Being human: Pope Francis delights many, frustrates some

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The pope is human. Pope Francis demonstrated that in Mexico, as he does wherever he goes, and most people find it attractive most of the time.

In Pope Francis, Catholics can see a real person trying to live his faith in a complicated world. Sometimes he waves at them, and they can see the frayed edges of his soutane sleeve. When his scotica is acting up, he needs extra help going down steps. His aids do not keep his reading glasses, so sometimes he fumbles with the soutane pocket trying to get them out.

Crowds “ahh” when he tenderly strokes the face of an obviously sick person, and they applaud when he gives a big hug to a child. However, they can be shocked when the human side of the pope is impatience or downright angry like it was on Feb. 16 in Morelia, Mexico, when one of the thousands of people who grab the pope at public events yanked him, pulling him up on top of a person seated in a wheelchair.

“What’s the matter with you?” the pope snapped. “Don’t be selfish.”

While security officers helped the pope back up, Pope Francis caressed the face of the boy he’d fallen on.

The off-the-cuff Pope Francis is very human, too. That touches people who experience a pope really listening to them, and who is taking notes as people ask him questions. It sometimes frustrates journalists who are taking notes as people ask him questions. It sometimes frustrates journalists who are taking notes as people ask him questions.

But the pope knows that. For example, when he spoke about the growing gap between the rich and poor, he openly

Carolyn Fenton stands outside a confessional at St. Joseph Church in Shelbyville, Indiana. The sacrament of reconciliation has long had a special place in her life after a priest’s advice led her to the husband of her dreams, and to the realization that Jesus is present in the sacrament. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

Visit to confessional, priestly advice lead woman to trust God’s future plan

(See POPE, page 2)

‘24 Hours for the Lord’ will highlight sacrament of penance

By Sean Gallagher

When Pope Francis announced last April that the Church would observe a Holy Year of Mercy this year, he specifically called on dioceses throughout the world to observe “24 Hours for the Lord” on March 4-5.

He launched this initiative in 2015 in the Diocese of Rome as a time dedicated to prayer, and especially to make the celebration of the sacrament more widely available to the faithful.

By having dioceses around the world take up “24 Hours for the Lord,” the pope said in “Misericordiae Vultus” (“The Face of Mercy”) that he hoped the initiative would place the sacrament of penance at the center of the life of the Church, and would “enable people to touch the grandeur of God’s mercy with their own hands” (#17).

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin has asked parishes across central and southern Indiana to observe “24 Hours for the Lord,” but has allowed each faith community to determine how to do this in its own particular context.

Some parishes across the archdiocese have

People wait in line outside of a confessional during the Holy Year of Mercy.

In the midst of this troubled time, Fenton left the downtown Indianapolis office where she worked to receive the sacrament of reconciliation one day at St. John the Evangelist Church.

“I went in to confess my sins, but I really went in to ask for help,” she says.

What happened next changed her life.

A promise and a series of surprises

After confessing my sins, I told the priest about my heartaches, fears and my
FAITH
continued from page 1

situation at that time," Fenton says. "As the priest consoled me, and listened to my concerns for myself and my son's future, I noted his deep but soft and caring voice.

"His advice was for me to let go of the fear and trust in God. He told me I must have faith and the Lord will work it out. Then he promised me that God would bring a man into my life, and that man would marry me and become the father of my son. He said it would occur through many surprising circumstances."

"The surprising circumstances" started to unfold a few months later, she says.

"My mother’s parents ran an orphan home in Indianapolis for years," Fenton says. "That’s where my dad met my mom. When my grandpa died, a lot of the orphans came to his funeral to pay their respects. A lot of those who couldn’t come wrote letters and notes to my mom. One of the letters was from a young man named David. The letter mentioned he and my mom kept written messages to each other. We went to visit them.

The visit occurred about 10 years after Fenton’s grandfather died, and a few months after Fenton received the sacrament of reconciliation at St. John. Fenton joined her family on the visit. It’s where she met David, the son of her mother’s pen pal.

"He was quiet, a good guy," Fenton says. "He treated me like a lady. He treated me with respect. That was the first thing that made a difference."

She received another surprise just before their third date, a surprise that came in a phone call from David.

"I knew he was there" said, "That was a turning point for me. I really felt like Mary Magdalene at the time. I was looking for forgiveness. I wanted to start clean. It gave me hope for the first time in many years."

Her voice becomes softer as she adds, "Jesus was there in the confessional that day. I knew he was there. After that, I knew why I needed to give up to God because of who he was really there. I still have that feeling when I’m in confession—knowing I’m loved and it’s going to be OK."

She marvels that one moment of forgiveness and compassion long ago continues to touch her life in so many ways.

"When I was younger, I thought I had to earn God’s love all the time. Now, I know I still fall back sometimes, but with age I’ve gotten to see all the blessings in my life instead of all the hard times. My parents and my family were right beside me. They taught me to keep my faith. I’ve just had so many blessings that I know God is real."

(The Criterion continues to invite our readers to share their stories of how their lives have been graced by the mercy of God and other people—and how that mercy has made a difference.

We are also seeking stories from our readers who have shown mercy and forgiveness to others—and how that act of mercy and forgiveness has made a difference to the person offering it. Please send your stories and responses to assistant editor John Shaughnessy by e-mail at jshaughnessy@archindy.org or by mail to care of The Criterion, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Please include your parish and a daytime phone number where you can be reached.)"
The meeting of Pope Francis and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill in Moscow exchange copies after signing a joint declaration during a meeting at Jose Marti International Airport in Havana on Feb. 12. ( CNS photo/Paul Haring)

By Sean Gallagher

Archbishop Tobin, Orthodox leader see significance in Havana meeting

Catholic and Orthodox leaders have taken historic strides over the past half century to bring closer together their Churches that have been divided for more than a thousand years.

Pope Francis and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill made their own contribution to this effort on Feb. 12 when the two met for the first time.

It was the first meeting in history of a bishop of Rome and patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, the traditional title held starting in 1589 by the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin watched the meeting of Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill with interest since, in addition to leading the Catholic Church in central and southern Indiana, he also serves as the co-chair of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation.

This body is aiming for ecclesial dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches since it was established in 1965.

Also observing the meeting in Havana closely was Orthodox Archdeacon John Chrysavgis, an Australian-born theological adviser to Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, who also helps lead Orthodox ecumenical efforts in the United States.

Archdeacon John Chrysavgis

The interview conducted by Archbishop Tobin and Archdeacon Chrysavgis about this historic meeting and the joint declaration that the pope and patriarch issued at it.

Archdeacon Chrysavgis described the meeting as “an important, even spectacular moment in relations between Russia and Rome,” and may mark the first “baby steps” of the Russian Orthodox Church’s move to improved relations with other Churches.

“The new and critical factor at this point in history is the emergence of the Russian Orthodox Church in its willingness to join the world community at the ecumenical table, so to speak,” said Archdeacon Chrysavgis. “In order to be a vital part of an united Christian response to global issues, such as the unjustified persecution of Christians in the Middle East and the perceived global subversion of Christian values.”

Much of the Havana declaration lays out the common ground between Catholic and Russian Orthodox Christians on such topics as marriage, family life, the sanctity of life and religious liberty.

The two leaders emphasized most their condemnation of the ongoing persecution of the Christian faithful in the Middle East.

“The two points of unity that the document cites are the experience of the first millennium, that is, up until 1054,” Archbishop Tobin said, “but also, in a real way and not simply an empty symbol, the blood of the martyrs, which, by and large, don’t involve Russian and Latin Christians. But they’re Christians. They’re Copts, Syrians and Chaldeans who are dying.”

