing 280 staff members and 3,300 volunteers.

Chancery Fiscal Year 2014 Operating Results

For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014, parish stewardship, through Sunday and holy day collections, and operating expenses decreased by 2% as compared to the previous fiscal year. The 2% decrease compared to fiscal year 2013 is partially related to financial reporting issues as the Archdiocese implements the Corrected in the Spirit initiative in many of our deaneries. Many of our parishes continue to see the positive trend of increased or consistent giving at the parish level, which demonstrates the strong and steady member commitment despite our current economic environment and the changes facing many of our parishes.

Parish Sunday and Holy Day Collections (2004 through 2014)

Parish and Archdiocesan Stewardship

The FY 2014 annual parish and archdiocesan community United Catholic Appeal: Christ Our Hope experienced a modest increase in recorded revenues. The FY 2014 appeal also enabled parishes to direct resources into those ministries closest to their community. The appeal received pledges totaling $5.5 million in fiscal year 2014, compared to the pledges of $5.4 million in FY 2013. While the annual appeal continues to trend upward, we are still below our historic highs.

United Catholic Appeal: Christ Our Hope (2005 through 2014)

Parish Services: Insurance and Benefit Plans

The Archdiocese operates several insurance plans, employee and priest benefit plans, and other services on behalf of parishes, schools, and agencies. Two of the larger plans are the lay employee health insurance plan and the property and liability insurance plan. Despite the challenging economic environment, both of these plans continue to experience positive results.

Property and Liability Insurance Plan

The property insurance plan also experienced positive results for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. The continued positive results have enabled us to fund a property insurance reserve fund in the Catholic Community Foundation of $9 million. The reserve fund was established to protect parishes, schools and agencies against catastrophic losses and help mitigate annual insurance cost increases. The Archdiocese was also able to maintain our self-insurance level at $1 million for the 2013-2014 fiscal year, which translates into lower premiums paid by our parishes, schools, and agencies for property and liability insurance.

Priest and Lay Employee Retirement Plan

The Archdiocese administers a defined benefit plan for the priests and both a defined benefit plan (Lay Pension Plan) and defined contribution plan (Lay 403(b) Plan) for eligible lay employees employed at the various parishes, schools, and agencies throughout the Archdiocese. We have continued the funding challenges that the Archdiocese and individual parishes face to fully fund the two defined benefit plans. While positive investment results will assist in closing the gap, the Archdiocese has also contributed additional funding to assist in alleviating the funding deficit. In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, the Lay Pension Plan of $6.3 million was made. Our most recent report from our actuarial firms as of January 1, 2013, indicates that the Lay Pension Plan was underfunded by $10.9 million for a funding level of 84%, an improvement from a 76% funding level in 2011. In September 2011 the Chancery announced changes to this plan and effective January 1, 2012, newly hired employees are eligible to participate in the Lay Pension Plan. Existing employees as of that date will continue to accrue benefits in the Lay Pension Plan. In addition to the Lay Pension Plan, the Archdiocese provides a retirement savings plan, or 403(b) Plan, whereby both employees and employer can contribute. Beginning in January 2012 the Archdiocese matches 50% of up to a maximum of $5,1 million in FY 2013. The Archdiocese matches 50% of up to a maximum of $5,1 million in FY 2013. While the increase in contributions to the Lay Pension Plan helps to alleviate the deficit, the Archdiocese continues to be challenged by parish operating deficits. The financial impact of these parish deficits shows up in the deposit and loan fund operated by the Archdiocese for its parishes (‘ADLF’). The ADLF has approximately $12.7 million in negative equity as a result of parish loans and interest forgiven over the last 20 years. The ADLF currently operates at a small surplus (inclusive of the current level of annual parish operating deficits), designed to slowly recover this negative equity over a period of years. Over the past several years, we’ve implemented a plan that is designed to help the struggling parishes navigate their financial troubles by identifying areas for improvement, improving the transparency to parishioners, and reducing or eliminating operating deficits and accumulated debt to the Archdiocese. These efforts are paying off for many parishes as we have fewer parishes with operating debt on their balance sheet and more parishes with a balanced budget.

Priest and Lay Employee Retirement Plan Fund Status

*Annual valuation reports are obtained every other year starting in 2011.

Yield Surplus

Lay Employee Retirement Plan Fund Status

Funded %

*2014 fiscal year appeal not complete as of printing.

Parish Services: Insurance and Benefit Plans

The FY 2014 property and liability insurance plan had a break even or surplus operating budget. For fiscal year 2013-2014 we ended the fiscal year $3.3 million or 10% ahead of budget on $34 million of operational expenses. The operations surpluses were generated mostly from unexpected premium reductions. We have also funded an endowment with the proceeds of premium reductions to help defray the costs to parishes, schools, and agencies.

