Assisting millions of Syrian and Iraqi refugees is a way of expressing faith, CRS director says

By Natalie Hoefer

GREENWOOD—Cullen Larson sat back comfortably in his chair, calm and relaxed. One would never guess the responsibilities resting upon his shoulders in his most visible role with Catholic Relief Services (CRS)—serving as the organization’s director of the southeastern United States and as acting director of the Midwest states.

But most impactful to him of late was his temporary role as country representative in Iraq in February and March.

The experience gave Larson insight into the recent wave of refugees seeking help in Europe, as well as an up-close view of CRS’s humanitarian relief efforts in Iraq.

Rather than viewing these events as remote to Indiana, Larson sees clear and simple ways that the people in central and southern Indiana can help those who have had to flee their homes overseas due to violence or poverty.

He spoke about these three areas during an interview with The Criterion and during a presentation he gave at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood on Oct. 14.

Refugee crisis ‘has been going on a long time’

The news has reported lately on the masses of Syrian refugees seeking help in Europe, and being turned away from one country after another.

“They call it Europe’s refugee and migrant crisis,” said Larson.

“I don’t think that accurately describes what’s going on because there’s nothing new. The people displaced by the war in Iraq, the violence in Syria and elsewhere are just now coming to the attention of Europe and the western media. But it has been going on a long time.”

According to Larson, CRS has been helping refugees in Syria, Iraq and the countries nearby for the last four years. Part of the problem with the refugee crisis that has now come to Europe is a matter of semantics.

“A refugee is someone who leaves their home country typically because of violence,” Larson explained. “A migrant is someone who typically leaves because of poverty.”

United Catholic Appeal campaign on Nov. 7-8 will impact lives throughout the archdiocese

This weekend, Nov. 7-8, is the annual United Catholic Appeal: Christ Our Hope intention weekend.

The goal for this year’s appeal is $6.2 million. The money will be distributed to various ministries and organizations throughout the archdiocese that provide help to those who have had to flee their homes overseas due to violence or poverty.

Here are examples of how different United Catholic Appeal: Christ Our Hope donation amounts can impact lives in central and southern Indiana.

• $10 will pay for two packs of diapers for a young mother caring for her newborn.
• $25 provides one day of Catholic education for a center-city student.
• $50 pays for 200 meals for those in need.
• $75 helps provide education and cultural immersion to a family in the Refugee Resettlement Program.
• $100 helps provide a month of health benefits for retired priests.
• $125 helps support the “Called by Name” program inviting young men and women to consider a call to vocations.
• $150 helps defray the cost of attending a ministry program or camp for one youth.
• $200 helps provide catechetical formation for a Catholic school educator so they can teach the faith.
• $400 pays for the books for a seminarian for one semester.
• $500 provides a year of parenting and nutrition classes for four single moms of newborns.

United Catholic Appeal: Christ Our Hope

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The U.S. bishops will consider whether to approve a new introductory note and a limited revision of their quadrennial statement on political responsibility during their Nov. 16-19 fall general assembly in Baltimore.

The statement, “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” is reissued every four years and takes into account the latest issues facing the church.

The bishops will also discuss and vote on a proposed formal statement on pornography. “Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography.”

The bishops had given their approval a few years ago to craft a statement on the subject.

The bishops also will hear a report on a proposed formal statement on sainthood causes.

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Cardinal, adviser to pope, says everyone is responsible to protect Earth

WASHINGTON (CNS)—People of developed nations share responsibility with the rest of the world to protect the Earth from environmental destruction and assist poor communities in escaping poverty, a cardinal who is a chief adviser to the pope said.

Honduran Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, coordinator of Pope Francis’ international nine-member Council of Cardinals, told reporters at a roundtable discussion on Nov. 2 that the pope calls people to dialogue in his recent encyclical on ecology, so that better understanding occurs across country boundaries.

“As the pope said, it is not only thinking that the rich have to go to the poor, but how can each one of us, every one of us, take our own co-responsibility because all of us are responsible [for our continent],” Cardinal Rodriguez said in reference to the encyclical’s title, “Laudato Si’, on Care for Our Common Home.”

“Laudato Si’” cannot ignore or be co-responsible for all around the world, he continued. “We cannot be closed down in our own borders and looking only to our own country, even if all of us are citizens of the same Earth and all of us have a common home.”

The cardinal met reporters for nearly an hour before he participated in a program on the encyclical at the Georgetown University Law Center.

He focused largely on the encyclical’s central message: that the human being must understand they are connected and that human beings must understand they are connected and that any action they undertake has implications for others as well as the planet.

Pope Francis stresses the importance of dialogue, which has been a mainstay of his papacy, the cardinal said. Dialogue is one of the keys for the solutions, and when you see from chapter 4 to the end of the encyclical, you see that the pope is always asking for dialogue, dialogue, dialogue, with different denominations within the religious aspect, with governments, with NGOs, with private foundations, dialogue with all kinds of people,” he said.

Cardinal Rodriguez said the pope is calling for revolution, not in the political sense, but “a real revolution to turn upside down, a change that is total.”

“We need a revolution in ecology under the ethical perspective, of course,” he said.

The encyclical, he said, is built on long-standing Catholic social teaching on human dignity.

The cardinal questioned the pope’s critics who suggested that the pontiff should limit his observations to theological questions rather than economic and scientific issues, especially those surrounding the climate, even before the encyclical was released.

“It [the encyclical] was criticized before being published. People asked, ‘What does the Holy Father know about science?’ It’s not about science. It’s about life,” Cardinal Rodriguez said.

“It’s what we used to call justice with the creation. What we are doing to the creation, with this treasure that was given to the human being. It’s to be preserved and cultivated, not destroyed.”

An awareness that resistance to the encyclical’s call for action to protect the environment and for a change in dialogue, dialogue; with different denominations within the religious aspect, with governments, with NGOs, with private foundations, dialogue with all kinds of people,” he said.

Cardinal Rodriguez held up entrepreneurs pursuing alternative fuels and whose business model is based on the development of people.

The encyclical also has a message for elected officials everywhere, he said, who must be more responsive to the development of people rather than focusing on their next election or maintaining power.

During the public program, Cardinal Rodriguez stressed the urgency that the encyclical be shared within parishes, schools and other settings. He called on parishioners to “steer to bring the message of ‘Laudato Si’” to their faith communities if their pastors and bishops are not.†

Despite violence, Pope Francis says he hopes to visit Central African Republic

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Despite ongoing violence in the Central African Republic, Pope Francis said he hopes to be able to visit the country in late November and to anticipate the Year of Mercy by opening the Holy Door of the cathedral in Bangui, the nation’s capital.

“The pain episodes that have aggravated the delicate situation in the Central African Republic in recent days have given rise to deep concern,” the pope said on Nov. 1 after reciting the Angelus prayer with visitors in St. Peter’s Square.

Cardinal Rodriguez said in reference to the encyclical’s call for dialogue, dialogue in his recent encyclical on ecology, so that better understanding occurs across country boundaries.

“The pain episodes that have aggravated the delicate situation in the Central African Republic in recent days have given rise to deep concern,” the pope said on Nov. 1 after reciting the Angelus prayer with visitors in St. Peter’s Square.

Central African Republic’s President Michel Djotodia resigned under pressure from the international community after Seleka rebels killed as they entered a Christian area with the murder of a Muslim taxi driver, which was reported on Oct. 28 that because of the violence “a tenth of the country’s population—about half a million people—have been forced to seek refuge outside the country, mainly in Cameroon, Chad, Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo.” The newspaper also cited UNICEF reports that as many as 10,000 children and teenagers have been recruited by armed groups.

Speaking on Nov. 1, Pope Francis offered special thanks to the Comboni missionaries at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Bangui for welcoming displaced people, and he expressed his solidarity with “the Church, the other religious confessions and the entire Central African nation, so harshly tried as they make every effort to overcome the divisions and relaunch the journey toward peace.”

Pope Francis is scheduled to begin his first papal trip to Africa on Nov. 25 in Kenya. He is scheduled to fly to Uganda on Nov. 27, and on to Central African Republic on Nov. 29 for a two-day stay.

More local volunteers are still needed to help with National Catholic Youth Conference on Nov. 19-21

Are you part of a Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) group, Men’s Club, Bible Study, choir or another parish-related group? Are you an individual looking for a unique volunteering opportunity through the local Church?

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis will host the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in two weeks, and help is needed to make the event a success.

Approximately 1,000 volunteers are needed to help support the event, which is expected to draw more than 20,000 young people from across the country at the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Nov. 19-21. The theme of this year’s gathering is “Here I Am Lord” (“Aquí Estoy Señor”).

To get more information, contact Kay Scoville, archdiocesan director of youth ministry, at 317-236-1442 or 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1447 or e-mail her at kscoville@archindy.org, or Scott Williams, youth ministry program coordinator, at 317-236-1442 or 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1442, or e-mail him at swilliams/archindy.org.†
"The reason some governments will avoid recognizing some people as refugees [and instead label them as immigrants] is because [the designation of refugee] under international law triggers obligations to help them, and they don’t want to face that."

Because the refugee crisis is finally becoming relevant to Europe, the focus has been on refugees in Europe, but the situation in Iraq is now gaining attention. It is a crisis that Larson witnessed firsthand earlier this year.

"Let that phrase sit with you—‘safety in Iraq.’"

In the far northern tip of Iraq, near the border with Iran, Syria, and Turkey, is the border of the Kurdish region of the country. Due to a 1975 agreement with the Iraqi government for more autonomy, Larson explained, "The Kurdish region has tended to be the more stable part of Iraq. That’s where people fled when ISIS [Islamic State in Iraq and Syria] started to take over in Iraq."

But the Syrians were not the first to flee to the Kurdish region, said Larson. Due to war in Iraq, there were already 2.5 million displaced Iraqis who fled to the area.

"The Kurdish region has been hospitable, but they’re really under a lot of pressure with these vast numbers."

Enter Catholic Relief Services. "About one-third of the refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs) stay in and around Erbil. You could imagine as a refugee camp—a government-sponsored, white-tents-in-rows, fenced-in camp," Larson explained. "That tends to be the latest in services from the government and from non-government organizations. CRS focuses on the least served and most vulnerable—so the other two-thirds scattered around the region."

That population is composed primarily of Christians, Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, Turkmen and Yazidi, he said. "Many are from religions and reasons for fleeing cover a broad spectrum."

The biggest misconception is that you can take a broad brush and interpret everything in the Middle East the same way, that the situation is the same in all countries, and all the Muslims want all the Christians out," said Larson. "But that’s not the situation everywhere, and most of the affected are not Christian. But our role as Christians is to serve everyone in need."

Providing humanitarian relief to these millions of people seems overwhelming. "In northern Iraq a typical staff of persons serves 60 people—consisting almost entirely of locals, refugees, migrants and displaced persons due to their language, regional and technical expertise. They work in Erbil, Kirkuk and Dohuk, a city located less than 20 miles from the ISIS-controlled city of Mosul. CRS and Catholic Relief Services provide refugees with food, hygiene kits, kerosene, blankets, translation services, legal aid and shelter—a difficult thing to come by for 2.7 million homeless people."

A more dignified living situation!" Larson travelled from Erbil to Dohuk for his stint as the CRS country representative in Iraq earlier this year. (Photos by Natalie Hoefer)

"Some were small, others were as tall as 20 stories," he said. "As Larson travelled from Erbil to Dohuk for his stint as the CRS country representative in Iraq earlier this year.