Archdeacon Chrysavgis noted, “There is no doubt in my mind that if religion is to have a credible, committed and courageous voice in our world, then Christian—and, more broadly speaking, religious—leaders must speak together against the violence of terror, war and greed. They need to put aside theological or ideological differences in order to respond to threats to human dignity throughout the world, and especially in the Middle East and Palestine. This is not a political conviction; it is a global reality.”

Archdeacon John Chrysavgis

Historic meeting reflects ‘imperfect communion’

By Sean Gallagher

An imperfect communion of many Churches.

That statement is a summary of important and complex realities behind the historic Feb. 12 meeting in Havana. Cuba, of Pope Francis and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill.

The Catholic Church, while being a single Church around the world, teaches that it subsists in a communion of particular Churches under the pastoral leadership of the bishop of Rome.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis forms part of the Roman or “Latin” Catholic Church. Particular Churches in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Asia also form part of the Catholic Church. Examples of these “eastern” Orthodox Churches are the Maronite Catholic Church, the Melkite Catholic Church and the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church.

Many of these are tied historically to specific nations, such as Lebanon, Syria or Armenia. They have their own liturgy, their own proper law and their own hierarchy.

Despite these differences, all of these particular Catholic Churches across the world share communion with the bishop of Rome and are part of the Catholic Church.

St. Athanasius the Great Byzantine Catholic Church in Indianapolis is an example of this unity among diversity.

This parish is a part of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchate of Parma, Ohio (the equivalent to a diocese in the Latin Church). Both the Eparchy of Parma and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis share full communion with the bishop of Rome.

Some eastern Catholic Churches were part of the Orthodox Churches not in communion with the pope. Their return to full communion with the Catholic Church still poses difficulties for the Orthodox Churches.

Most of the approximately 275 million Orthodox around the world belong to any one of the 14 autocephalous Orthodox Churches.

The term “autocephalous” refers to the fact that each of these Churches has a leader, often called a “patriarch,” that does not fall under the jurisdiction of another leader.

The faithful of these Churches, many of which were established in the earliest days of the Church, are located primarily in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Emigration, however, has spread the Orthodox Churches to many places around the world, including central Indiana.

The Catholic Church recognizes the Orthodox Churches as true Churches in part because they accept the “less Apostolic succession,” that is, the uninterrupted transmission of spiritual authority from the Apostles to the bishops of today.

As a result, the Catholic Church recognizes as valid the sacraments of the Orthodox.

Nonetheless, the communion of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches is imperfect because of a few doctrinal differences, although many of these problems have found a solution. The greatest challenge to full communion is that the Orthodox Churches do not accept the universal primacy of the bishop of Rome.

During the first 1.000 years of Christianity, those now identified as Catholic and Orthodox were one in faith.

A series of crises due to cultural, social and even linguistic differences, however, led to the rupture of communion between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches in 1054 that remains to this day.

Over the past half century, however, Catholic and Orthodox leaders have made significant efforts to further unity among their Churches, beginning with the historic encounter of Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in 1964.

The ecumenical patriarch holds a special place of honor with Orthodox and is widely regarded as the representative and spiritual leader of the world’s Orthodox Christians.

The meeting of Pope Francis and Russian Patriarch Kirill on Feb. 12 in Havana is the latest step in this work to fulfill Christ’s prayer at the Last Supper that all of his followers “may be one” (Jn 17:21).
Knowing Jesus and his mercy and sharing it with others

Mercy has been in the news a lot lately, and for good reason. We’re several months into the Church’s Holy Year of Mercy, and at its heart is a prayer for each of us as Christians to turn away from sin and seek God’s forgiveness. And, just as important, to offer mercy to those who have wronged us.

“God’s justice is his mercy,” Pope Francis wrote. Christians are obliged to treat others with mercy. In fact, the Gospel says that Christians will be judged by the mercy they show others.

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

Many of us may have rightly decided to focus on mercy during Lent, and two weeks into this liturgical season, a fair question to ask ourselves is: How are we doing?

As we ponder how to take the pope’s words to heart during the current Year of Mercy, the Lenten season seems like an appropriate time for all Catholics to spend more time practicing what they have traditionally been called the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The corporal works are: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, giving water to drink to the thirsty and burying the dead. The spiritual works are: converting sinners, preaching the Gospel to the “lost,” and sharing it with others.

Yet significant technical and ethical hurdles remain before growing organs in pigs is likely to be feasible. The science is still in its infancy, and researchers have yet to figure out how to make human cells coexist in a stable fashion with animal tissues. There are abundant concerns about the possibility of transmitting animal viruses to humans, especially considering how readily viruses like avian influenza can be able to jump from birds to humans.

Even assuming these kinds of risks are able to be minimized, and pig/human chimera could be safely produced, there would still be several ethical issues.

One concern involves using stem cells from human embryos as part of the process for making pig/human chimeras. Typically, scientists try to generate chimeras by adding human embryonic stem cells to pig embryos. If we continue to grow up and develop into chimeric animals. Destroying young humans in their embryonic stages for the sake of growing stem cells is gravely objectionable, so creating chimeras could be ethically only if alternative, non-embryonic sources of stem cells—like adult stem cells or induced pluripotent stem cells—were utilized for the procedure.

The technology might also lend itself to other unethical practices, like trying to create a pig that could produce human sperm or eggs in its genitalia. Similarly, if human nerve cells were incorporated into a developing pig brain in such a way that the animal developed what appeared to be human brain structures, some have noted there could be questions about the occurrence of intelligence or self-consciousness or other facets of human identity in the animal.

Although such concerns seem far-fetched, given the dearth of knowledge about the “scaffolding of consciousness,” it seems reasonable to limit this kind of experimentation. Some scientific agencies like the National Institutes of Health have restricted the availability of research funds for the study of human pig chimeras because of these and other considerations, seeing to lever pressure so the morbidity and mortality data for the notion of putting together a pig brain and discussion occurs before researchers proceed further.

We tend to view modern scientific progress as a powerful “engine of good” for the “well-being of mankind, and in response to the moral question to insist that cutting edge biomedical research remains in active dialogue and interaction with sound ethics.

The expanding study of human/animal chimeras challenges us to reflect carefully on the ethical appropriateness of use of these novel and powerful technologies, so that human dignity will not be harmed, subjugated or misappropriated in any way.

(Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience at Yale University and did post-doctoral work at Harvard University. He is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as director of education at the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org) / Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Opinion

Letter to the Editor

Bishop Barron’s column on chips’ ad offers food for thought, reader says

Bishop Robert E. Barron’s column in the Feb. 19 issue of The Criterion concerning the Doritos commercial aired during the Super Bowl was great, and said it all.

He brought out a few other things we people may have forgotten—abortion (the killing of a baby) is legal even after birth. We need to hear more of this from our bishops.

Barbara Maness Vevay

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be brief, clear, well-expressed, concise, temperate in tone, courteous and respectful. Letters should give the right to select and edit the letters based on space limitations, pastoral sensitivity and content. Letters must be signed, but, for reasons of space, 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.
Practicing mercy in the season of Lent

The Holy Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis, we are making a special effort to understand why mercy (loving forgiveness) is such an important feature of our Christian way of life.

Mercy is not an abstraction. It is an attitude of the mind and heart that is most fully expressed in action. When I forgive someone who has harmed me, I must show it in the way I treat her. When I let go of past hurts, I have to make amends. That means making these relationships right again through specific actions performed by me on behalf of each person who has wronged me in the past.