United Catholic Appeal: Christ Our Hope

For fiscal year 2014, 3,724, 21.6% of total donations were accepted 5,144 Indiana Choice Scholarships, which demonstrates the strong and steady member commitment despite our current economic environment and the changes facing many of our parishes.

Parish Sunday and Holy Day Collections

The Chancery offices and agencies of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis completed its ninth consecutive year with a break even or surplus operating budget. For fiscal year 2013, the Archdiocese was able to maintain our self-insurance level at $1 million for the 2013-2014 insurance year. The Archdiocese administers a defined benefit plan for the priests and both a defined benefit plan (Lay Pension Plan) and defined contribution plan (Lay 403(b) Plan) for eligible lay employees employed at the various parishes, schools, and agencies throughout the Archdiocese. We have continued the funding challenges that the Archdiocese and individual parishes face to fully fund the two defined benefit plans. While positive investment results will assist in closing the gap, the Archdiocese has also contributed additional funding to assist in alleviating the funding deficit. In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, the Lay Pension Plan of $6.3 million was made. Our most recent report from our actuarial firms as of January 1, 2013, indicates that the Lay Pension Plan was underfunded by $10.9 million for a funding level of 84%, an improvement from a 76% funding level in 2011. In September 2011 the Chancery announced changes to this plan and effective January 1, 2012, newly hired employees are eligible to participate in the Lay Pension Plan. Existing employees as of that date will continue to accrue benefits in the Lay Pension Plan. In addition to the Lay Pension Plan, the Archdiocese provides a retirement savings plan, or 403(b) Plan, whereby both employees and employer can contribute. Beginning in January 2012 the Archdiocese matches 50% of up to a maximum of $5,1 million in FY 2013. The Archdiocese matches 50% of up to a maximum of $5,1 million in FY 2013. While the increase in contributions to the Lay Pension Plan helps to alleviate the deficit, the Archdiocese continues to be challenged by parish operating deficits. The financial impact of these parish deficits shows up in the deposit and loan fund operated by the Archdiocese for its parishes (“ADLF”). The ADLF has approximately $12.7 million in negative equity as a result of parish loans and interest forgiven over the last 20 years. The ADLF currently operates at a small surplus (inclusive of the current level of annual parish operating deficits), designed to slowly recover this negative equity over a period of years. Over the past several years, we’ve implemented a plan that is designed to help the struggling parishes navigate their financial troubles by identifying areas for improvement, improving the transparency to parishioners, and reducing or eliminating operating deficits and accumulated debt to the Archdiocese. These efforts are paying off for many parishes as we have fewer parishes with operating debt on their balance sheet and more parishes with a balanced budget.
Expenses Related to Sexual Misconduct Lawsuits

In fiscal year 2014, approximately $43,000 was spent to provide counseling for victims of sexual misconduct perpetrated or alleged to have been perpetrated by priests or lay employees of the Archdiocese. Approximately $47,000 was spent for these purposes in fiscal year 2013. Through January 2014, we have settled a total of twelve sexual abuse of sexual misconduct perpetrated or alleged to have been perpetrated by priests or lay employees of the Archdiocese, which contribute to these plans, is not included in the audited combined financial statements. There are neither separate valuations of plan benefits nor segregation of plan assets specifically for the Chancery.

Priest Retirement Plan Funded Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dollar Millions</th>
<th>Actuarially Valued</th>
<th>Funded %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Actuarial valuation reports are obtained every other year starting in 2011.

Archdiocesan Grants Awarded

Thanks to the generosity of the parishes in the Archdiocese and a special bequest, we have three endowments in the Catholic Community Foundation that have been established such that the annual distributions are used to award grants in the Archdiocese to parishes, schools and agencies. These grant opportunities are awarded through an application process and target home mission opportunities, growth and expansion initiatives in the Archdiocese; and matching grants for capital needs in our parishes, schools and agencies.

St. Francis Xavier Home Missions Fund

The St. Francis Xavier Home Mission Endowment Fund was established to provide grants to home mission parishes in the Archdiocese. The annual distribution from the endowment is combined with the funds the parishes direct that are collected over and above the parish United Catholic Appeal goal. These funds are then awarded to home mission parishes and schools. These grants began in 2002, and since their inception they have disbursed approximately $3.9 million to support our parishes and schools with the greatest needs. The endowment is that established to support these grants had a June 30, 2014 balance of $4.4 million, which allows us to distribute approximately $200,000 in grants each year. In 2014, the United Catholic Appeal overages added an additional $100,000, which allowed for a total of over $300,000 in grant awards.