Refugees continued from page 3

"It’s easy to be overwhelmed by some of the numbers and scale of all their refugee efforts," Larson admitted. "But we can become paralyzed by inaction, choosing not to do at least one thing that we can do... thinking that it doesn’t count. That’s not true. That’s not the case."

Larson listed several tasks people can do. "Keep yourself informed," he advised. "And don’t just use one news source. Go to several for different viewpoints. And go to CRS for news—we’re on the ground. You can sign up for informational e-mails (from Catholic Relief Services) about what’s going on (see related site). And share what you learn."

Another step Larson said members of the archdiocese can take is to serve as advocates. "CRS and the USCCB [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops] are communicating with elected officials in Congress and the president and administration all the time," he said. "But their voice cannot be heard unless the voices of millions of Catholics are heard as constituents.

To help individuals in this effort, CRS’s advocacy arm, Catholics Confront Global Poverty, allows online users, by typing in their zip code, to send a pre-written but modifiable e-mail directly to their specific representatives in Congress. Larson said individuals’ advocacy support is needed to promote the three-pronged goal that CRS and its parent organization, the USCCB, are asking of the U.S. government: strong, consistent humanitarian assistance; robust and persistent diplomacy to resolve the root cause of the crisis; and allowing 100,000 Syrian refugees into the U.S. this year, plus 100,000 refugees from other countries."

For more information on how to get involved with Refugee and Immigrant Services, contact archdiocesan director of refugee services Heidi Smith at humb richt@archindy.org, 317-236-1404 or 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1404.

To help refugees: Learn more about Catholic Relief Services (CRS) at www.crs.org. Receive e-mails on CRS activities by e-mail at www.crs.org/email-sign-up. Call or e-mail Congress, find your representatives’ contact information, and learn some tips on what to say when you call Washington, D.C., for your senator or representative, to request assistance for refugees: bit.ly/2jPlyvs.

Members of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis can help those refugees, as well as the refugees overseas, in a number of ways:

- Volunteering with the archdiocesan Refugee and Immigrant Services by teaching English as a second language, instructing citizenship classes, mentoring a refugee, tutoring, setting up apartments, creating welcome cards or spiritually adopting a refugee.
- Donating educational and household items.

For more information on how to get involved with Refugee and Immigrant Services, contact archdiocesan director of refugee services Heidi Smith at humbricht@archindy.org, 317-236-1518 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1404.

To help refugees overseas: Learn more about Catholic Relief Services (CRS) at www.crs.org. Receive e-mails on CRS activities by e-mail at www.crs.org/email-sign-up. Call or e-mail Congress, find your representatives’ contact information, and learn some tips on what to say when you call Washington, D.C., for your senator or representative, to request assistance for refugees: bit.ly/2jPlyvs.

- Send a pre-written message to President Barack Obama or your specific senators and representatives to help Syrian refugees: bit.ly/1K9GQfV.

• Sign up for action alerts from Catholics Confront Global Poverty, the humanitarian advocacy arm of CRS and the USCCB at www.confrontglobalpoverty.org.
• Sign up to be a Global Solidarity Ambassador for your parish or Catholic school, helping those within your family and clustered parishes to keep up-to-date with the latest news and action items from Catholic Church’s humanitarian work around the world. Contact Danielle Chambler, archdiocesan director of CRS and Catholic Relief Services, at��tchambler@archindy.org, 317-236-1404 or 1-800-382-9836, ext. 1404.
• Participate in the CRS Lenten Faith in Action Rice Bowl Program, with 25 percent of all proceeds staying within the Archdiocese of Indianapolis to assist with local food and poverty initiatives: www.crsricebowl.org.

Compiled by Natalie Hoefer

How to help victims of refugee crises

This crisis is not new.

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We have been working for more than 4 years to assist more than 600,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and northern Iraq.

Jessica Inabnitt, manager of health services for the archdiocese’s Refugee and Immigrant Services, left, Maryam Basim Mohammed and Msgr. Mark Swarzvokt, pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, listen as Catholic Relief Services’ (CRS) Cullen Larson describes his experience during his temporary stint as the CRS country representative in Iraq earlier this year.

(Photos by Natalie Hoefer)
Some of the bishops thought that controversial parts of the synod were not exclusive.

"Love is the fundamental and innate exhortation on the family following the synod process, to form a vocations committee. In the Catholic religion, marriage is not exclusive.

A man and woman grow up as Catholics and get married in the Catholic Church. "To my mind, there is no right of divorce. After a few more years, the marriage ends in divorce. A man with an affair with another woman, leaves his wife, and the marriage ends in divorce. After a few more years, the woman has a civil marriage to another man. They have a happy and enduring marriage for 25 years, raising children in the faith, and faithfully practicing the Catholic religion, except that they cannot receive Communion when they go to Mass.

That’s what much of the pastoral care was about. Some of the bishops thought that the Church must continue the rule about the indissolubility of marriage, said, “To my mind, there is no right of divorce. After a few more years, the marriage ends in divorce. A man with an affair with another woman, leaves his wife, and the marriage ends in divorce. After a few more years, the woman has a civil marriage to another man. They have a happy and enduring marriage for 25 years, raising children in the faith, and faithfully practicing the Catholic religion, except that they cannot receive Communion when they go to Mass.

The newly formed committee designed a prayer initiative with a “Traveling Crucifix,” and launched this campaign on Priesthood Sunday, Oct. 25. Families signed up to pray every week in their homes beginning with National Vocation Awareness Week, Nov. 7-17, until next November 2016.

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are published in The Criterion as part of the newspaper’s commitment to “the responsible exchange of freely-held and expressed opinion among the People of God” (Communio et Progressio, 116).

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to publish those letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

The editors reserve the right to select the letters that will be published and to edit letters from readers as necessary based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content (including participant name and contact information). In order to encourage opinions from a variety of readers, frequent writers will ordinarily be limited to one letter every three months. Concise letters (usually less than 300 words) are more likely to be published.

Letters must be signed, but for serious reasons, names may be withheld.

Send letters to “Letters to the Editor,” The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2367. Readers with access to e-mail may send letters to criterion@archindy.org.
A vibrant young Church renews us all

Decisions that young people make determine the character of our Church, and young people are in many ways more attentive to our actions than we would like to admit. They can’t afford to let our young people drift away from the practice of their faith in the hopes that they’ll come back someday when they’re older and have families of their own. Too much is at stake. Someone has to be Christ for them. Someone has to speak his words of invitation to discipleship and to a personal relationship with him. This is “youth ministry” is all about.

The responsibility for youth ministry begins in the family, but it is shared by the entire Church—parishes, schools, and the archdiocese’s youth and young adult ministry programs. All of us have a serious obligation to make sure that young people are being introduced to the person of Christ through their participation in the sacraments, through their religious instruction, through fellowship and through engagement in the wider community. Parish communities throughout central and southern Indiana, supported by the archdiocesan ministry office, parishes, assistant pastors and youth ministers in carrying out this serious responsibility.

The greatest challenge young people face today? I think it is our contemporary culture—the world and what it offers all of us, but especially the young. Advancing technology and information media teach young people to consume and promise immediate gratification. Young people may live in a virtual world that they can control, but it soon fades away, leaving them feeling empty and alone. Then the siren song of consumerism tells them that they don’t have enough—stuff, relationships, “likes” on their Facebook page—whatever. The cycle begins again.

What Christ has to offer is freedom. He doesn’t say to us that our earthly possessions, physical appearance or circle of friends matter. Instead, Christ says that we matter. The Gospel constantly reminds us that our earthly possessions don’t make us who we are. God created us perfectly; we are made in God’s own image. But we allow ourselves to be consumed by our “stuff,” and this prevents us from being who we are perfectly created to be. Only by developing a personal relationship with Christ, and living as he lived over 2,000 years ago, can we be really free to reach our full potential as human persons.

Youth ministry is essential to the evangelizing mission of the Church. By building strong relationships with young people, by letting them know that they are welcomed and needed, and by encouraging them to develop a personal relationship with Christ, parish priests help carry out the work of evangelization. Prayer in particular, Mass and the sacraments are not old-fashioned in spite of the fact that they connect us with traditions that date back many hundreds of years to the early Church and the faith of our Jewish sisters and brothers. The prayers we say, especially in the Eucharist, are both ancient and ever-new: We need to remind our youth frequently: You matter! Come to Mass! It’s important. That’s where we meet Christ face to face in word and sacrament. To stay away is to risk spiritual anorexia.

Sharing Christ with the young Church is also where we most effectively promote vocations—to the priesthood and diaconate, to consecrated life, to marriage and to the dedicated single life. Parish youth ministers help members of the young Church better understand God’s personal call, and they help teens begin to discern their life’s vocation in a safe environment. By inviting members of the young Church to grow in their relationships with Christ and his Church, parish youth ministers share their own faith and help hand on the Gospel to those who are calling them to be leaders and faithful parishioners—both in the years to come and right now! If prayer is the most powerful means of support that we can give to members of the young Church. As individuals, families, parishes and school communities, and particularly our young people and their parents, we pray to pray each day for those who work with our children, youth and young adults. Our prayer helps them to stay positive and energetic in spite of the obstacles posed by our culture and, sometimes, by our Church. Our prayer for vocations to ordained ministry, consecrated life and lay ministry encourages gifted men and women to respond generously to Christ’s call.

Another way we can support youth ministry is by our encouragement and support. As human beings, we’re often quick to criticize but slow to offer praise. Let’s overcome our shyness and speak out whenever we see good things happening on behalf of our young Church. Let’s remember to recognize and thank all the dedicated youth ministers, teachers, parish and school staffs. Let’s make sure that all who work with children, youth and young adults in our archdiocese get the encouragement and support they need to continue this vitally important work of evangelization.

Decisions that young people make today determine their lifelong consequences. It’s important that the Church is present for them in significant ways. Let’s say a special prayer for those who serve in youth ministry for their faithful stewardship of our young Church!†

Traducido por: Daniela Guanipa

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El dinamismo de la Iglesia joven nos renueva a todos

Las decisiones que toman los jóvenes hoy en día acerca de su fe hacemos una gran diferencia, tanto en su vida y en la de las generaciones que las siguen, como en la vida de la comunidad eclesial familiar y en la forma en que se enfrentan al mundo. No podemos darme un golpe en la cabeza y pensar que los jóvenes se alejan del ejercicio de su fe con la esperanza de que algún día regresen. Cuando sean mayores y tengan sus propias familias. Es demasiado tarde.

Algunos temen que representen la figura de Cristo para ellos. Algunos temen que los jóvenes se alejen del ejercicio de su fe con la esperanza de que algún día regresen. Cuando sean mayores y tengan sus propias familias. Es demasiado tarde.

La responsabilidad del ministerio para jóvenes comienza en la familia pero la comparte toda la Iglesia a través de los programas de ministerio para jóvenes y adultos jóvenes de las parroquias, las escuelas y las parroquiales. Todas tenemos una obligación muy seria de fomentar esos efectos con los que los jóvenes conocen a la persona de Cristo a través de su participación en los sacramentos, la formación religiosa, a través del compañerismo y a través de su participación en actividades que incluyan a toda la comunidad. Las comunidades parroquiales de todo el mundo y el centro del sur y de Indiana, apoyadas por los ministerios arquidiocesanos, colaboran para que los padres y los ministerios dedicados a la juventud puedan cumplir con esta responsabilidad tan importante.