Showing mercy isn’t easy. Our egos get in the way. We much prefer revenge—“getting even” or making other people pay for the wrongs committed against us.

Some cultures (such as organized crime) make exacting revenge into a solemn commitment. That’s one reason Pope Francis has spoken out forcefully against subcultures in Italy—and throughout the world—that constantly seek revenge.

The Holy Father knows that vengeance leads only to hatred, violence and an unending, vicious cycle of evil consequences. Mercy is the opposite of vengeance. It is the only way to lasting peace.

During the season of Lent, we are given many concrete opportunities to practice mercy and to learn how to forgive ourselves as well as those who have trespassed against us. The three classic Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and good works (almsgiving) can be means of practicing mercy in our daily lives.

In the Lord’s prayer, we ask the Father to forgive our sins “as we forgive those who trespass against us.” God’s forgiveness is not in doubt, but our ability to forgive (ourselves and others) is what we must pray for. Only God’s grace can unlock our stubborn, abused and unloving hearts. That’s why we pray that the Father will help us seek and accept his forgiveness while granting us the power to forgive others.

One of the most powerful ways to make amends for past wrongs—whether committed by us against another or against the person who has wronged us or whom we have wronged—is sometimes not possible to request the forgiveness of someone we hurt long ago (a parent who is now deceased, a former employer, an old friend or lover). But even if it is impossible to look another person in the eye and say, “I forgive you” or “I’m sorry,” we can always pray for them. If we ask God to extend to them the love and mercy that we are unable to express directly—for whatever reasons—we can be confident that our merciful Father will do so. And, in our prayers, we will forgive us also for whatever we part played in harming the relationships that we now seek to amend.

Jesus commanded us to pray for our enemies, including those who persecute us, because he knew that prayer is the voice of mercy. Prayer brings us into right relationship with God and each other. We practice praying for forgiveness during Lent as we repeat the words of Jesus, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.” (Lk 23:34), and as we pray frequently, “Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Fasting is also a way to express mercy. How many of us sin by overindulgence, knowing that so many of our sisters and brothers have less than they need? Fasting reminds us that we do not live by bread alone. It challenges us to live temperate lives while being generous toward others. How is this an act of mercy? We seek God’s pardon and forgiveness for the ways we have abused God’s material and spiritual gifts. And we resolve to be much more attentive to the needs of others—especially the poor, neglected and unwanted people on the margins of society who are, in truth, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

“Almsgiving” is much more than giving money to the poor (although that is very important). It is expressing our solidarity, our closeness, with those we have wronged by the sin of indifference. It is seeking their forgiveness, not simply by our words, but by the actions we take on their behalf.

By our prayer, our fasting and our almsgiving, we ask the Father to forgive our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. This Lent, let’s take advantage of this wonderful opportunity. Let’s practice mercy as we prepare for the ultimate act of mercy, the Resurrection of our crucified Lord!”

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Practicar la misericordia durante la Cuaresma

En la Cuaresma de este Año Santo de la Misericordia proclamado por el Papa Francisco, estamos haciendo un esfuerzo especial para entender por qué la misericordia (el perdón amoroso) es una característica tan importante de nuestra vida cristiana.

La misericordia no es una abstracción. Es una disposición de la mente y el corazón que se manifiesta en mayor plenitud a través de la acción. Cuando perdono a alguien que me ha hecho daño, debo demostrarlo en la forma en que trato a esa persona. Cuando me despiojo de viejos agravios, tengo que hacer algunas modificaciones. Eso significa subtrair esas relaciones mediante acciones específicas que yo debo realizar en nombre de cada persona que me ha hecho daño en el pasado.

Demonstrar la misericordia no es fácil ya que el ego se interpone. Tenemos una clara preferencia por la venganza: “quedar tablas” o hacer que la otra persona pague por el daño que nos ha causado.

Algunas culturas (como el crimen organizado, por ejemplo) transforman al acto de la venganza estricta en un compromiso solemne. Esa es una de las razones por las que el Papa Francisco ha pronunciado tan energéticamente en contra de los subculturas de Italia, así como de todo el mundo, que buscan constantemente la venganza. El santo padre sabe que la venganza únicamente conlleva al odio, a la violencia y a un círculo vicioso sin fin con consecuencias nefastas. La misericordia es lo opuesto de la venganza, es el único camino para la paz duradera.

Durante la temporada de la Cuaresma, nos presentan muchas oportunidades concretas para practicar la misericordia y aprender a perdonarnos a nosotros mismos, así como también a aquellos con quienes nos hemos ofendido. Los tres ejercicios clásicos de la Cuaresma—oración, ayuno y limosna—pueden ser formas para practicar la misericordia en nuestra vida cotidiana.

En el Padrenuestro le imploramos a Dios nuestro Padre que perdones “nuestras ofensas así como también nosotros perdonamos a los que nos ofenden.” El perdón de Dios no está en entredicho; en cambio, debemos orar por nuestra propia capacidad para perdonar (tanto a nosotros mismos como a los demás). Solamente la gracia de Dios puede abrir nuestros corazones tercos, maltratados y falsos de perdón. Es por ello que rezamos para que el Padre nos ayude a procurar y aceptar su perdón y que al mismo tiempo nos conceda la gracia de perdonar a los demás.

Una de las formas más poderosas para subtrair viejos agravios—ya sea que los hayamos cometido nosotros o otros nos hayan agravado—es oír a estas personas que nos han faltado o a quienes nosotros les hemos faltado. Al veces no se puede pedir el perdón de alguien a quien herimos hace mucho tiempo (un padre o una madre fallecida, un antiguo patrono, una vieja amiga o amante).

Pero aunque nos resulte imposible ver a esa persona a los ojos y decirle “te perdonó” o “perdón,” siempre podemos rezar por ellos. Si le pedimos a Dios que estienda sobre ellos el amor y la misericordia que no podemos expresar directamente, por el motivo que sea, podemos tener la plena confianza de que nuestro Padre misericordioso lo hará. Y, en el proceso, Dios también perdonará cualquiera que haya sido nuestra culpa en la relación que ahora intentamos subtrair.

Jesús nos ordenó que rezáramos por nuestros enemigos, incluso por aquellos que nos persiguen, porque sabía que la oración es la voz de la misericordia. La oración perfectiona nuestra relación con Dios y con los demás. Durante la Cuaresma practicamos rezar para pedir perdón al repetir las palabras de Jesús: “Padre, perdónanos porque no saben lo que hacen” (Lc 23:34), y tal como rezamos a menudo, “Señor Jesucristo, Hijo de Dios, ten piedad de mí, pecador.”

El ayuno también es una forma de expresar la misericordia. ¿Cuántos de nosotros pecamos por indulgencia excesiva, aun sabiendo que muchos de nuestros hermanos y hermanas tienen menos de lo necesario? El ayuno nos recuerda que no solo vivimos del pan.

Nos desafía a vivir moderadamente y al mismo tiempo generosos con los demás.

¿Es clase de acto de misericordia es este? Pedimos perdón a Dios por las formas en las que hemos maltratado Sus dones materiales y espirituales. Y nos comprometemos a prestar mucha más atención a las necesidades de los demás, especialmente de los pobres, los abandonados y las personas que habitan en los márgenes de la sociedad y se consideran indeseables, pero que son en verdad nuestros hermanos en Cristo. La “limosna” es mucho más que dar dinero a los pobres (si bien esto es muy importante). Se trata de una expresión de solidaridad y cercanía para con aquellos a quienes les hemos fallado por el pecado de la indiferencia. Es buscar su perdón, no solamente a través de nuestras palabras sino en las acciones que emprendemos en su nombre.