Growth and Expansion Endowment Fund

The Growth and Expansion Endowment Fund was established to provide grants to parishes, schools and agencies in the Archdiocese that are growing their existing ministries consistent with the overall strategic plan of the Archdiocese. Since the inception of this grant fund we have disbursed approximately $930,000 to support various growth opportunities in ministry and capital throughout the Archdiocese. The endowment that is established to support these grants had a June 30, 2014 balance of $3.4 million, which allows for approximately $155,000 in annual grant funding.

James P. Scott Capital Improvement Endowment Fund

This endowment fund was made possible by an undesignated estate gift to the Archdiocese from James P. Scott. The annual distributions will be provided in the form of a matching grant or award to support parish, school and agency capital projects that demonstrate the greatest potential impact on an archdiocesan program, parish or the larger Catholic community. The endowment had a June 30, 2014, balance of $5.7 million, which generates annual grants of about $270,000.

For more information on the grant process, please visit the Finance Office webpage at archindy.org/grant or contact Stacy Harris in the Finance Office at sharris@archindy.org.
CRONIN, Brother of Mary Dausch Krings, Daniel and Thomas of Margaret Craig, Catherine

CRONIN, Thomas J., Jr., 82,

of Shirley Creamer. Father of

Indianapolis, March 27. Husband

86, St. Luke the Evangelist,

CREAMER, James J.

five. Great-grandfather of four.

of Lester Bottorff. Grandfather of

of Betty Jean Bottorff. Father of

Clarksville, March 26. Husband

88, St. Anthony of Padua,

Zachery Anderson. Derrick McKinney, Jonathan and

Makahla Marass, Danielle Young,

Michelle Anderson. Brother of

March 11. Son of John and

St. Lawrence, Indianapolis,

DERRICK MCKINNEY, Jonathan and

Arellano. Grandmother of seven.

HANNEFORD, Leonard P.


and Jack Cronin. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of one.

HALEY, Carmen, 78,

St. Lawrence, Indianapolis,


Hask, Joseph and Richard Arellano. Grandmother of seven.

HANNEFEY, Rita Helen

84, Holy Spirit, Indianapolis,

March 24. Mother of Mary Jenkins, Patty Loford, John, Mike and Robert Hanney. Grandfather of six. Great-

grandmother of two.

HAYES, Foster A., 64,

St. Lawrence, Indianapolis,

March 2.

HAYES, Sister of Donna Schwen, Rada Tilson, Ernest

of Myrna Mosconi, Frances


Jacqueline, Daniel, Joseph and

Godme, Catherine Holle,

Makahla Marass, Danielle Young,

Michelle Anderson. Brother of


MACKENZIE, Veronica (Willis)

89, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis-

March 15. Mother of Anne, Judy, Niki and Jimmy Mackenzie.

MAHON, Betty (Ellis)

91, St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), March 25. Mother of Mary Abel, Susan Godine, Catherine Holle,

Jacqueline, Daniel, Joseph and


MCKNIGHT, Margaret B., 98,

St. Lawrence, Indianapolis,


KELLER, KELLER, Marqueite H.

Indianapolis, March 15. Mother

91, St. Therese of the Infant

Jesus (Little Flower), March 25.

and Jack Cronin. Grandfather of six. Great-grandfather of one.

Hailey, Carmen, 78,

St. Lawrence, Indianapolis,


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Keller, Marqueite H.

Indianapolis, March 15. Mother

91, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower), March 25. Mother of Mary Abel, Susan Godine, Catherine Holle,

Jacqueline, Daniel, Joseph and


HANNEFORD, Leonard P.


Schneider, Leonard P.

93, St. Michael the Archangel,

Indianapolis, March 22. Father of Sandra Barnett, Linda Griffis,

Anna Snyder, Tammy Simms,

Linda Stein, Carol Wibbels, Gary

and Rick Tucker. Grandfather of

there.

Vogel, Nancy (Morris)

96, Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Indianapolis, March 27. Mother

of two.

CRONIN, Thomas J., Jr., 82,

SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi,

Greenwood, March 26. Father of Margaret Craig, Catherine

Kings, Daniel and Thomas Cronin. Brother of Mary Dausch

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Cancer claims freshman basketball player known for ‘determined spirit’

CINCINNATI (CNS)—Lauren Hill, a Mount St. Joseph University freshman who gained international attention when she pursued her dream of playing college basketball even as her inoperable brain cancer advanced, died overnight on April 10. She was 19.