¿Cuál es el desafío más grande que enfrentan los jóvenes hoy en día? Creo que es nuestra cultura contemporánea. Aquí, en el mundo y todo lo que este nos ofrece, pero especialmente a los jóvenes. La publicidad y los medios de ocio enseñan a los jóvenes a consumir y prometer gratificación inmediata. Es decir, que los jóvenes encuentren algún tipo de placer, pero este se estima rápidamente dejando una sensación de vaciedad. Entonces, surgen los cartes de sienra del consumismo que les dicen que no tienen suficiente, ya sean suficientes posesiones materiales, relaciones, “me gusta” en Facebook, otras cosas. Y el ciclo comienza nuevamente.

Cristo ofrece libertad; su mensaje no da importancia a nuestras posesiones terrenales, a nuestra apariencia física y a nuestro círculo de amistades. En vez de ello, Cristo dice que lo importante somos nosotros. El Evangelio nos recuerda constantemente que nuestras posesiones materiales no definen quienes somos. Dios nos hizo perfectos; nos hizo a su propia imagen. Pero no dejamos consumir por las “cosas” y esto nos impide llegar a ser los seres perfectos tal como fueron creados. Únicamente al entablar una relación personal con Cristo y vivir como él lo hizo durante el transcurso de toda su vida, podremos ser verdaderamente libres para alcanzar nuestro máximo potencial como personas humanas.

El ministerio para los jóvenes es un elemento esencial de la misión evangelizadora de la Iglesia. Al formar relaciones sólidas con los jóvenes, dándoles la bienvenida y transmitiendo el mensaje de que son necesarios, y animarlos a que establezcan una relación personal con Cristo, las parroquias ayudan a los jóvenes a llevar a cabo su obra evangelizadora. La oración y la alabanza, la misa y los sacramentos no son ritos anticuados, si bien es cierto que los vinculan con nuestras tradiciones que datan de muchas décadas. Es decir, que se remontan a los albores de la Iglesia y a la fe de nuestros hermanos judíos. Las experiencias que a veces luchan, especialmente durante la eucaristía, son antiguas pero al mismo tiempo recientes. Tenemos que recordar periódicamente a los jóvenes que ellos son importantes e invitarlos a la mesa. Esto es fundamental ya que es allí donde encontramos frente a frente con Cristo en la palabra y en el sacrificio. Al mantenernos apoyados corremos el riesgo de sufrir una “anexia espiritual.”

Al compartir con Cristo y la Iglesia las experiencias de nuestras vidas, estamos compartiendo la misma espiritualidad con los demás. Con cada eucaristía, en estos momentos de comunión celebrada, el mensaje de que somos iglesianos, de que somos discípulos de Cristo, que estamos en comunión con todas y cada una de las personas que nos presenta la cultura y, en ocasiones, la propia Iglesia. Nuestra oración por las vocaciones a las órdenes, a la vida consagrada y al ministerio de los sacerdotes, a las vocaciones al sacerdocio, a la vida en solitario dedicada a la fe. Los ministros para jóvenes de las parroquias ayudan a los integrantes de la Iglesia joven a comprender mejor el llamado personal de Dios y ayudan a los adolescentes a discernir la vocación de su vida en un entorno seguro. Al invitar a los integrantes de la Iglesia joven a cultivar su relación con Cristo y su Iglesia, los ministros para jóvenes de las parroquias comparten su propia fe y proclaman el Evangelio a aquellos llamados a convertirse en nuestros líderes y fieles parroquianos, tanto en los años futuros como en este momento.

La oración es la forma de apoyo más poderosa que podemos ofrecer a los jóvenes de las parroquias jóvenes. Como personas, familias, parroquianos y comunidad escuela, y también como arquidiócesis, debemos acordarnos de rezar todos los días por aquellos que trabajan con nuestros jóvenes, ya sean adultos jóvenes o adultos jóvenes. Nuestra oración los ayuda a mantener una actitud positiva y entusiasta, independientemente de lo que nos presenta la cultura y, en ocasiones, nuestra propia Iglesia. Nuestra oración por las vocaciones a las órdenes, a la vida consagrada y al ministerio de la Iglesia joven a hombres y mujeres talentosos a responder generosamente al llamado de Cristo.

Otra forma de respaldar a los ministros para jóvenes es mediante nuestro alegre y apoyando. Como seres humanos, a menudo estamos prontos a criticar pero no debemos estar en el lugar de éstos, expresando nuestro entusiasmo a pesar de los obstáculos que se presentan. Cuando seamos testigos de buenas obras en favor de la Iglesia joven, acordémonos de dar reconocimiento y agradecer a los ministros para jóvenes, maestros y personal de nuestras parroquias y escuelas. Cerciorémonos de que todas las personas que trabajan con niños, jóvenes y adultos jóvenes en nuestra arquidiócesis reciban el aliento y el apoyo que necesitan para proseguir con su obra vitalmente importante de evangelización.

Las decisiones que toman los jóvenes hoy en día tienen repercusiones para toda la vida. Es fundamental que la Iglesia los acompañe de formas importantes. Expresemos un agradecimiento especial para todos aquellos que trabajan en los ministerios para jóvenes, por su entusiasta correspondencia en nuestra Iglesia joven.†

Traducido por: Daniela Guanipa
Advent African-American and African Catholic Women’s Retreat set for Dec. 5

The Black Catholic Ministry, in outreach of the Office of Intercultural Ministry, will offer an Advent African-American and African Catholic Women’s Retreat at Fatima Retreat house, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Dec. 5, with Mass at 4 p.m.

This year’s speaker is St. Joseph Sister Gail Trippet. She has been a teacher, principal, served on board of education committees, planned curriculum and facilitated quality education for more than 30 years.

Sister Gail recently traveled to China with an education delegation through Auburn University’s Confucius Institute. She is a past chair of the Education Committee for the National Black Sisters Conference, as well as a member of the Program Management Committee for the National Conference.

Cost for the retreat is $25, which includes a continental breakfast and lunch.

For more information or to register, contact Franciscan Sister Jennet Peitke, archdiocesan coordinator of Black Catholic Ministry, at 317-236-1474, 800-382-9836, ext. 1474, or jesminek@archindy.org.

St. Martin of Tours Parish, 1720 E. Harrison St., Indianapolis, Christmas Holiday Bazaar, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Nov. 21-22. Masses are at 5 p.m. on Nov. 21 and 7, 9 and 11 a.m. on Nov. 22.

The event is an alternative Christmas gift market, where all purchases help ministries supported by the parish’s Outreach Committee, such as the Habitat for Humanity, Global Gifts, St. Vincent de Paul Society, The Christmas Store, Cathedral Soup Kitchen, St. Bonaventure Indian Mission, Sherry Meyer’s Catholic radio ministry in Uganda, Grace on Wings and many more.

Many of the items for purchase are handmade by people at the missions, patients or volunteers. All proceeds go to the organizations.

People representing the organizations will share information about the work they do and the people they serve.

All are invited to purchase gifts that are unique, and also touch the lives of many in need.

For more information, call 812-353-2946 or e-mail ProcCrl@spgmw.org.

St. Barnabas Parish offers unique ‘Giving Market’ on Nov. 21-22

St. Mary-of-the-Woods, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, will offer its eighth annual “Different Kind of Giving Market” at the parish, 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Nov. 21-22. The Masses are at 5 p.m. on Nov. 21 and 7, 9 and 11 a.m. on Nov. 22.

This year, the feast will coincide with the commitment ceremony of new Providence Associates.

For more information, call 812-353-2946 or e-mail ProcCrl@spgmw.org.

Six Divorce and Beyond sessions scheduled from Nov. 10-Dec. 15

The annual holiday sessions of Divorce and Beyond has been scheduled at St. Mark Church, 353 Edgewood Ave., in Indianapolis from 7:30 p.m. for six consecutive Tuesdays from Nov. 10- Dec. 15.

The emphasis will be on getting through the holidays with discussions on the process of divorce, self-image, stress, anger, blame, guilt, loneliness and forgiveness. All separated and divorced people are invited to attend.

The cost is $30, which includes a book. Please register before the session begins so materials are available.

For more information or to register, contact Deb VanVelze at 317-236-1586 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1586, or e-mail her at dvanelz@archindy.org.
Supporting Church in the Holy Land ‘a question of love’

By Maureen Geis
Special to The Criterion

The recent unrest in Israel served as an unfortunate but timely backdrop for the Oct. 3 fundraiser dinner for the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL), highlighting the importance of the organization’s mission to safeguard the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

“I was surprised and grateful for that welcome. You could say they were imitating Jesus. Jesus wouldn’t pass the evil on. He died rather than pass the evil on that was done to him.”

But restrictive laws and lack of jobs are making it more difficult for Christians to stay in the Holy Land.

According to the FFHL website, “steady Christian exodus from the land where Christianity began suggests that within the next 50 years, the Christian community will cease to exist unless something is done.”

Msgr. Joseph Schaedel, pastor of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis and who served as master of ceremonies, stated in his opening comments that Catholics need to stand “in solidarity in the land where Jesus walked.”

One way members of central and southern Indiana can stand in solidarity with Christians in the Holy Land and ensure a continued Christian presence there is by planned the archdiocesan pilgrimage to the Holy Land and that also serves as the public relations and marketing arm for the FFHL. Archbishop Tobin commented on the attitude of Christians in the region.

“Standing alongside someone [with] the physical pilgrimage … was our contact with other Christians … [They had a] sense of self-irony in describing their situation. They weren’t out to demonize anybody. They rather said, ‘This is just the way we live. We want to live here, and we accept that this is the way it is, even though it’s not just or not right. We love this land. We’ve been here for centuries, and we’ve welcomed people like you [pilgrims] for centuries, and we’ll continue to do it.’

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By Brandon A. Evans

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• Stocks donated to institutions
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• By St. Louis paper: Reform of bishops’ conference urged
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• Superintendents back school boards
• Editorial: Matter of rights

“In a letter on this page, we are taken severely to task for upholding the constitutional rights of peace demonstrators. The letter writer, in effect, accuses us of being in league with the Communists. Now, Doctor, our problem is: Should we dignify that accusation with a denial, or should we just laugh? The way the hysteria against any dissenter is rising, there may not be a whole lot of free speech left in the country by Christmas. That possibility, remote though it may be, worries him as much as the protest parades, rallies and speeches.”

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• Parish society concept is dead, speaker asserts
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• Japanese music expert booked
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• Americans give more to charity
• Drive cooperation urged by Brademas
• Program helps disadvantaged prepare for the first grade
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—Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin

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Pope Francis will visit Mexico in February, cardinal says in homily

MEXICO CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis will visit Mexico in February, marking the pontiff’s first trip to the heavily Catholic country, said Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera of Mexico City.

Cardinal Rivera revealed the date Feb. 12—during a homily on Nov. 1—but he offered no other information on itineraries or the length of the stay.

“From that day onward, we will receive him with a lot of affection,” he said.

The Vatican has not confirmed the dates. Father Hugo Valdemar Romero, Mexico City Archbishop spokesperson, said Vatican officials responsible for organizing papal trips planned to arrive in Mexico on Nov. 3. Details of where the pope might visit “are still to be determined,” he said.

Vatican and Mexican Church officials confirmed in October that Pope Francis had wanted to visit Mexico, but instead went to Cuba in advance of his U.S. trip. In Mexico, Pope Francis told reporters his wish was to symbolically cross from the border city of Ciudad Juárez into the U.S. as an expression of solidarity with migrants.

Preachers, and lay Catholics are at the front lines of those offering humanitarian and legal assistance to the thousands of Central Americans transiting the country on northbound trips, although such migrants are increasingly being detained and deported.

“The subject he wants to address is migration,” Father Ciudad Juárez is being signaled,” Archbishop Carlos Aguiar Retes of Tlalnepantla told the newspaper Excélsior.