A través de la oración, el ayuno y la limosna le imploramos al Padre que perdone nuestros pecados así como también nosotros perdonamos a aquellos que nos ofenden. Aprovechamos esta fantástica oportunidad en esta Cuaresma.

Practicemos la misericordia a medida que nos preparamos para el acto de misericordia suprema: la resurrección de nuestro Señor crucificado.

Traducido por: Daniela Guanipa
March 1
St. Lawrence Parish, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. Catholic Charismatic Renewal, 6:30-8:30 p.m. each evening; no registration required, no cost, free soup and bread served at 5:30 p.m. in the gym, childcare available. Information: Vanessa Wurm, 765-832-8468.

March 2
St. Lawrence Parish, 6944 E. 46th St., Indianapolis. Lenten Series: The 10 Commandments in the World of Today. Christian Culture of Life. 7:30 p.m. Information: St. Lawrence, 317-629-0280.

March 3
St. Christopher Church, 5301 W. 16th St., Speedway. “The Seven Last Words of Christ” Lenten Cantata, by Theodore Dobson, performed by St. Christopher Music Ministry. 7:30 p.m., free. Refreshments will be served following the service. Information: 317-241-6314 or slucnk@sbcglobal.net.

March 4
St. Mary’s Basilica, 3200 Cold Spring Road. Dei Catholic Business Group. Mass and monthly meeting. 6:30-8:30 p.m. breakfast, $15 per person. Information: 317-455-5447 or deicatholicbusinessgroup@gmail.com.

March 5
Holy Name Holy of Jesus, 89 N. 17th Ave., Breck Grove. First Friday devotion, ex voto on the Blessed Sacrament. 5:30 p.m.; reconciliation, 5:45-6:45 p.m.; Mass, 7:00 p.m. Litany of the Sacred Heart and prayers for the Holy Family, 7:30 p.m. Information: 317-784-5454.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. First Friday celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mass and Mass of the Blessed Sacrament following Mass, until 9:30 p.m. with reconciliation available. Information: 317-888-2861 or info@ourladyofgreenwood.org.

St. Matthew the Apostle Church, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. Lenten Fish Fry dinner. 5-8 p.m. Information: trgger@sbcglobal.net.

March 6
East Central High School Performing Arts Center, 1 Trojan Place, Suite A, St. Leon. E6 Catholic Men’s Conference, featuring Christopher West, Mark Houck, Thomas Morein, the Presidents of the National Catholic Men’s Conference and Jonathan Meyer, Mass with Father John Devine, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Tickets, $45, or $50 at the door. $35 for groups of 10 or more. $15 high school and college students ages 16-25, free for clergy and religious. Information or to register: www.e6catholicmen.com conference.com.

Northside Knights of Columbus, 2100 E. 71st St., Indianapolis. Tropical Tribute Fundraiser for Bishop Chastard High School grant, appetizers, live music, beer, wine, proceeds go to Joe and Barb Krier grant for a qualified North Diocesan eighth-grader to attend Bishop Chastard High School. 7:30-11:30 p.m. $30, tickets and donations available by calling Indiana Landmarks at 812-284-4534.

Dr. Cecilia Moore to speak at lecture at Cardinal Ritter Birthplace on March 14

The Cardinal Ritter Birthplace Foundation is sponsoring its fourth annual free lecture and Irish coffee in the community room at the Cardinal Ritter House, 1218 E. Oak Street, in New Albany, at 7 p.m. on March 14. The featured speaker will be...

Dr. Cecilia Moore, associate professor of religious studies at the University of Dayton and an associate scholar for the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University of Louisiana.

Moore will speak on the state of race relations in America today, offer commentary on the Christian response to racial inequality and the Black Lives Matter Movement, and provide insight on the relevance of Cardinal Joseph E. Ritter’s legacy of racial equality in 21st-century America.

Moore was published several articles and published a book, specializing in the history of African-American politics. She is currently working on a history of Black conversion to Roman Catholicism in 21st-century America.

Attendees will have the opportunity to view the Ritter museum room.

While the event is free and open to the public, reservations are requested by March 11 and can be made by calling Indiana Landmarks at 812-284-4534.

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Attendees will have the opportunity to view the Ritter museum room.

While the event is free and open to the public, reservations are requested by March 11 and can be made by calling Indiana Landmarks at 812-284-4534.

Dr. Cecilia Moore to speak at lecture at Cardinal Ritter Birthplace on March 14

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By Brigid Curtis Ayer

A state investigation exposing disposal practices of fetal remains prompts a heightened need to take legislative action during the final weeks of February. The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) agrees that proper handling of fetal remains should be addressed through legislation.

A bill requiring fetal remains to be buried or cremated instead of being disposed of in landfills passed the Indiana House of Representatives Feb. 18. The Senate sponsor of the bill, Sen. Michael Young, R-Indianapolis, presented the bill before the Senate panel, saying, “I have a company in my district that was just fined by IDEM for disposing of fetal remains without the proper permit.”

He said the question is not whether the company had the proper permit or not, but whether lawmakers think it is OK to dispose of human bodies in the underground way they used.

There are four other companies in Indiana that dispose of fetal remains by grinding them into a grinder, much the way that sausage is made, grinding the body up and then pumping it into a landfill,” Young said. “We think that’s the way the proper disposal of a human body.”

Young said House Bill 1337 prohibits any company from either bringing in or shipping out “the bodies of little babies” that are the result of a miscarriage or abortion, and designates the remains are to be cremated or buried. Under the bill, fetal remains would not be considered medical waste.

Another aspect of the bill requires private informed consent related to the disposal of fetal remains from a woman seeking an abortion. Young said the reason for private informed consent is quite clear. “If the mother has a question, she might be uncomfortable or embarrassed to ask if it is done in a group setting.”

Cathy Humbarger of Indiana Right to Life told the Senate panel, “There is nothing in this bill that limits the legal right for a woman to have an abortion. In fact, it gives her more information to make her choice. The methods of disposal for aborted babies does not limit access to a woman seeking an abortion because the baby is already dead.” She added the legislation directs how and where the babies’ bodies will be handled.

Humbarger said there have been numerous accounts of aborted babies being disposed of on disposal docks and being ground up in garbage disposal in abortion facilities. She added that aborted babies are being disposed of in landfills, still legal in Indiana. Landfills for garbage, not the bodies of aborted babies, Humbarger said. “What we do know is aborted babies from Missouri are being sent to Indiana and dumped in landfills.”

Also testifying in support of the bill was Glenn Tebbe, executive director for the ICC. “It is well established that the Catholic Church is opposed to abortion. Although because abortion is legal, we believe regulation of it is in the common good,” he said. “We see this issue as important because it ensures proper care and disposal of a fetus given the sacred nature of the human person. Treating the dead with respect is a duty, and we believe by doing this we are reminded of our own mortality, and it provides for the common good.”

—Glenn Tebbe, executive director for the ICC

Family members follow the casket of the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia to a hearse waiting outside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington after his Feb. 20 funeral Mass. (CNS photo/Paul Harsch)
Pope Francis calls for jubilee moratorium on death penalty during Year of Mercy

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis called for a moratorium on executions during the Holy Year of Mercy and said the fifth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” applies not only to the innocent but to the guilty as well.