She suffered from a fatal brain cancer called diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma, known as DIPG. "God has a new game plan for Lauren," said a statement from Tony Aretz, president of Mount St. Joseph University. "Her legacy will continue to shine on us all as her supporters worldwide continue her mission of raising awareness and finding a cure for DIPG," he said.

"We are forever grateful to have had Lauren grace our campus with her smile and determined spirit. She has left a powerful legacy. She taught us that every day is a blessing; every moment a gift."

Lauren Hill rose to national fame on Nov. 2 after Mount St. Joseph, a Catholic university, petitioned the NCAA to open the season early so that she could achieve her dream of playing collegiate basketball. Hill scored a layup with 6:45 left in the game, a highlight that has been viewed on YouTube more than half a million times.

Readers of TheCatholicTelegraph.com, the website of the diocesan newspaper, voted Hill’s story the No. 2 story of 2014.

The university held an evening memorial service for Hill on April 11.

"As Lauren’s family and friends grieve, I am sure I speak for many who will choose to reflect on her incredible life with admiration and find ways to remember her selfless generosity," Aretz said. "We thank God for the gift of Lauren, and thank her parents and family for the honor of allowing her to be a part of her life. Her love and laughter will remain in our hearts."

Following her diagnosis, Hill worked tirelessly to raise money and awareness for research on her cancer with the Cure Starts Now Foundation, granting interviews and making appearances even as her condition worsened.

"We are saddened to hear that our friend Lauren Hill has passed away this morning," said a foundation posting on Facebook. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to her family during this difficult time."

Throughout her diagnosis, Lauren was a tireless advocate and spokesperson for the Cure Starts Now’s efforts to find a treatment and cure. Lauren’s support of the stories of people worldwide with her tenacity and determination to play in her first collegiate basketball game with her Mount St. Joseph University team.

The Cure Starts Now Foundation added that Hill’s efforts have raised $1.4 million for research on diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma.

In a commentary in The Catholic Telegraph last November, John Siegeman, the paper’s new media editor, called Hill “an angel from God.”

Various reports suggest Hill has until December to live. It’s not clear, he wrote. "She knows of her end of life, but she doesn’t know when. In the time she has, she will live more fully than many of us ever do. Lauren Hill is truly dying with dignity."  

What was in the news on April 16, 1965? School aid bill Palm Sunday tornadoes and the funeral of Cardinal Meyer

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 April 16, 1965, issue of The Criterion:

• **Vast school aid bill is signed into law**
  > "WASHINGTON—The U.S. government now stands on the brink of launching a vast program pioneering federal recognition of the educational needs of both public and private school pupils. By a vote of 73 to 18, the Senate [April 9] added its endorsement to House approval on March 26 of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s $1.3 billion proposal. The president hailed passage of the measure. He predicted that it would prove to be ‘just the beginning, the first step toward full educational opportunity for all of our school children.’ "

• **Diets at age 62: Funeral Mass held for Cardinal Meyer**
  > "CHICAGO—Pontifical Requiem Mass for Cardinal Albert Meyer of Chicago, the reserved scholar and cardinal who died March 28, was celebrated today at Our Lady of the Angels Church.

Read all of these stories from our April 16, 1965, issue by logging on to our archives at www.CriterionOnline.com.

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**PACHOLCZYK continued from page 4**

...are also associated with heightened risks for a number of rare and serious genetic disorders, including a form of the familial melanoma syndrome, Angelman’s syndrome and various developmental disorders like ataxia telangiectasia and Hurler’s syndrome. Considering the various harmful and unnatural steps involved in moving human reproduction from the marital embrace into the petri dish, it should perhaps come as little surprise that elevated rates of birth defects have been observed, even when certain genetic defects may have been previously screened out.

As children born by assisted reproductive technology become adults, they are starting to be tracked and studied for various psychiatric issues as well. A growing number of young adults are vocalizing their strong personal concerns about the way they came into the world through technologies like anonymous sperm donations because they find themselves feeling psychologically adrift or deprived of any connection to their biological father.

It should be any obvious way that once weakens or casts into question the idea of a single parent as the origin of life is coming, but she doesn’t know when. In the time she has, she will live more fully than many of us ever do. Lauren Hill is truly dying with dignity."
Jesus’ compassion, healing and mercy demonstrate, the pope said, “that the mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality through which he reveals his love,” just like mothers and fathers love their children.

“How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God,” he wrote. “May the balm of mercy reach everyone, out to every man and woman, bringing the health of the body and the soul.”