Pope Francis will be the third pontiff to visit Mexico. Pope Benedict XVI made the last papal visit in 2012, traveling to Guanajuato state.

BISHOPS

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the USCCB Subcommittee on the Church in Latin America on the golden anniversary of the annual national Collection for the Church in Latin America.

The canonization causes also will go before the bishops for the canonical consultation required to advance their causes:

• Father Aloysius Ellacuria was a 20th-century Claretian Missionary in the American Southwest, converted by Franciscans, may have been murdered by the National Liberation Army for his work among indigenous communities. Ellacuria was regarded as a mystic by some and a terrorist by his enemies.

• Antonio Cuipa, who along with more than 80 “companeros,” was martyrs for the faith in colonial Florida between 1549 and 1706. Cuipa, an Apalachee Indian converted by Franciscans, may have been studying for the priesthood when he was seized by another Indian tribe, nailed to a cross and set afire. Witnesses said Cuipa had a vision of Mary while he was dying.

The bishops will discuss and vote on proposed revisions to strategic priorities for the next USCCB planning cycle, which covers 2017-20, following up on input given a draft version of these priorities during their June meeting in St. Louis.

A vote will be taken on the inclusion of Excerpt From the Bishops’ Book for Use at the Chair in U.S. dioceses. Presentations will be made to the bishops by, among others, Dominican Sister Donna Markham, president and CEO of Catholic Charities USA.

The national network launched its “Hand54” campaign to cut U.S. poverty just ahead of Pope Francis’ visit.

Carolyn Woo, president and CEO of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), will join with Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, co-champion, in a presentation on how CRS programming is responding to Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment, “Laudato Si’,” on Care for Our Common Home.”

Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, Conn., will update his brother bishops on next year’s World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland.

Cardinal Sean O’Malley of Boston will give an update on diocesan Project Rachel ministries for post-abortion healing.

Bishop Richard J. Malone of Buffalo, N.Y., chair of the USCCB Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, will report on marriage and family life ministry.

Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chair of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee on Religious Liberty, will introduce a trailer to a movie on “Dignitatis Humanae,” the Second Vatican Council’s decree on religious freedom.

Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera of Mexico City distributes Communion during Mass in early May at Mexico City’s Metropolitan Cathedral. Pope Francis will visit Mexico in February, marking the pontiff’s first trip to the heavily Catholic country, said Cardinal Rivera. (CNS photo/Ricardo Cakmort, EPA)
The Jubilee of Mercy and discernment

Fr. Eric M. Augenstein

In a few weeks, the Church throughout the world will open the Jubilee Year of Mercy. In his letter announcing the jubilee year, Pope Francis spoke of what mercy is about. “With our eyes fixed on Jesus and his merciful gaze, we experience the love of the Most Holy Trinity. The mission Jesus received from the Father was that of revealing the mystery of divine love in its fullness” (“Misericordiae Vultus,” #8). It seems to me that this understanding of mercy also speaks to what we understand vocation to be—our vocation is God’s call to each of us to become his disciple, to experience his love, and then, filled with that love, to be sent out on mission in the world.

Whether as priests, deacons, consecrated men and women, or through the sacrament of marriage, our vocation is to love as best we can and to show God’s love to others. But we can only do that after we have first fixed our eyes on Jesus “and his merciful gaze” toward us.

In fact, we might even be able to articulate a plan for discernment based on the Holy Father’s understanding of mercy. To discern is to listen for God’s voice: it begins by growing in relationship with God and experiencing his love. We might think of discernment encompassing three components:

• Prayer—to keep “our eyes fixed on Jesus and his merciful gaze.”
• Sacraments—which through our experience of the love of the Most Holy Trinity, especially in the Eucharist and the sacrament of penance and reconciliation.
• Works of mercy—sharing in Christ’s mission of “revealing the mystery of divine love in its fullness” (”, especially in the Eucharist and the sacrament of penance and reconciliation.

To discover one’s vocation is to grow in receiving and showing mercy, and to grow in receiving and showing mercy is a sure path to discovering one’s vocation. Ultimately, our vocation cannot be about us—I am not a priest because I wanted to be a priest, but rather because God called me to follow him and to serve as a priest.

And so any path of discernment should not really start with us, but with God. To put God first in prayer—to receive God’s grace and to grow in the sacraments—and to serve God in our brothers and sisters—that is both the path of mercy and the path of discernment.

This year’s Vocations Supplement, you will read stories of people who have spent time with God, have been strengthened by the sacraments, have served their brothers and sisters, and in doing so have heard the call to service as a priest, deacon, or consecrated religious. I invite you to read their stories—stories of men and women who have walked the joint path of mercy and discernment.

And if you’re trying to figure out where you’re called, we invite you to join us as we pray, listen, and grow closer to God. I have someone to share it with, and even more joy in my work because I have someone to share it with, and more to share with my students.

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Since Father Eric Augenstein became archdiocesan vocations director in 2013, he’s made a point to visit Catholic high schools across central and southern Indiana on a regular basis.

It’s a key setting for him to help people discern God’s call in their lives because high school students are at an age when they often give serious thought to their future.

“It’s important to let young people in our Church know who they can talk to if they want to have more conversations about a vocation, that they know that there is a vocations office, that there is a vocations director,” Father Augenstein said.

And he has been in contact with a growing number of high school students interested in learning more about vocations.

Four new seminars for the archdiocese this year are graduates of Bishop Chatard and Roncalli high schools, both in Indianapolis, and Our Lady of Providence Jr./Sr. High School in Clarksville, where the archdiocesan vocations director in 2013, he’s made a point to visit Catholic high schools across central and southern Indiana on a regular basis.

It’s kind of cool to have vocations continually brought up more and more, especially at Roncalli,” he said. “It’s energetic, passionate, caring and forgiving. Seeing her have a relationship with God is very helpful because it shows everyone that we need God in our life. Dedicating yourself to God can be hard, but he will be right there with you.”

As faith formation director at Father Michael Shawe Jr./Sr. High School in Madison, Chemaign Drumm helps sophomores, juniors and seniors learn about and be open to the vocation God has planned for them.

“If they are going to be truly great disciples, they need to figure out how to figure out what they are called to,” Drumm said. “It’s important to educate them on all aspects of a vocation so they have a better understanding of what it is. We have to make it more approachable and a tangible idea in order for them to even slow down to think about it.”

The class on vocations that Matthew Long took at Roncalli as a senior helped him slow down and listen to God’s call. He hopes the increasing effort at his alma mater will mean more young people discerning priesty or religious vocations in the future.

“It’s kind of cool to have vocations continually brought up more and more, especially at Roncalli,” he said. “It will be nice to see vocations grow here.”

(For more information about the vocations curriculum that the archdiocesan vocations office has made available to schools and parishes across central and southern Indiana, send Father Eric Augenstein an e-mail at augenstein@archindy.org or call him at 800-382-9836, ext. 1496 or 317-236-1496.)

High schools work to help students be open to God’s call in their lives

By Sean Gallagher

The presence of priests and religious sisters in Catholic high schools across the archdiocese also helps young people consider God’s call in their lives.

Benedictine Sister Kathleen Yeakon, who teaches seniors in social justice and Scripture classes at Bishop Chatard, sees this happen on a daily basis.

“Use every topic as a springboard for a discernment. In social justice, each student chooses a cause to research and work on throughout the first quarter,” said Sister Kathleen, a member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove. “I explain how God calls us through the interests we have. In sacred Scripture, many of the Old Testament stories teach the class on how discernment works.

“I am always on the lookout for young people who might be interested in a Church vocation. I create lots of projects in my class, and we do plenty of reflections so it gives them time to think about how God is calling them.”

Quenton Wellington, a senior at Bishop Chatard, appreciates the witness that Sister Kathleen gives to him and his classmates.

“She has a special connection with God,” he said. “She is energetic, passionate, caring and forgiving. Seeing her have a relationship with God is very helpful because it shows everyone that we need God in our life. Dedicating yourself to God can be hard, but he will be right there with you.”

Although Long noted there wasn’t such a vocations day at Roncalli when he was a student there, he said that his experience at the high school—especially a class specifically on vocations during his senior year—was “a big part” of his vocational discernment.

“The seminarians and religious sisters spoke with the high school students about their vocations. It made vocations, especially the priesthood, seem like so much more of an option,” Long said.

“If they are going to be truly great disciples, they need to figure out how to figure out what they are called to,” Drumm said. “It’s important to educate them on all aspects of a vocation so they have a better understanding of what it is. We have to make it more approachable and a tangible idea in order for them to even slow down to think about it.”

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Above, Father Eric Augenstein, archdiocesan vocations director; speaks about vocations on Oct. 28 to freshmen at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

Top photo, Father Timothy Wycziskala, second from left, elevates a chalice during an Oct. 28 Mass at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis while members of a student choir stand at his left. The liturgy was part of a day dedicated to vocations for the freshmen at the high school.

Kneeling third from left is seminarian Matthew Long. Father Eric Augustein stands fourth from left; Kneeling at left is Dominican transitional Deacon Reginald Wolford.

Providence Sister Editha Ben, left, vocations director for the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, speaks on Oct. 28 with freshmen women at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis.

Haley Stonecipher, left, and Elizabeth Bradley, both freshmen at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, lead the singing of the responsorial psalm during an Oct. 28 Mass at Roncalli. The Mass was part of a day on vocations for the school’s freshman class.
Carmelite nuns’ community celebrates 500th anniversary of foundress’ birth

By Sean Gallagher

TERRE HAUTE—Western Indiana in 2015 might seem a world away from Spain in 1515. But a group of Discalced Carmelite nuns in Terre Haute recently celebrated the close connection that they have to St. Teresa of Avila, their order’s foundress who was born in Spain 500 years ago.

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, several priests, and scores of friends of the Carmelite Monastery of St. Joseph worshipped on Oct. 10 in the chapel at the Discalced Carmelite Monastery of St. Joseph in Terre Haute to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the birth of St. Teresa of Avila, who founded the women’s branch of the Discalced Carmelites.

Although he reflected on St. Teresa during his homily, Archbishop Tobin said with a smile that “the real experts on St. Teresa are the people that God sends with him that we will make our way home.”

He also reflected on the way in which St. Teresa understood that God was working through the many instances of suffering in her life to bring about great good.

“For her, suffering was not simply a masochistic embrace of pain,” Archbishop Tobin said. “It was confidence that God was doing something with the suffering that came into her life. She often talked about being purified by what she suffered. Certainly, God made her suffering fertile.”

Ultimately, Archbishop Tobin said, St. Teresa remains relevant for the Church today because she “was so rooted in the Gospel.”

She was gratified to have the archbishop, several priests and so many friends of the cloistered monastic community gather to honor her foundress.

“[S]he taught that holiness begins with desire,” Archbishop Tobin said. “Holiness understood as communion with God who is love, and living in a loving relationship with the people that God sends into my life begins with wanting it.”

Archbishop Tobin reflected after the Mass on how the community has given special attention to the study of St. Teresa’s writings in the three years leading up to the 500th anniversary of her birth.

“Jesus is the only way that we can understand the gift that God’s love brings to us,” he said.

Archbishop Tobin also encouraged that conversion is possible, “It certainly was an affirmation of what we hope we are for the archdiocese,” Mother Anne said.

“Even though we are primarily hidden and many people may not know about us, we believe that our life of prayer can be leaven in the dough.”


Sister’s focus on doing ‘small things’ leads to closer bond with God

By John Shaughnessy

With tears streaming down her face, the Marian University student rushed into the office of Franciscan Sister Monica Zore.