In encouraging an end to tensions between Orthodox and Eastern-rite Catholics, the declaration referred to the Church being “ecumenical communities,” a phrase usually used to designate communities the Catholic Church believes are lacking valid sacrifices and apostolic succession. Yet, clearly, as part of the Catholic Church that does not apply to Ukrainian Catholics, the declaration’s affirmation that the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and other Eastern Catholic Churches have the right “to undertake all that is necessary to meet the spiritual needs of their faithful, while seeking to live in peace with their neighbors,” the archbishop said, is “a step forward.”

However, the declaration’s recognition that the Eastern Churches have a “catholicity at Rome with a joint declaration signed by the pope and the Russian Orthodox patriarch.”

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The declaration invited “all sides involved in the conflict to prudence, to social solidarity and to action aimed at constructing peace.” The pope’s response also urged the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to work toward social harmony, to refrain from participating in the confrontation and no support any further development of the conflict.

In announcing the cu Church, Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, director of foreign relations for the Russian Orthodox Church, said the Russian Orthodox Church still sees the Eastern Catholics as an obstacle to normalized relations. However, he said the need for joint efforts to defend the rights of persecuted Christians in the Middle East was more pressing.

In addition to calling for protection and respect for the identity of the Ukrainian Church, the declaration also urged Catholics and Russian Orthodox to work together to fight secularization, to protect the environment and to defend definitions of marriage and family life.

“It is good to be united because of so many common challenges in today’s world,” Archbishop Shevchuk said, “but I think that real ecumenism is the search for unity in the name of one God, not one enemy.”

The permanent synod of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was to meet in Rome beginning on Feb. 27, and its members hoped to have a meeting with Pope Francis, the archbishop said.

Head of Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church console the pope's words

The archbishop said that when the pope-patriarch meeting was first announced, “my spontaneous reaction was, ‘Finally,’ and I was pleased that Pope Francis repeated almost the same when he embraced Patriarch Kirill in Havana.

“I think that the very gesture is sacred—we are supposed to make it—we are supposed to talk, but that meeting is only a tool to start true, sincere dialogue,” the archbishop said.

The desire for mutual respect and closer cooperation among Catholics and Orthodox in Ukraine is in question, the declaration said, but the declaration’s depiction of the situation in Eastern Ukraine and the terminology used to describe the situation is not.

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POPE continued from page 7

approximates. “If I’m not mistaken—the figures are approximate—but more or less 80 percent of human wealth is in the hands of less than 20 percent of the population,” he said on Feb. 10 at his weekly general audience at the Vatican.

When people call Pope Francis “the pope of surprises,” they usually say it with a delighted sense of expectation. But there are those in the world who really don’t like surprises. As far back as the papal trips of St. John Paul II, the pope himself had included being on the papal plane because it is the only time they are guaranteed a chance to ask the pope questions. Pope Francis does not hold regular news conferences, unlike with a pope’s answers must be submitted in advance and he resists almost always makes the news. He is back from Mexico on Feb. 17.

Pope Francis was asked to react to Donald Trump’s accusations that the pope is political and, since the pope had just celebrated Mass at the Mexican-U.S. border, he was also asked to comment on Trump’s proposal to build a wall along the entire length of the border and deport millions of immigrants. Pope Francis answered, “If we do just these things, this man is not Christian.”

The pope was less clear in responding to a question about whether “the possibility of a pregnancy” could be considered a “lesser evil” when facing the possibility of birth defects from the Zika virus. He said the pope used the word “contraception” when referring to Blessed Paul VI’s allowing women religious in the Belgian Congo in the 1960s to take the pill to avoid becoming pregnant if they were the victim of rape, which was being used as a weapon of war.

Then, answering the question about Zika, he said, “Avoiding pregnancy is not an absolute evil. But look at the one I mentioned of Blessed Paul VI, it was clear.” The answer led to headlines saying the pope opposed using birth control in response to Zika could be tolerated.

At one recent news conference, he said, the pope said it was possible that his statement about Zika was “true.”

The pope’s responses to journalists, particularly, to the Trump question and to the Zika question made a splash in the news and social media.

Thomas Peters, who tweets as @AmericanPapist, tweeted, “For the 1 millionth time, more in-depth papal news conferences please?” And a bit later, he added, “Seriously, who believes that off-the-cuff interviews at 30,000 feet after a weeklong international trip is a good idea anymore?”

Pope Francis’ answer to another question, one that did not make the news, also illustrates his human side. He was asked that he did not want to comment after the 20-minute sitting of the Holy Father’s visit to the Federico Gomez Children’s Hospital in Mexico City.

He said he prayed for so many things that Mary, “poor thing,” probably had a headache when he was done. He said he prayed for forgiveness, for the growth of the Church, for the Mexican people, for priests, nuns, bishops. “I asked for a lot.”

But he would not say more or give more details. “The things a child tells his mother are kind of secret,” he explained.†

† Pope Francis embraces Rodrigo Lopez Miranda, 5, as he visits the Federico Gomez Children’s Hospital of Mexico in Mexico City on Feb. 14. At left is Mexico’s first lady Angelica Rivera (@ , photo by Paul Haring)
No more death, no more exploitation,’ pope says at border

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (CNS) — Speaking from a symbolic platform at the U.S.-Mexico border, Pope Francis pleaded for the plight of immigrants while warning those refusing to offer safe shelter and passage that their actions and inhumane attitudes were bringing about dishonor and self-destruction as their hearts hardened, and they “lost their sensitivity to pain.”

Recalling the story of Jonah and his instructions from God to save the sinful city of Ninveh by telling the residents that “injustice has inflicted their way of seeing the world,” Pope Francis’ homily called for compassion, change and conversion on migration issues.

He alluded to Mexico and the United States as Ninveh, the city he said was shown symptoms of “self-destruction as a result of oppression, dishonesty, violence and injustice.” He also said mercy was a way to win over opponents.

He also preached urgency.

“We cannot deny the humanitarian crisis which in recent years has meant the migration of thousands of people, whether by train or highway or on foot, crossing hundreds of kilometers through mountains, deserts and inhospitable areas,” Pope Francis said on Feb. 17 to hundreds of thousands of people from both sides of the border.

“The human tragedy that is forced migration is a global phenomenon today. This crisis, which can be measured in numbers and statistics, we want to measure instead with names, stories and faces.”

The Mass capped a six-day trip to Mexico in which Pope Francis traveled to the northern and southern borders and denounced the indignities of discrimination, corruption and violence. During the trip, he also asked off-oppressed indigenous peoples for their forgiveness and chastised the privileged political and business classes — saying their exclusionary actions were creating “fertile ground” for children to fall into organized crime and drug cartels.

Pope Francis delivered his homily a stone’s throw from the Rio Grande, which has swallowed so many migrants over the years as they vainly tried to enter the United States in search of bettering their lot in life and, more recently, escaping violence enveloping Central America.

The Mass was celebrated as a binalational event with thousands watching across the Rio Grande in El Paso and in a college football stadium. Pope Francis saluted the crowds watching at the Sun Bowl stadium, and Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso for providing technological connections that allowed them to “pray, sing and celebrate together,” and “make us feel like a single family and the same Christian community.”

The pope focused on migration, along with the dangers migrants encounter en route to their destinations, and the difficulties of surviving on the margins of society without protections.

“Being faced with so many legal vacuums, they get caught up in a web that ensnares and always destroys the poor people,” Pope Francis said.

Migration has marked Mexico for generations, though the number of Mexicans leaving the country is surprising for those returning in droves involuntarily or otherwise — as poor job prospects, an increasingly fortified border and anti-immigration initiatives prompt many to stay.