The pope said he will designate and send “Mercy Missions” to preach about mercy; they will be given special authority, including the power to absolve sins. Converting sinners, instructing the faithful, guiding the way to God, and burying the dead are the spiritual works of mercy. The corporal works are: feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, visiting the imprisoned, giving drink to the thirsty and burying the dead. The spiritual works are: converting sinners, instructing the ignorant, advising the doubtful, comforting the sorrowful, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving injuries and praying for the living and dead.

The date the pope chose to open the year—Dec. 8—is the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council. Both dates, he wrote, are related to the Year of Mercy.

Mercy, he said, “is the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to a hope of being loved forever despite our sins.” That bridge was made concrete when God chose Mary to be the mother of his son. The Year of Mercy, Pope Francis wrote, is also a way to keep the Second Vatican Council alive: “The walls which too long had made the Church a kind of fortress were torn down, and the time had come to proclaim the Gospel in a new way,” he said. The council recognized “a responsibility to be a living sign of the Father’s love in the world.”

The life and action of the Church, he said, “is authentic and credible only when she becomes a convincing herald of mercy,” a mercy that “knows no bounds and extends to everyone without exception.”

While some people try to argue that mercy, even God’s mercy, is limited by the demands of justice, Pope Francis said mercy and justice are “two dimensions of mercy and justice are ‘two dimensions of the same reality that unfolds progressively until it culminates in the fullness of love.’”

Preaching mercy, he said, is not the same as ignoring sin or withholding correction. Instead, mercy invites repentance and conversion and ensures the sinner that once God forgives a sin, he forgets it.

The pope addressed direct appeals in the document to members of the mafia and other criminal organizations, as well as to officials and others involved in corruption. “For their own good, I beg them to change their hearts,” he wrote. “Let them turn to the name of the Son of God who, though rejecting sin, never rejected the sinner.”

“Violence inflicted for the sake of amassing riches soaked in blood makes one neither powerful nor immortal,” he continued. “Everyone, sooner or later, will be subject to God’s judgment, from which no one can escape.”

At the same time, Pope Francis wrote, many of those who insist first on God’s justice are like the Pharisees who thought they could save themselves by following the letter of the law, but ended up simply placing “burdens on the shoulders of others and undermined the Father’s mercy.”

“God’s justice is his mercy,” the pope said. “Mercy is not opposed to justice, but rather expresses God’s way of reaching out to the sinner,” offering him a new chance to look at himself, convert and believe.

Recognizing that they have been treated with mercy by God, he said, Christians are obliged to treat others with mercy. In fact, the Gospel says that Christians will be judged by the mercy they show others.

“At times how hard it seems to forgive,” he said. “And yet pardon is the instrument placed into our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully.”

Pope Francis also noted that God’s mercy is an important theme in Judaism and Islam, and he urged efforts during the Year of Mercy 2015-16 to increase interreligious dialogue and mutual understanding with followers of both faiths.

Do more to help the poor, pope tells leaders at Summit of the Americas

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—With an obligation to lead and protect everyone in their nations, government officials cannot be content “to hope that the poor collect the crumbs that fall from the table of the rich,” Pope Francis said in a message to the Summit of the Americas.

Thirty-five heads of state from North, Central and South America met on April 10-11 in Panama City, Panama, for discussions under the theme, “Prosperity with Equity: The Challenge of Cooperation in the Americas.”

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, was invited to the meeting and read a message from Pope Francis to the participants, who included U.S. President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro.

In his message, the pope said he liked the theme of the gathering and hoped the leaders would find ways not only to promote economic growth, but also to guarantee the rights of the poor to the “basic needs of land, jobs, shelter, health care, education, security and a healthy environment—things ‘no human being should be excluded from.’”

While everyone says they want greater equality and justice, the pope said, “unfortunately, it is still far from a reality. There continue to be unjust inequalities that offend human dignity.”

Some countries of the Western hemisphere have enjoyed economic growth in recent decades, but others are still “prostrated by poverty,” he said. “What is more, in the emerging economies a large portion of the population has not benefited from the general economic progress,” and the gap between rich and poor has grown.

Pope Francis also repeated what he said in his apostolic exhortation, “Evangelii Gaudium” (“The Joy of the Gospel”), that “trickle-down” economics doesn’t work. The theory held that increased wealth stimulates the entire economy, and its benefits “trickle down” to the poorer sectors of society.

Poverty, discrimination and exclusion, he said, push people to immigrate and breed resentment and violence.

“The immense disparity of opportunities between one country and another means many people feel obliged to abandon their homeland and family, becoming easy prey to human traffickers and slave labor,” he said. In situations like those, he said, “it is not enough to enforce the [immigration] law” because true justice requires defending the rights of the powerless.”