The young woman told Sister Monica that she had just learned that one of her friends had died of a drug overdose.

Sister Monica offered condolences, gave comfort and then made plans to let the student reschedule the math test she was supposed to take that day.

“Letting her take the test later is not a big thing in my sight, but it was a big thing in the student’s eyes,” Sister Monica says. “I would have to proctor her test another day—not everyone would do that—but she was so relieved. It made a major difference to her. She saw the pain she was in and offered comfort.

That’s what Pope Francis, Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin and St. Francis are calling us to do. We don’t have to do the big things. It’s the small things that can make an important difference. If I can help others in small ways to do what is necessary for a child in the classroom, then that ripple is just going to keep going on.”

Beyond the combination of caring, teaching beyond the classroom, and understanding the importance of the bonds that connect us, have resulted the vocation of Sister Monica over even she professed final vows in 1975 as a Sister of St. Francis in Oldenburg.

In fact, her own need for community and connectedness eventually became a major factor in her twinning journey to becoming a religious sister.

She entered the Oldenburg community for the first time straight after high school, but then she left after 10 months.

“I was beginning to question if religious life was what I was supposed to be doing,” she recalls. “I also knew I couldn’t continue my education immediately in high school. In high school, I decided I wanted to stay up each night. I believed God had given me a gift to teach it to others. Other students told me I made it understandable for them.

So she spent the next three years at Marian University in Indianapolis pursuing her math degree while discussing her future with God.

SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS—Providence Sister Tracey Hornak knows she’s in the minority. In September 2014, Sister Tracey, a native of Indianapolis, was welcomed into the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods as a postulant. And in August, she entered her canonical novitiate.

The Sisters of Providence currently have more than 300 women religious in their congregation, with the median age of members is 78.

But Sister Tracey and the other younger women religious with the Sisters of Providence likeness these statistics back to when St. Mother Theodore Guerin and her five companion sisters traveled from France to Indiana in 1840.

“Sometimes, among the newer members, we joke that we really don’t have to worry until there are fewer than six since that’s how many were in Mother Theodore’s group when they first came to Indiana,” she said. “But look where we are now! At that time, Mother Theodore said, ‘all appearances are against it,’ and I’d imagine that’s what so many people feel today when they look at the future of religious life.”

Sister Tracey graduated from the University of Dayton in 2010. Following that, she taught math at a middle school in Texas before coming to the White Violet Center in Shipshewana, Ind.

Hostetler first became connected to Sister Monica during a “math for elementary education” class. But their bond grew stronger during a difficult time in Hostetler’s life, when she was upset by a breakup and struggling with math for tests for her teaching license.

“The summer before my junior year, I thought about transferring,” she says. “Sister Monica called me weekly for a month or two before school started. She was very lovely, she would come by her office to visit, and even if she’s grading papers, she’ll take the time.

“She gives great advice. I’ve learned from her never to give up, to be confident, to trust that even when things are bad, they’re going to get better, to trust in God’s plan.”

Those beliefs are at the heart of Sister Monica’s approach to life, says a friend who has known her for about 50 years.

“She’s extremely generous, always helpful and very supportive,” says Franciscan Sister Carol Slinger, who taught Sister Monica when she was a high school student at the former St. Mary Academy in Indianapolis.

“She’s also a very family-oriented person—her blood and family relationship. She’s always striving to do the best for them.”

Sister Monica’s love shines through in the rosaries she prays for others, the extra efforts she makes for students, and even in the homemade spaghetti sauce she cooks with tomatoes that she grows in her mother’s garden.

“I’ve learned that God works in ways we never imagine could happen,” Sister Monica says. “The older I get, the more I see that. God is so creative. He can take the things we do and use them to move us to a closer union with him.”

Sister Monica has found that deeper relationship with God as a religious sister. She believes everyone will find their vocation by putting their trust in him. “You have to listen to your heart and follow it,” she advises. “You won’t go wrong if you do that. It’s in your heart that God will speak to you. God will give you the grace. Trust what you hear and take time to listen. The plan that God has for each of us is the best.”

(For more information about the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, visit www.oldenburgfranciscans.org)

SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS—For me, giving up family and children was a real challenge. After I left the community for the first time, I prayed to God. If you really want me to stay in the community, don’t make me choose between a physical partner and you. I wasn’t sure I was strong enough for that. I knew a lot of good guys in college, but I never really met anyone.

So, three years led her to a better understanding of herself and a deeper relationship.

“That’s when I discovered that I needed the community to continue my faith journey. When I entered the community the second time, I was 1, and I had several people in a personal relationship. I knew I needed community to strengthen and develop my relationship with God.

“For me, community is that place where I know I’m going to get support through my struggles, whether in spirituality, work or whatever. I know that even when we disagree, we believe in the same fundamental things. And I know these people love me and I love them even when we do struggle. It makes it easier to go outside the community and do the same thing.”

Beyond the community of the sisters in Oldenburg, she has established another community at Marian where she has taught math for the past 32 years. When she first arrived at Marian, she knew there were about 30 other sisters teaching there. Now, as 66, she is the only one still teaching.

Yet her impact is considerable, usually in one-to-one connections.

“She’s my greatest mentor. She means everything to me,” says Stephanie Hostetler, a senior from Shipshewana, Ind.

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Sister Tracey admitted she and the younger sisters have a different relationship with God. “They were able to see in me the spark, the energy and passion from her to never give up, to be confident, to trust that even when things are bad, they’re going to get better, to trust in God’s plan.”

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(For more information about the Congregation of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, visit www.oldenburgfranciscans.org)
Seminarian Jeffrey Dufresne knew in his heart he was a priest long before he even considered entering formation for the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

He wasn’t delusional. He just had a sharp awareness of and a high value for the common priesthood which all Christians share by virtue of their baptism. The bishops at the Second Vatican Council more than 50 years ago noted in the “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church” (“Lumen Gentium”) that all the faithful offer spiritual sacrifices in the world to God in the way of life to which they have been called. “They ... exercise that priesthood in receiving the sacraments, in prayer and thanksgiving, in the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity” (#10).

Dufresne was led to this awareness while growing up in Dayton, Ohio, in a family that deeply appreciated its Catholic faith.

“Some of my earliest memories are going to Mass with my family, even when I was 3 or 4 years old,” said Dufresne.

The Sunday liturgy was always a constant in our family life, which is an important component of growing up in the Church and being able to hear God’s call to a vocation. The education he received at Chaminade-Julienne (CJ), a Catholic high school in Dayton, also helped him enter more deeply into his faith.

Dufresne said that his religion classes, the way service was integrated into the life of the school on an almost daily basis, and the good example given to him by his teachers and campus ministers led him “on a search for the radical Christian life.”

By the time Dufresne graduated from high school in 2008, he was convinced where God wanted him to live out this deep life of faith. “My experience at CJ—being able to think and to study, learning how to pray a little more deeply and learning how to live out the Christian life—really led me to want to serve the Church as a lay pastoral minister,” he said.

So he enrolled that fall at Marian University in Indianapolis as part of its San Damiano Scholars Program, which forms college students for lay ministry in the Church. Receiving this formation alongside other San Damiano scholars helped Dufresne become a pastoral leader among his peers in the broader Marian community.

“We brought that common formation to the greater community,” he said. “It really felt like that was an opportunity to have instilled in us a mindset for lay pastoral ministry, to learn how to be a leaven in a community.”

Mark Erdosy, executive director of the San Damiano Scholars Program, witnessed the leadership that Dufresne exercised personally. “Jeff is very passionate about his faith,” said Erdosy. “He is equally passionate about ministering with people and helping connect them with Christ.”

Jeff is a very compassionate person who will make time for people because he wants to be Christ’s presence for others. “It’s who he is called to be.”

As a student at Marian, Dufresne grew in his understanding of God’s particular call to him. He began to sense that God might be calling him to serve, not in the common priesthood of the baptized, but in the sacramental priesthood.

He first got an inkling of this call while praying before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration during his freshman year at Marian.

“Sitting there in prayer and in silence, I really felt a sense that God was calling me to discern the priesthood and to think about being a priest,” Dufresne said. “I kind of had my heart so much set on lay ministry, but also on being a husband and a father, that I tried to put that off to the side for a few years. While I still prayed, that voice kind of made me skittish.”

Indeed, it wasn’t until the spring of 2013—a year after he had graduated from Marian—that he really responded to that call and began the process to affiliate with the archdiocese as a seminarian.

Part of what particularly led him to become a seminarian was seeing the sacramental leadership of the chaplain of Bishop Fenwick High School in Franklin, Ohio, where Dufresne was serving as the interim director of campus ministry.

“As I reflected on how fulfilling my role and ministry was for me, I realized that it wasn’t as fulfilling as it could be,” he said. “I really started to see that, although I was doing my best in so many ways to live out the priesthood of the baptized, it was really the sacramental priesthood that I was being called to and that I really had a desire to live out by being able to bring God’s presence, his healing, his love and his grace to people in the sacraments.”

Although he grew up in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Dufresne chose to become a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in part because of his experience of the life of faith at St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis. He valued it so much that he would drive two hours to attend Sunday Mass while serving at Fenwick High School. The worshipping community there was for him “full of life” and “very hospitable.”

And he valued getting to know the “two joyful and passionate priests” who served there, Father Todd Goodson, its pastor, and Father Dustin Boehm, its associate pastor at the time.

“Their personality is a big deal,” said Father Boehm of Dufresne. “He’s a guy that, as soon as you meet him, you kind of ask the question, ‘Wow, what’s his joy?’ And he makes no bones about it. His personality clearly gains a lot of life from the Gospel and from Jesus Christ.”

As he continues in his formation for ordained ministry and looks forward to possible life and ministry as a priest, Dufresne hopes to be able to help the faithful whom he would serve to embrace their common priesthood.

“The mission of the sacramental priesthood is to empower the laity through the sacramental life to live their vocation to transform the world where they are,” he said. “That spiritual leadership that is rooted in the sacramental life is what drew me to the priesthood in the first place.”

Dufresne looks forward to helping lay Catholics to powerfully live out their faith in so many areas of life—as spouses, parents, in the work world and in the broader community.

“What I’ve realized over time is that there are many ways to live out the radical Christian life that I was looking for, and was passionate about finding when I was younger,” Dufresne said. “We’re all members of the one body of Christ in the Church by baptism.”

(For more information about a vocation to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, log on to www.HearGodsCall.com)
Husband, father becomes a deacon to serve the Church in a different way

By Victoria Arthur

Deacon Steven Gretencord was at least about to leave the hospital, thinking his work for the day was done. Then he received an urgent request. There was someone who needed a Catholic chaplain—immediately. Just 10 minutes before, this patient had learned he was dying of cancer. The man and his family were reeling from the news, and they were waiting.

There was no time to prepare. But at that moment, and in so many others in his ministry, Deacon Gretencord began pondering the idea.

Deacon Gretencord began pondering the idea, immediately. Just 10 minutes before, this patient had learned he was dying of cancer. The man and his family were reeling from the news, and they were waiting.

Deacon Gretencord recalled thinking at the time. “I felt quite calm about it,” he says of that day this past summer. “I spoke from my heart, but my preparation and formation definitely came into play.”

Deacon Gretencord was among the first group of men to be ordained as permanent deacons in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis in 2008. Permanent deacons are distinguished from transitional deacons, who are men in the final stage of formation for the priesthood.

Looking back over his life, Deacon Gretencord says he never felt called to the priesthood. But the husband and father was eventually called to serve the Church in a different way, and it began in the unlikeliest of places.