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Ironically, Mexico has assumed an unlikely role over the past several years: enforcer as it departs and deportees record numbers of Central Americans trying to transit the country — while many more of those migrants are preyed upon by criminals and corrupt public officials and suffer crimes such as kidnap, robbery and rape.

The Mexican crackdown came after thousands of Central American children streamed through Mexico in 2014, seeking to escape forced enlistment in gangs and hoping to reunite with parents living in the shadows of American society, working minimum-wage jobs to support children left with relatives they hadn’t seen in years.

Each step, a journey laden with grave injustices. …

They are brothers and sisters of those excluded as a result of poverty and violence, drug trafficking and criminal organizations,” Pope Francis said, while lauding the priests, religious and lay Catholics who accompany and protect migrants as they move through Mexico — acts of compassion not always popular with the authorities.

“They are on the front lines, often risking their own lives,” he said. “By their very lives, they are prophets of mercy. They are the beating heart and accompanying feet of the Church that opens its arms and sustains. They are brothers and sisters of those excluded as a result of poverty and violence, drug trafficking and criminal organizations,” Pope Francis said. “Injustice is radicalized in the young. They are ‘cannon fodder,’ persecuted and tortured when they try to flee the spiral of violence and hell of drugs. Then there are the women unjustly robbed of their lives.”

Pope Francis ended his homily by returning to the the example of Jonah and his call for conversion in Ninveh.

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“A way to win over opponents, saying it “always appeals to the latent and numbed goodness in every person,” and

urged people to follow Jonah’s example.

“Just as in Jonah’s time, so too today may we commit ourselves to conversion,” Pope Francis said. “May we commit ourselves to conversion. May we be signs lighting the way and announcing salvations.”

Ciudad Juárez once held the dubious distinction of “murder capital of the world.” More than 10,000 lives were lost between 2008 and 2012 as drug cartels battled over a coveted smuggling route, and young people were seduced by easy money into illegal activities that led to their deaths.

The pope’s visit was promoted by civic officials as a rebirth for Ciudad Juárez, though priests say the city still suffers vices such as exclusion and violence — in lower numbers than before — and jobs with low salaries and long hours in the booming factory for export economy, all of which strain family life. †

In silence, Pope Francis remembers those who cross Mexican-U.S. border

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (CNS) — At the border of Mexico and the United States, Pope Francis blessed a large cross in memory of all the people who have crossed the frontier.

The pope said nothing on Feb. 17, but he clasped his hands tightly in prayer and bowed his head in silent prayer. He left a bouquet of flowers on a table in front of the cross.

Then, to the great joy of people, including immigrants, gathered in El Paso, Texas, on the other side of the fence, the pope waved.

The moment lasted less than three minutes. But with hundreds of thousands of people waiting in a fairgrounds nearby for Mass, the pope was intent on taking the time to acknowledge the significance of the spot.

At the foot of the large cross were three small crosses, which the pope also blessed. They will go to the dioceses of El Paso, Ciudad Juárez and Las Cruces, N.M.

According to figures released by the U.S. Border Patrol, there were 11.3 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. in 2014—which makes up about 3.5 percent of the nation’s population. Mexicans make up about half of all unauthorized immigrants, the center said in a report in November, though their numbers have been declining in recent years.

There were 5.6 million Mexican unauthorized immigrants living in the U.S. in 2014, down from 6.4 million in 2009, the Pew Research Center reported.

But it is not only Mexicans who are crossing the border. More and more of the immigrants apprehended by the U.S. Border Patrol are from violence-torn Central American countries, particularly El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

According to figures released by the U.S. Border Control, 4.353 people have died trying to cross the border from 2005 to 2016.

Cardinal Sean O’Malley of Boston, one of several U.S. bishops at the pope’s Mass in Ciudad Juárez, said the pope’s brief moment at the border memorial was “a great sign of hope for families separated and suffering.

With 20 years of experience ministering primarily to migrants, the cardinal said he can guarantee, “they bring an energy and a work ethic and a spirit of adventure that made America a great country.”

Lily Limon, a member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in El Paso, whose parents were immigrants from Mexico, put her hand over her heart as she saw the pope bless the border.

“To know that he was this close to us, and he took time to bless and look over to us, to the VIPs seated here, our immigrants, our young people that have crossed over undocumented, our migrant workers, this is just an incredible gesture and for us, an unforgettable experience.”

There were about 550 people seated on the U.S. side of the Rio Grande taking part in the Mass. †
Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes.

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

Batesville Deanery
• March 4, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., at all Saints, Dearborn County, St. Martin Campus
• March 4, 8 a.m-6 p.m., for Immaculate Conception, Millhousen
• March 12, 1-3 p.m., at St. Michael, Greenfield
• March 17, 7 p.m., at St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville

Indianapolis East Deanery
• Feb. 29, 7 p.m., for Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower)
• March 9, 7:30 p.m., at Holy Spirit
• March 11, 7 p.m., at St. John the Baptist, Greenfield
• March 12, 1-3 p.m., at St. Michael, Greenfield
• March 14, 7 p.m., for Holy Angels and St. Rita at St. Rita
• March 15, 7 p.m., at St. Mary, Indianapolis
• March 17, 7 p.m., at St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville

Indianapolis North Deanery
• March 6-2:30 p.m., at St. Simon the Apostle
• March 7-8:30 a.m. at St. Pius X
• March 8-7:30 p.m., at St. Pius X

Indianapolis South Deanery
• March 5, 7 a.m. at St. Francis and Clare of Assisi, Greenwood
• March 7, 7 a.m. at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
• March 7, 7 p.m., at St. Joseph, Greenfield
• March 10, 10 a.m., at St. Barnabas
• March 13, 7 p.m., at Good Shepherd
• March 15, 7 p.m., for St. Mark the Evangelist and St. Roch at St. Roch
• March 15, 7 p.m., for Our Lady of the Greenwood, Greenwood

Indianapolis West Deanery
• March 8-6:30 p.m., at St. Michael the Archangel
• March 9, 7 a.m., at St. Joseph
• March 9, 7 p.m., at Holy Family, Plainfield
• March 15, 6:30 p.m., for St. Anthony and St. Christopher at St. Anthony
• March 16, 7 p.m., at St. Gabriel the Archangel
• March 17, 7 p.m., at St. Thomas More, Mooresville

New Albany Deanery
• March 15, 8 a.m.-8 p.m., at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, New Albany ("12 Hours of Grace")
• March 16, 7 p.m., at St. Mary, Navilleton
• March 20, 4 p.m., at St. John the Baptist, Sharpsville
• 5:45-15 p.m. each Wednesday in Lent at St. Mary, New Albany
• 7:45-8:30 p.m. each Wednesday in Lent at Holy Family, New Albany
• 7:8 p.m. each Wednesday in Lent at St. Mary, Lakeville
• 6:30-8:30 p.m. each Wednesday in Lent at St. Michael, Charlestown
• 6:30-8:30 p.m. each Thursday at St. Francis Xavier, Henryville

Seymour Deanery
• March 7, 7 p.m., for Our Lady of Providence, Brownstown, and St. Ambrose, Seymour, at St. Ambrose, Seymour
• March 7, 6:30 p.m. at St. Ann, Jennings County
• March 8, 7 p.m., at St. Mary, North Vernon, and St. Joseph, Jennings County, at St. Joseph, Jennings County
• March 8, 6:30 p.m. at St. Rose of Lima, Franklin, and Holy Trinity, Edinburgh at Holy Trinity, Edinburgh
• March 9, 7 p.m., at St. Bartholomew, Columbus
• March 13, 4:30 p.m. at St. Patrick, Salem, and American Martyrs, Scottsburg, at American Martyrs, Scottsburg