A game changer

Deacon Steven Gretencord was at Indiana State University’s Hulman Center in Terre Haute, watching his beloved Sycamores play basketball. On that day 15 or so years ago, he was seated next to Father Stephen Giannini, who at the time was Gretencord’s pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Terre Haute.

“Deacon Gretencord and Father Joseph Feltz, sacramental minister, process out of Sacred Heart Church in Terre Haute at the end of a Mass celebrated on Oct. 18. Like all permanent deacons, Deacon Gretencord balances his ministry between duties at the parish and serving in the community. (Submitted photo)”

During the game, Father Giannini made an offhand remark about a meeting he had just attended in Indianapolis. The archdiocese was exploring the idea of beginning a deacon formation program.

“Deacon Gretencord,” he said. “It’s a wonderful, remarkable privilege.”

And like all permanent deacons, Deacon Gretencord fulfills all of his duties on a volunteer basis. Now 63, he looks forward to retiring from his full-time role at Valley Electric Supply at the end of this year. But he has no plans to retire from his ministry.

“I cannot imagine my life without being a deacon,” he said. “It’s wonderful, remarkable privilege.”

(Submitted photo)

Victoria Arthur is a freelance writer and a member of St. Malachi Parish in Brownsburg.

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Top page photo, altar server Cami Swaner, left, Deacon Steven Gretencord and Father Joseph Feltz, sacramental minister, process out of Sacred Heart Church in Terre Haute at the end of a Mass celebrated on Oct. 18. Like all permanent deacons, Deacon Gretencord balances his ministry between duties at the parish and serving in the community. (Submitted photo)
my mom to lunch. On the way back, I told her, ‘I got a call from the seminary, and I’m going to leave in an hour.’ She had been praying on it. I went in my brother’s office and told him the same thing. He said, ‘I’m sure you’ll be good at it.’”

Everything went according to plan in seminary until he became a transitional deacon—the last year before his priestly ordination in 1999—and he took a class centered on the Mass.

“When I first came [to the parish], we didn’t have a large Hispanic community, so I did all,” he said. “I do in Spanish during 12 years of mission work in the South American countries of Columbia and Peru. As the Hispanic population increased in the parish, Sister Anna Marie’s ministry to them became more focused on religious education, sacramental preparation and outreach to the poor.

Her work is now expanding beyond the Hispanic community as the parish seeks to create more unity between its Latino members and parishioners from other ethnic backgrounds. But as she reflected on her ministry at St. Monica Parish on the northwest side of Indianapolis.

For the last 50 years, Benedictine Sister Anna Marie Megel has been a Benedictine for 50 years. “Hispanic people are impressive and inspiring. They are caring, concerned, and they help their people a lot. I’m edified by their generosity and appreciation and their giving of self.”

“[Benedictines] are called to welcome all as Christ. I really get to do that in my ministry. Her service at St. Monica fulfills one portion of the two-fold call of St. Benedict’s Latin motto, ‘ora et labora’—prayer and work.” While the two are intertwined, her prayer life takes a special focus at Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove—another source of joy in the way she feels about our Catholic faith. He makes you want to be like him in his faith.

Father Eldred’s journey to the priesthood has been filled with some amazing moments. On his 51st birthday, he and five other priests concelebrated Mass with then-Pope John Paul II at the pope’s summer residence in Italy. He also concelebrated Mass with Pope Benedict XVI at the canonization of St. Theodora Guérin in Rome.

“I’ve experienced things that are just unbelievable,” he says. “You take a little kid from Terre Haute, and he’s celebrating Masses with two popes! I say, ‘God, why me?’” Still, he regards the everyday moments of being a priest as equally special.

He beams when he talks about giving first Communion to children, working with seminarians and providing the sacrament of reconciliation.

“I like to show people that God still loves them,” he says. “I’ve been blessed to get three eucharistic adoration chapels started, too.

“We also have a Christmas in July fund where we collect money for seminarians and retired priests. We send them gift cards. The retired priests are surprised to get a ‘thank you’ from a parish where they were never an active priest. And the seminarians are thankful, too.”

He has also helped to establish Becky’s Place, the Catholic Charities transitional housing site in Bedford for homeless women and children. For Father Eldred, it’s all a matter of caring for people, especially in those moments where they face physical, emotional and mental problems.

“You see someone with cancer or a 6-year-old with a brace on his leg. Or you’re with a widowed and a son in the process of their husband and father dying. You try to be there for them. Sometimes, all you can do is pray and support them. But I’ve seen the power of prayer, too. The greatest gift mankind has is the power of prayer.” He has seen that power in his life.

“You have your challenges just like anyone else. You can’t do everything. You can’t be a priest.” He says, “The peace and joy as a priest are off the charts. You have this wonderful presence in the presence of the Lord in your life.”

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Because of saying we’re coming closer to Jesus.

“Joy in the living of the day’

Sr. Bernardine Ludwig, O.S.B.


Father Rick Eldred poses for a photo next to a statue of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford. Father Eldred’s concern for the poor shows in his efforts for Becky’s Place, the Catholic Charities transitional housing site in Bedford for homeless women and children.

(John Shaughnessy)

Benedictine

continued from page 9

Eldred

continued from page 9

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“I love being a sister,” she said enthusiastically. “I love my daily prayer as community.”

Despite all the time Sister Anna Marie dedicates to work and prayer, she counts herself as the blessed one.

“I believe he’s led by the Holy Spirit,” Warthen says. “He’s very upbeat about his faith and evangelizing. And it’s contagious the way he feels about our Catholic faith. He makes you want to be like him in his faith.

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(John Shaughnessy)
“With our eyes fixed on Jesus and his merciful gaze, we experience the love of the Most Holy Trinity.
The mission Jesus received from the Father was that of revealing the mystery of divine love in its fullness.”
-Pope Francis

2015-2016 Archdiocese of Indianapolis Seminarians

Deacon Nicholas Ajanagath Tocz
Saint Mary’s School of Theology Fourth Theology Holy Family, New Albany

Deacon James Brockmiller
Saint Mary’s School of Theology Fourth Theology St. Mark, Indianapolis

Deacon Anthony Hollowell
Portefield North American College, Rome Fourth Theology Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Indianapolis

Deacon Douglas Hunter
Saint Mary’s School of Theology Fourth Theology St. John of Ars, Indianapolis

Deacon Kyle Redden
Saint Mary’s School of Theology Fourth Theology Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jeffersonville

Deacon Matt Sahayam
Saint Mary’s School of Theology Fourth Theology St. Jude, Indianapolis

Deacon Matthew Tucci
Portefield North American College, Rome Fourth Theology Holy Family, New Albany

Timothy DeCraite
Saint Mary’s School of Theology Second Theology Most Holy Name of Jesus, Beech Grove

Jeffrey Dukkan
Saint Mary’s School of Theology Second Theology St. Monica, Indianapolis

Viney Gillmore
Saint Mary’s School of Theology Second Theology St. Monica, Indianapolis

Michael Balz
Saint Mary’s School of Theology Second Philosophy Our Lady of Sweden, Indianapolis

Jonathan Hilber
Saint Mary’s School of Theology Second Philosophy St. Bartholomew, Columbus

Dustin Nelson
Saint Mary’s School of Theology Second Philosophy St. Paul, Bloomington

Thomas Wilcik
Saint Mary’s School of Theology First Philosophy Holy Family, New Albany

Michael Clawson
Bishop Simon Brull Seminary Fourth Year College Annunciation, Brazil

Mike Dehek
Bishop Simon Brull Seminary Fourth Year College Fourth Year College Bloomington

Joseph Hering
Bishop Simon Brull Seminary Fourth Year College St. Nicholas, Crawfordsville

Eamon Dally
Bishop Simon Brull Seminary Third Year College St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg

Nick McKinley
Bishop Simon Brull Seminary Third Year College St. Christopher, Indianapolis

Matthew Pernette
Bishop Simon Brull Seminary Second Year College St. Alphonsus, Bloomington

Casimiro Sahma-Enye
Bishop Simon Brull Seminary Second Year College St. Gaudens, Indianapolis

James Callahan
Bishop Simon Brull Seminary First Year College Christ the King, Indianapolis

Matthew Long
Bishop Simon Brull Seminary First Year College St. James, Indianapolis

Charlie Wester
Bishop Simon Brull Seminary First Year College St. Simon, Indianapolis

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Jubilee of Mercy
December 8, 2015 – November 20, 2016
Seminarians’ pilgrimage of faith includes visit to saint’s shrine

By Mike Krokos

Pope Francis wasn’t the only person to make a connection with America’s first native born saint during his recent pilgrimage to the United States. While President Barack Obama presented the Holy Father with a key to the home of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton as a gift upon the pope’s arrival to the White House on Sept. 22, young men in formation for the priesthood at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis spent time at the saint’s shrine in Emmitsburg, Md., a day later.

On Sept. 24, the 38 seminarians and Father Robert Robeson, rector of Bishop Bruté, and Father Joseph Moriarty, vice-rector, toured the grounds of the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and celebrated Mass there. The day before, the priests and seminarians were among the estimated 25,000 people who attended the canonization liturgy for Blessed Junipero Serra outside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

Their pilgrimage of faith included a stop in Emmittsburg on their way home to Indianapolis.

“It was great to be in the same place where a saint lived and worked,” said Adam Berning, a sophomore at Bishop Bruté and a member of Sacred Heart Parish in McCartyville, Ohio, in the Cincinnati Archdiocese. “It was amazing.”

Two hundred years ago, Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton founded the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph’s, the first new community for religious women to be established in the United States that Mother Seton founded for religious women to be established in the United States. “It was in Vincennes in the Bruté archives,” Berning said. “To be where the saint’s commitment to faith-based education had more the saint’s commitment to faith-based education education.

“It really brought to my attention the need of great Catholic schools and great Catholic teachers in the United States because there is such a rich tradition of it,” Berning said. “To be where the first free Catholic school was in the United States that Mother Seton founded was really cool.”

(For more information on the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, log on to www.setonheritage.org)†
Strength in adversity: When families are everything

Strength in adversity: When families are everything

Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Archbishop of Kiev-Halych and head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, saw the reality as a youth when Ukraine was under the Soviet Union’s communist rule, and he sees it today as hundreds of thousands of people are displaced by the fighting in his country’s Eastern region.

Philippine Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila said he sees it every time an earthquake or typhoon hits his country, and also in the relationships of refugees forced to flee violence.

Both Archbishop Shevchuk and Cardinal Tagle participated in the Synod of Bishops on the family on Oct. 4-25.

“She said, but only about 400,000 of them are manifesting its true identity.”

the family “is becoming stronger and remains the last fortress, the last hope, the houses of our Providence Associates are being displaced by the fighting in the East, he said, but only about 400,000 of them are receiving assistance from international humanitarian organizations, the Ukrainian government and Ukrainian religious or volunteer organizations. The remaining 1.1 million people are being taken care of by their extended families.

Those extended families are Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, Jewish, Protestant and nonbelievers. The phenomenon is not religious, Archbishop Shevchuk said. It simply demonstrates that families remain the foundation of a society’s existence even when the bigger units of society fail. What is more, the family shows itself to be “an outstanding source of solidarity.”

Cardinal Tagle, who also serves as president of Caritas Internationalis, witnessed the strength of families when he took a quick break from his duties at the synod and traveled to Greece’s border with Macedonia to visit Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan refugees heading toward northern Europe. According to a staff member of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, about 400,000 of the people crossing the border each day were children, most of whom were traveling with their parents. Standing in the Idomeni refugee transit camp after handing out bags of food to refugees, Cardinal Tagle said the synod was not just about Communion for the divorced and civilly remarried or attitudes toward homosexual people—“although those are really important issues”—but also about how war, migration and poverty are testing families and tearing some apart. Watching young parents get off buses with their children, standing in line for food, water and clothing, it is obvious how war impacts families and how families resist, he said.

“If you’re a Christian, you see it every time an earthquake or typhoon hits your country, and also in the relationships of refugees forced to flee violence. Both Archbishop Shevchuk and Cardinal Tagle participated in the Synod of Bishops on the family on Oct. 4-25. “ ‘Ukraine today is going through the experience of war,’ the archbishop told Catholic News Service. Especially at times when political and social structures are weak and ‘ideologies are crushing, family remains the last fortress, the last hope, the last protection of human dignity.’

‘In this period of adversity,’ he said, the family ‘is helping people to find strength and to manifest its true identity.’

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**Faith**

Those who are dying can teach the living important lessons

By Daniel S. Mulhall

Trappist Father Christian-Marie de Chergé was certain by the beginning of 1994 that his life in this world would soon end violently.

Around that time, he composed a letter to be read after his death. The French monk assured those he loved that he intended to embrace the time leading to his death, and live as it passed as a great clarity regarding life’s purpose in a turbulent environment.

So much works against viewing the time of dying as a unique phase in human life, able to yield rich blessings. Death more commonly is viewed simply as an endpoint terminating all the earlier, rewarding phases of life that allowed the human spirit to expand and soar.

Father Christian-Marie’s letter came to the world’s attention in May 1996 after the bodies of seven members of the Trappist monastery of Notre Dame de l’Atlas in Algeria were found south of Algiers. The Armed Islamic Group claimed responsibility for the killings.

Astonishingly, Father Christian-Marie termed his letter a “thank you” in which “once and for all, I say about my life.”

The priest, prior of the monastery, even extended thanks to his “last-minute friend,” describing his killer as “you who know not what you do” and adding, “May we meet each other again, happy thieves, in paradise.”

Father Christian-Marie and his fellow Trappists pursued a life of Christian witness in their Muslim-dominated environment. His letter worried “that the people that I love” would be indiscriminately blamed for his murder.

In addition to the sacredness and dignity of human life, which all end-of-life issues must be considered.

As the catechism states, “Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end. No one can under any circumstances claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being” (#2258).

In addition, the catechism points out, the commandment also forbids “doing anything with the intention of indirectly bringing about a person’s death” (#2269).

Another key principle of Catholic teaching is the intrinsic dignity of the human person that springs forth from the Creator. This dignity exists from conception until natural death. When people’s lives are “diminished or weakened,” they “shall not kill.”

The catechism says that one may not intentionally put an end to life either by an act or by failure to act. However, the catechism says one can discontinue medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome” (#2276).

Such decisions are to be made by the patient or someone legally acting on his or her wishes. Pain relief and palliative care are always permitted.

The most comprehensive presentation of the Church’s teaching on end-of-life issues can be found in St. John Paul II’s 1995 encyclical “The Gospel of Life.” The encyclical was written following a consultation with bishops from throughout the world.

In the encyclical, the pope sought to offer “a precise and vigorous reaffirmation of the value of human life and its inviolability,” and to make a universal appeal to “respect, protect, love and serve” every human life (#5).

One point made repeatedly in the encyclical is the importance of putting the benefit of the suffering person first and above everything else. Making life easier for the caregiver or family is secondary. Maintaining the dignity and sacredness of the patient is the deciding factor.

In addition to the sacredness and dignity of human life, one other factor must be considered: the mystery of God. How does the decision being considered flow from God’s unceasing love and mercy? How do our decisions reflect the will of the Creator?

(Alex Mulllall is a catechist. He lives in Laurel, Maryland.)
St. Bernard was by far the most outstanding Churchman of the first half of the 12th century. He became Prior of the Cistercian monastery at Citeaux, in Clairvaux. His five brothers, two uncles and some friends followed him into the monastery. By the age of 22, he was abbot of a new house, in Clairvaux.

Bernard was often called upon to solve problems. There was an eight-year schism when there were two popes—Innocent II and Anacletus II. It started with the death of Pope Honorius III in 1130. The chancellor and a minority of cardinals quickly burned him in a temporary grave, and elected Cardinal Gregorio Papareschi pope, enthroning him the next day as Pope Innocent II.

It's All Good/Patti Lamb

God is at work in all of us—wherever we are on our journey

Recently, I found myself job searching. I updated my resume, cast my line and prepared myself for the quest. After months—and months—of submitting online applications and networking, I was connecting for networking lunches and more prayer. Sometimes it was difficult to accept that place that I didn’t quite expect. I accepted a position at an art studio just a stone’s throw from my home. I received the news of two lovely women and fellow parishioners.

When I shared my job news with a college girlfriend recently, she seemed startled. “Your degree isn’t art,” she plaintively reminded me. “Didn’t you once tell me that, during school, you wanted to pursue a career in the arts?”

I gently explained that I felt like this was a good fit for me. I would be putting my education to use, and pursue and pulled out a tattered newspaper clipping from years ago that I saved from this studio for inspiration.

In the clipping, the theologian Father Michael Himes condensed vocational discernment questions: “First, what gives me joy?”

Father Himes noted that joy is not the same thing as happiness. For him, happiness is fleeting, but joy “speaks more to a deeper reality, an abiding sense of consolation and peace.”

“Joy” (not what “feels good,” as our culture often defines it today), said Father Himes. “It is what ‘feels right’ when I stand openly and honestly before God.”

**“Second, what am I good at?”**

The theologian encourages us to examine our strengths and our weaknesses. “Where should we ask friends and family what they see as our strengths.”

**“Really, what is the need?”**

Father Himes asks. Author and theologian Frederick Buechner refers to vocation as the place where “our deep gladness and the world’s hunger meet.”

Then, I relayed a story to my college friend that I was privileged to witness recently at the studio. A young woman came in on an early September day and explained that she had spoken to the owners, who suddenly appeared from the back with an unpainted ceramic Christmas tree, along with paint and paints.

Meanwhile, when the customer and I got talking, tears began to cascade down her face. She told the fired painter that she paints a ceramic Christmas tree each year for a family member. This year, however, her grandchild was with her and this would be the last tree she would paint. The recipient would be this woman’s 18-month-old son. I promised to add the woman’s grandmother to my prayer list.

A short time later, the hand-painted treasure was carefully unloaded from the kiln and prepped for the grand opening to properly price it. As we raced into the studio, examined the tree with a smile and added, “Please express my gratitude to the owner for her generous donation.” She continued: “My grandmother is in her last 24 hours, and one of her final wishes is to give this tree to my son, her great-grandson.”

That day at work, I got to witness a little miracle: a Christmas tree painted month before Dec. 25, yet right on time.

Rest in peace, Sharon, and enjoy your eternal reward. Your tree will be cherished for generations to come.

For the Journey/Effie Calderolla

Getting rid of clutter to make room for things of the spirit

A member of my faith-sharing community devoted one year to buying nothing. Nothing, at least, that wasn’t necessity. She bought food, of course, and if her children ran out of ink, she would deem that a necessary purchase. She paid her utility bills and put gas in the car, but she added no “stuff” to her life.

She resisted clothes, jewelry, household furniture and appliances. Do you think she sold her children were alerted that Christmas gifts would be family mementos or keepsakes passed down to them? Did she add no “stuff” to her life.

I thought about her on a day when I was researching the current mania about simplifying. The latest self-help craze is all about getting rid of the stuff that overwhelms us. Probably the most recent hit in this genre is Marie Kondo’s (Effie Calderolla writes for Catholic News Service.)

If you research this trend, you’ll find that Kondo’s enormously popular book is a mere 108 pages. It is a tour-de-force of motivation, cluttering and minimalism.

“First, what gives me joy?”

From a Christian standpoint, do we ask “What gives me joy” in our life needlessly.

Maybe we’re obsessed by clutter right now because we are so engrossed in personal life. It fills our houses to the brim. We rent instead of buying. What can we do with the things we need.

How does our relentless consumerism take us away from God? Basically, does clutter, and the money on it, bog us down and our spiritual life as well as our house? One hardly needs to be a certified housekeeper to know that all clutter is a sin.

Maybe we’re obsessed by clutter right now because we are so engrossed in personal life. It fills our houses to the brim. We rent instead of buying. What can we do with the things we need.

What else can you do?

• To learn more about the Syrian refugee crisis, visit www.archdiocese.org/refugee or for more information.

Faith, Hope and Charity/ David Silver

Doing all we can to help with the refugee crisis

Perhaps no migration of citizens from a single country has ever been more broadly reported than the millions fleeing the war and the rise of ISIS. The number of people who have fled the war in Syria has topped 4 million. More than 4 million Syrians have fled the conflict to seek safety in another country in the past 40 years. Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis has been referring refugees from various countries around the world to central Indiana for 40 years.

We are in a time when the federal government has supported families consisting of one parent with children. The federal government promised to resettle 587 refugees from seven different countries. We cannot do this work alone. Our work with the community, and without the many volunteers who help by making meals, answering phones and donating household items, just to name a few things.

A Virginian is a legal term to describe an individual who has been given this status by the government, while immigrants who are people who have fled or migrated to another country but have not been given the status of refugee. It will be up to us to determine who we believe will be refugees and invited to start a new life in our country— as with other countries who decide to do the same. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) strongly supports this effort, and we in turn subcontract with the USCCB.

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Additional information.

US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
Sunday, Nov. 8, 2015

• 1 Kings 17:10-16
• Hebrews 9:24-28
• Mark 12:38-44

The First Book of Kings furnishes this weekend with its first reading from the Scriptures. Political governance, in the minds of the ancient Hebrews, was not the chief function of their kings. Rather, assuring the nation’s faithfulness to God and to the law of God given through Moses was their primary responsibility. Nothing was more important than the people’s fidelity to God.

Since this religious function was so vital, prophets were important. Not surprisingly, many stories contained in Books of Kings also give great attention to the prophets. Such is the case this weekend. The central figure in this story is Elijah, the prophet. In the story, Elijah appears at the gate of a city and encounters a woman collecting twigs and branches to use as firewood.

Questions Corner

Mary Magdalene was a disciple of Jesus and the first witness of his resurrection

Q Today I was chatting with a friend who is a Buddhist. She does not have a deep knowledge of the Bible, and she talked about Mary Magdalene as a great sinner and former prostitute who developed a romantic relationship with Jesus. I wanted to correct her, but I couldn’t find the right words. Can you help me, too (Iowa)?

A Your friend has perhaps been influenced by the novelist Dan Brown, who suggested in his book The Da Vinci Code that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and fathered a child by her.

Dan Brown is in the entertainment business. He is a writer of fiction, and this is what he has done. It must be said that the way he wrote his novel can mislead readers about the truth claims made in it. In any case, there is no historical basis for the scenario he has created. Mary of Magdala appears in the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke as a woman from whom seven devils had been expelled. There is no scriptural evidence to link her to the woman mentioned in a chapter elsewhere in Luke who, at a Pharisee’s house, washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and dried them with her hair.

What we know from the Gospels about Mary Magdalene is that she was a loyal disciple of Christ who, along with other women, helped to support his work financially. She witnessed his crucifixion and his burial, and she spoke with the risen Lord on Easter Sunday morning and reported his resurrection to the Apostles.