Terre Haute Deanery
• Feb. 28, 2 p.m., at Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute ("The Light is on for You")
• Feb. 29, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at Sacred Heart, Clinton ("The Light is on for You")
• March 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at St. Joseph, Rockville ("The Light is on for You")
• March 10, 1:30 p.m., at Sacred Heart of Jesus, Terre Haute (Penance Service)
• March 10, 7 p.m., at St. Patrick, Terre Haute (Penance Service)
• March 16, 7 p.m., at Sacred Heart, Clinton
• March 16, 7 p.m., at St. Benedict, Terre Haute ("The Light is on for You")
• March 23, 7:30-9:30 p.m, at Annunciation, Brazil (every Wednesday in Lent at 7:30-9:30 p.m.)
• March 23, 7 p.m., at St. Benedict, Terre Haute ("The Light is on for You")
• Every Monday in Lent 6-7:30 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle, Greencastle
• Every Wednesday in Lent 7-8 p.m. at St. Joseph University Parish, Terre Haute

Lenten penance services are scheduled at archdiocesan parishes.
Visiting the imprisoned affirms their God-given dignity

By Mike Nelson

The prisoner’s name was Federico, and he was sharing with his visitor the challenge of coping with society’s attitudes toward people like him.

“Too little is said about us, and then often in ways so cruel as to wish we waded out of society entirely,” Federico said. “It makes us feel subhuman.”

His visitor nodded, listening intently, as Federico continued: “We beg you,” he pleaded, “to make sure that we are respected and treated as human beings.”

And so it is not taken for granted that being secluded means being excluded forever.

Again his visitor nodded, and then replied, in a pastoral manner befitting a successor of St. Peter: “It seems important to me,” said Pope Benedict XVI, “to encourage everyone to find meaning in your suffering, to aim to help you in the process of rising again. And I will do my part to invite all to think in this just way, not disparagingly but humbly, realizing that anyone can fall, but that God wants everyone to come to him.

“And we must cooperate in the spirit of brotherhood and awareness of our own fragility, so that they can truly rise again and move forward with dignity and always find respect for their dignity, so that it increases. And in this way they can also find joy in life, for life is given to us by the Lord, with his plan.”

This pastoral visit of Pope Benedict—to the Rebibbia District Prison in Rome on Dec. 18, 2011—modeled the corporal work of mercy that all who follow Jesus are called to perform, as Jesus himself suggests to his disciples in the Gospel of Matthew: “I was in prison and you visited me” (Mt 25:36).

Such visits are made by bishops, clergy, religious and lay people. In recent years some have led in this example, Pope Francis, within days of his 2013 election, visited a juvenile detention center on Holy Thursday, washing the feet of a segment of society many of the rest of us—as Federico suggested to Pope Benedict—would just as soon ignore, or disparagingly but humanely, realizing that anyone can fall, but that God wants everyone to come to him.

“...and the people of Gerasa feared him. They caged us in, stopping us from living as love and fruitfulness with family and friends. Jesus visited a mother’s son.”

Perhaps that is what helps motivate so many detention ministers who regularly visit, comfort and embrace those imprisoned. It matters not what the prisoners’ crimes are. It matters only that, for even a few moments of the day, the prisoners are accorded a measure of dignity, humanity and love—the love of Christ.

That was the message Pope Francis brought last fall to inmates at the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia, the first visit ever made by a pope to an American prison.

“This time in your life can only have one purpose: to give you a hand in getting back on the right road, to give you a hand to help you rejoin society,” the pope told his Sunday morning audience.

“All of us are part of that effort. All of us are invited to encourage, help and enable your rehabilitation.”

(Mike Nelson is former editor of The Tidings, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.)

Show mercy to people held captive by mental and emotional illness

By Marge Fenelon

During this Holy Year of Mercy instituted by Pope Francis, we’re called to become extensions of God’s mercy to others, particularly through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy—acts of charity and love toward others. But one corporal work of mercy may prove a bit more challenging to carry out—visiting the imprisoned. How are we supposed to visit the imprisoned? No doubt, it’s important to visit prisoners. They need and deserve Christian love and charity as much as anyone else. But there are different ways to be imprisoned. Just as there are physical bars that keep us locked in, there are mental, emotional and spiritual walls that keep us locked in as well.

Fears, anxiety, depression and hopelessness are all “prisons” that hold us captive, keeping us from feeling the love of God. They cage us in, stopping us from living as the children of God that he intended us to be. We may not have committed a crime per se, but we are incarcerated just the same.

Our Lord had compassion for those imprisoned by invisible walls, as well as those imprisoned by real walls. There are numerous examples in Scripture, but the one that comes to mind is the story in the Gerasene demoniac (Mt 8:28-34; Mk 5:1-20, Lk 8:26-39) cured of his affliction and released from his cell by Jesus.

Jesus and his disciples had crossed the Sea of Galilee and entered Gerasa. There, he found a man who had long been tormented by demons and lived among the tombs. No manner of restraint could keep him from causing harm to himself or to others. The people of Gerasa feared him.

“...and the people of Gerasa feared him. They caged us in, stopping us from living as love and fruitfulness with family and friends. Jesus visited a mother’s son.”

And so, too, should we see and help those who are imprisoned by a variety of walls. We should see them, not as they are, but for what they should and can be: free and joyful children of God. They need us to visit them in their prisons, and to minister to them with compassion.

We may not be able to cure them of their torment, as Jesus did with the Gerasene man, but we can be for them a reflection of the light in their darkness.

(Marge Fenelon is a freelance writer from Milwaukee and author of Imitating Mary: Ten Marian Virtues for the Modern Mom.)

Mother Marie Makhlouf greets a young man in one of the centers operated by the Franciscan Sisters of the Cross in Jal El Dib, Lebanon. She is superior of an order of mostly Lebanese children and adults with physical and/or developmental disabilities or mental illness. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)
Debra Tomaselli
Cynthia Dewes

Renaissance Church: The reconquest of Spain

Is there a modern way to celebrate the Lenten season?

Lenten spiritual practices come to our souls

Don’t be afraid to surrender your problems to God

Faith and Family/Sean Gallagher

From the Editor Emeritus/John F. Fink

Perspectives

For this series of columns, let’s leave the Renaissance popes aside and talk about what else was going on in the world that affected the Church during the 15th century. First, we’ll go to Spain and back up a few centuries.

The Muslims had conquered Spain in the 8th century and then moved north into France before Charles Martel stopped their advance in 732. They retreated back to Spain, where they ruled benevolently for several centuries. At the beginning of the 11th century, though, the Muslim dynasty that was tolerant of Christians and Jews as “People of the Book” faced opposition from more extreme Muslims from Morocco—the Berbers. Christians escaped to the northwest of Spain where there were still Christian communities. It was precisely at this time, too, that those Christian communities began to consolidate into kingdoms and slowly advance south as part of the Reconquista—

the reconquest. Of all the Spanish heroes of the time, the man most often chronicled was Alphonso IX, known as Al El-Cid—from the Arabic al-sayyid meaning “the lord.” Both Christian and Muslim sources praised him because at times he fought for the Christians, and at other times for the Muslims.