Besides the lack of any hard evidence for his fanciful assertions, I would want to ask Brown this: If Mary Magdalene and Jesus really were married and had a child together, then why, from the cross on Good Friday, did Christ assign John to take care of his mother and make no provision for his “wife” and their “child”?

(questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com or at 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.)

Unborn purpose

By Ann Wolski

Ann Wolski is a member of St. Matthew the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis. At The Shrine of Christ’s Passion in St. Mary, Ind., in the Gary Diocese, on April 1, a statue of Jesus holds the figure of an unborn child at a memorial to the innocent victims of abortion. (Photo by Natalie Hooten)

You were called a mistake but you and I know God doesn’t make mistakes. All lives have a purpose. To think that you, sweet little one, would not be allowed to follow your life journey is heartbreaking.

So I will nurture you for nine months. I will sing to you. I will calm you. I will pray for you. I will dream for you.

I will love you. And, when the time comes, I will hug you and say goodbye.

Another mother and father will raise you to become the beautiful person God has created. You are not a mistake. You are their purpose.

Josaphat

c. 1580 - 1623

feast - November 12

An early ecumenist, Josaphat was born in Ukraine. Not happy with a mercantile apprenticeship in Lithuania, he spent his spare time learning church Slavonic to enhance his liturgical and prayer life. In 1604 he entered a monastery in Vilnius, where he began promoting Orthodox union with Rome and reform of Ruthenian monasteries. This movement eventually became the Basilians of St. Josaphat. As an abbot, bishop and archbishop in Eastern Europe, he constantly called for unity with Rome, a position that became increasingly controversial. In 1623, after travelling openly in Vitebsk (Belorussia), he was attacked by a mob, shot and thrown in a river. This patron of Ukraine is the first Eastern-rite saint whose cause was processed by Rome.

My Journey to God

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Daily Readings

Monday, November 9
The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica
Ezechiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12
Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9
1 Corinthians 3:3-11, 16-17
John 2:13-22

Tuesday, November 10
St. Leo the Great, pope and doctor of the Church
Wisdom 2:23-3:9
Psalm 34:2-3, 16-19
Luke 7:17-10

Wednesday, November 11
St. Martin of Tours, bishop
Wisdom 6:1-11
Psalm 82:3-4, 6-7
Luke 17:11-19

Thursday, November 12
St. Josaphat, bishop and martyr
Wisdom 7:22b-8:1
Psalm 119:89-91, 130, 135, 175
Luke 17:20-25

Friday, November 13
St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, virgin
Wisdom 13:1-9
Psalm 19:2, 5b
Luke 17:26-37

Saturday, November 14
Wisdom 18:14-16; 19:6-9
Psalm 109:2-3, 36-37, 42-43
Luke 18:1-8

Sunday, November 15
Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Daniel 12:1-3
Psalm 16:5, 8-11
Hebrews 10:11-14, 18
Mark 13:24-32

The Criterion Friday, November 6, 2015

© 2013 Catholic News Service
Pope: God doesn’t condemn sinners; he weeps, waits for their conversion

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—God loves his children so much that he does not condemn them—he weeps when they stray, commit evil or refuse his love, Pope Francis said at morning Mass.

God will wait until the final moments of a sinner’s life, like he did for the good thief on the cross who mocked him, said the pope said in his homily on Oct. 29 during the Mass in the chapel of his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

The worst person, the worst blasphemer is loved by God as much as the good thief on the cross, who mocked him, he said.

In fact, God—who is all powerful—is helpless in that no power, no thing will be able to eliminate this love,” the pope said.

It also is a love that cannot be explained, he said, because he still offers his love and gift of salvation even to those, who in their free will, refuse him and choose narcissism, pride and sin instead.

Those who unite themselves with Christ are victorious—not because the battle against evil is somehow over, but because there is nothing and no one who can take away God’s love, Pope Francis said.

“Is it not that we are victorious over our enemies, over sin? No. We are so bound to God’s love that no person, no power, no thing will be able to eliminate this love,” he said.

A woman visiting the Franklin Institute Science Museum in Philadelphia on Oct. 23 takes a close look at a Lego rendition of the Vatican’s St. Peter’s Basilica, crafted by Father Bob Simon, pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Moscow, Pa. Father Simon says his Lego-building hobby has served as an evangelization tool.
Consoling the Heart of Jesus retreat

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis recently concluded a Consoling the Heart of Jesus retreat. The retreat is based on Marions of the Immaculate Conception Father Michael Gaitley’s book Consoling the Heart of Jesus: A Do-It-Yourself Retreat—inspired by the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius. It is a sequel to his 33 Days to Morning Glory: A Do-It-Yourself Retreat in Preparation for Marian Consecration. The Consoling the Heart of Jesus retreat integrates Ignatian spiritual exercises with teachings of mercy and Marian experts, including Sts. Thérèse of Lisieux, Faustina Kowalska, John Paul II, Maximilian Kolbe and Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, among others. Its goal is to enhance understanding of and to fully embrace the Divine Mercy message—ask for mercy, be merciful and completely trust in Jesus. The retreat, which included 36 participants, was held every Sunday afternoon for 10 weeks, and culminated with the blessing of the retreatants by Father Jegan Peter, associate pastor at St. Luke Parish.

Pictured in the photo, above right, are facilitators displaying their Consoling the Heart of Jesus certificates, guests, the retreat facilitators and Father Peter.

Showed below right, are facilitators with Father Peter. They include Vic Romero, left, Myrna Romero, Father Peter, Pilar Sayoc, Tina Ricofero, Lisa Iaig, Ninna Solito and Leo Sollito.
Knowing how to cry opens one to tenderness, pope says at cemetery Mass

“Blessed are those who weep, because they will be comforted,” the pope said. “This morning we were all at the point of tears.”

Father Timothy Wyciskalla, associate pastor of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish in Greenwood, holds a San Damiano crucifix has been initiated by the newly formed parish vocation ministry committee. Students pictured with Father Wyciskalla are Sydney McConnell, left, Athena Pavelko, Jackson Stroumins and Drew Gavin. (Submitted photo)

As Pope Francis processed to the temporary altar, he also stopped to lay a white rose on a grave.

The day’s Gospel reading was St. Matthew’s version of the Beatitudes, which the pope said was the path Jesus taught as the road to heaven. “It’s a journey difficult to understand because it goes against the tide, but the Lord tells us that whoever takes this path is happy,” the pope said. “Those who are happy in spirit, the pope said, are happy because they have experienced the truth that everyone is in need of forgiveness and mercy, the pope said. “They don’t judge everyone, try to put themselves in the other’s shoes.”

Mass always begins with asking God’s forgiveness and mercy; it is a time when “we recognize ourselves for what we are, sinners. It’s not just a saying, a formality,” he said. “And if we learn how to give others the forgiveness that we ask for ourselves, we will be blessed.”

The Beatitudes say that peacemakers will be blessed, and that is something often visible in the here and now, he said. “Look at the faces of those who go around sowing discord: are they happy?” Those who always look for opportunities to trick others, to take advantage of others, are they happy? No, they cannot be happy.”

But those who patiently try each day to promote peace and reconciliation, even through small gestures at home and at work, “are blessed because they are true children of our heavenly Father, who always and only sows peace.”

As dusk approached, Pope Francis asked the thousands of people gathered in the cemetery to pray with him for “the grace to be simple and humble people, the grace to know to weep, the grace to be merciful, the grace to work for justice and peace, and especially, the grace to let ourselves be forgiven by God in order to become instruments of his mercy.”

Earlier in the day, the pope recited the Angelus with visitors gathered in St. Peter’s Square, focusing on the call to be saints that all Christians receive at baptism.

The saints officially recognized by the Church and the saints “next door” are models to imitate and are those who give people encouragement, he said. At baptism, the pope said, “we received the ‘seed’ of our heavenly Father and we became his children. To put it simply, we have God’s last name,” and a vocation to holiness.

The saints—formally recognized by the Church or known only to their families and friends—are those who have kept that seal intact and behaved as children of God, he said. To imitate their gestures of love and mercy is a bit like continuing their presence in the world, he said. “These evangelical gestures are the only ones that resist the destruction of death. An act of tenderness, generous help, time spent listening, a visit, a nice word, a smile— these can seem insignificant, but in the eyes of God they are eternal because love and compassion are stronger than death.”

CANNON
continued from page 4

community set apart from the world where life in prayer proclaims the Gospel in their own distinct way.

Consecrated single life is a response from God to live a Christian life under the vow of consecrated celibacy. The strength of God’s kingdom is contingent on every vocation. For most people, married life and openness to the blessings of children is the greatest “call” to love.

Please take time to pray about vocations as a family, and then your children will realize how important it is to discern where God is calling them in life. Help them understand that vocations to priesthood and religious life are joyful options. If you witness qualities that would make a great priest or religious in the young people of your parish, do not be afraid to encourage them. More information can be found at www.HearGodsCall.com.

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Those who “are poor in spirit,” the pope said, are happy because heaven is their only treasure; heaven awaits them. Those who mourn are blessed because without ever having experienced “sadness, anguish, pain, one will never know the power of consolation,” the pope said. But those who know how to weep for themselves and for others will experience the caress of “the tender hand of God.”

“How many times,” the pope asked, “are we impatient, nervous, always ready to complain, and to criticize others as if we were the bosses of the world when in reality we are all children of God?”

Jesus showed his followers that meekness is the path to eternal happiness, the pope said. Although the Son of God, he experienced exile as a child in Egypt, he was slandered, falsely accused and condemned. But “he took it all with meekness. He bore it out of love for us, even to the cross.”

Those who hunger and thirst for justice, the pope said, “will be satisfied because they are ready to welcome the greater justice, which is what only God can give.”

The merciful are blessed because they have experienced the truth that everyone is in need of forgiveness and mercy, the pope said. “They don’t judge everyone, try to put themselves in the other’s shoes.”

Mass always begins with asking God’s forgiveness and mercy; it is a time when “we recognize ourselves for what we are, sinners. It’s not just a saying, a formality,” he said. “And if we learn how to give others the forgiveness that we ask for ourselves, we will be blessed.”

The Beatitudes say that peacemakers will be blessed, and that is something often visible in the here and now, he said. “Look at the faces of those who go around sowing discord: are they happy?” Those who always look for opportunities to trick others, to take advantage of others, are they happy? No, they cannot be happy.”

But those who patiently try each day to promote peace and reconciliation, even through small gestures at home and at work, “are blessed because they are true children of our heavenly Father, who always and only sows peace.”

As dusk approached, Pope Francis asked the thousands of people gathered in the cemetery to pray with him for “the grace to be simple and humble people, the grace to know to weep, the grace to be merciful, the grace to work for justice and peace, and especially, the grace to let ourselves be forgiven by God in order to become instruments of his mercy.”

Earlier in the day, the pope recited the Angelus with visitors gathered in St. Peter’s Square, focusing on the call to be saints that all Christians receive at baptism.

The saints officially recognized by the Church and the saints “next door” are models to imitate and are those who give people encouragement, he said. At baptism, the pope said, “we received the ‘seed’ of our heavenly Father and we became his children. To put it simply, we have God’s last name,” and a vocation to holiness.

The saints—formally recognized by the Church or known only to their families and friends—are those who have kept that seal intact and behaved as children of God, he said. To imitate their gestures of love and mercy is a bit like continuing their presence in the world, he said. “These evangelical gestures are the only ones that resist the destruction of death. An act of tenderness, generous help, time spent listening, a visit, a nice word, a smile— these can seem insignificant, but in the eyes of God they are eternal because love and compassion are stronger than death.”