In 1085, Alfonso VI of Castile established a Christian kingdom with Toledo as its capital. But then the Muslims called in the Almoravids, who overpowered Alfonso in 1085 and, four years later, established their kingdom. They were succeeded by even more extreme Muslim rulers of the Almohads.

In 1198, Pope Innocent III began his reign as pope. While he was pope, the Christians in 1212 won a great victory at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa. After that, the Muslim cities fell like dominoes—Cordoba in 1236, Valencia in 1238, and Granada in 1248. Finally, Granada was the only taifa (city-state) the Muslims had left. The Christians awarded this taifa to the Nasrid family because of its invaluable assistance in the battle for Cordoba. The Nasrids continued to rule Granada for the next 256 years. It was during that time that they built the magnificent Alhambra, still today one of the most popular tourist sites in Spain. In 1491, the son of Aragon, Ferdinand, married Castile and united their kingdoms in 1469. They thought it their religious duty to convert the Muslims and Jews. In 1492, they marched to the Alhambra dressed in Moorish clothes. There, Muhammad XII handed over the keys of the last Muslim stronghold. Spain was once again a Catholic country.

Renaissance Church: The reconquest of Spain

Catholic Monarchs as Ferdinand and Isabella were called, were not as tolerant as the earlier Muslims had been. They were real royalty. In 1492, they forced the Jews who refused to convert to Christianity were expelled from the country. It has been estimated that, of approximately 80,000 Jews in the country, about half chose emigration. About 40,000 were baptized during the three months before the deadline. The Spanish Inquisition, under the direct control of the monarchy, was established to root out Jews and Muslims who were insincere in their conversion. Estimates of those killed by the Inquisition range from 2,000 to 5,000.

The Muslim writers praised him because at times he fought for the Christians, and at other times for the Muslims.

I slipped into the living room. I stood. I can’t explain it, but I felt create such serenity within my heart … no

I identified the Big and Little Bear with each other than to putting their desires in their relationship arises, it’s easy to see the effects of sin in their lives as they often look first to

I want to change the bad habits I have built up over time, but they’re ingrained enough that tearing them down and building up virtues in their place is a constant struggle.

He did this in part to complete some service hours for the preparation program in which he is participating for the sacrament of confirmation. But he and his brothers have long been in the habit of helping clear the sidewalks and doors away for our neighbors in need on snowy days.

A principal way to grow in our faith during this season of Lent is to reflect and use the sacraments to give almsgiving and prayer, such as devotional books, films and CDs. Inspirational music conducive to prayer can be found in recordings to use at home.

I’m not sure of the strictness of the old days to help us enrich our Lent, but we always have freewill to do it for ourselves. That, among so many other things, is one of the rewards that Easter brings.

The prognosis was good, but what if the cancer returns? I knew I could trust him to

I felt a great connection coming from the skies, moving through clouding me to the Earth on which I stood. I can’t explain it, but I felt strengthened.

I recalled the many times in my life that something miraculous saved the day. I surrendered my problems to

During the rest of this Lenten season, may we cooperate more consistently with this grace as we strive to be of service to our families. As this becomes a good habit in our lives, the splendor of this grace as we strive to be of service to our families. As this becomes a good habit in our lives, the splendor of

The Catholic Church has long taught

The Criterion

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Prayer is an essential part of Lenten practice, and the Church continues to offer opportunities to fast and to repentance and observing the Stations of the Cross, among other things. There are many forms of almsgiving and prayer, such as devotional books, films and CDs. Inspirational music conducive to prayer can be found in recordings to use at home.

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Sunday Readings

Sunday, Feb. 28, 2016

- Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15
- Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12

The Book of Exodus provides the first reading for this weekend’s Mass readings. It recalls the encounter between God and Moses at the burning bush. Moses is tending his father-in-law’s flock. Suddenly he saw a bush that, although on fire, was not consumed by it.

Then God spoke, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The message was simple. God is always with his people, aware of their plight. He is always merciful, sending leaders such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to bring hope, relief and guidance. Moses in his turn was God’s instrument of this salvation.

God is always with us. This is a message that the Corinthians would have needed to hear.

Moses was called to serve God at a time when the people of Israel were vulnerable. Paul warned them, encouraged them, taught them and sought to inspire them. This reading is typical of his effort, and his success, both in Corinth and in Rome.

As the first reading said, God alone is the source of true life. St. Luke’s Gospel furnishes the last reading, giving one of the rare glimpses of the passion narratives. It is not complimentary to him, Pilate, who so casually sentenced Jesus to an agonizing death, was ruthless and unmerciful. He also had no regard for the God of Israel, or for the religion of the people whom he worshipped him.

An ancient tradition holds that he was recalled to Rome because of his brutality, a religion too vicious even by accepted standards of Roman imperial governance. Jesus said that the victims of Pilate’s heartlessness did not deserve what they received. Jesus referred then to an accidental disaster, when 18 people were killed by a falling tower in Siloam. He noted that they, too, were innocent.

Regardless, all those to whom Jesus referred in the end died, innocent or not, unable to control evil decisions or evil persons, or the mishaps of nature or invented things.

The manner of death, however, is unimportant in the end. All people die. Jesus tells the people to reform, giving the parable of the barren fig tree. The owner wants to destroy the tree, but the vinedresser pleads for another year, for enough time to nourish the tree in the hope that it will bear fruit.

Reflection

We continue to move through Lent. The Church in these readings is very harsh. It tells us that abandoning God reaps a whirlwind of calamity, sweeping into its wake even the innocent. Thus were the victims of Pilate’s heartlessness not deserving of what they were given. Jesus referred then to an accidental disaster, when 18 people were killed by a falling tower in Siloam. He noted that they, too, were innocent.

Humans inevitably walk into disaster when they rely upon themselves alone. As the first reading said, God alone is the source of truth and wisdom. In the clear words of Christ in the Gospel, the Church calls us to repent in Lent. Remember the fig tree. God is patient, but one day, all our way of life will be upon us.

Question Corner/ Fr. Kenneth Doyle

The Church has called the faithful to worship on Sundays since its earliest days.

In the Bible, Jesus says: “Do this in memory of me” in regards to the Eucharist. And he doesn’t say it that it has to be done every Sunday and holy day. So many young people seem to be falling away from the Church because of its rigidity. Please explain what we are obligated. (Iowa)

A

The responsibility to gather on Sundays for the Eucharist has been recognized by Christians since the earliest days of the Church, although it was not specifically written into law until the fourth century. That obligation is codified in the current Code of Canon Law, which says that “Sunday ... must be observed in the universal Church as the primordial holy day of obligation.” (§1246).

Sunday is singled out as sacred, of course, because it was the day of Christ’s resurrection. In the Church, which is a compendium of Christian teaching written in the second half of the first century, believers were directed as follows: “On Sundays, get together and break the bread and give thanks, confessing your sins in order that your sacrifice may be pure.”

It is true, as you say, that the Sunday Mass obligation is a precept of the Church rather than a verbatim command of Jesus, and therefore it could be modified by competent Church authority. But it doesn’t seem to me that removing the obligation would serve to bring young people back to more regular participation in the Eucharist.

The solution, I think, has more to do with liturgies that celebrate joyfully what Jesus has done, with homilies that point the way to the Mass obligation is a precept of the Church rather than a verbatim command of Jesus, and therefore it could be modified by competent Church authority. But it doesn’t seem to me that removing the obligation would serve to bring young people back to more regular participation in the Eucharist.

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Rest in peace

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

BISHOP’S BLESSING

Bishop Thomas M. Lukefahr, head of the newly established St. Mary, Queen of Peace Syro-Malankara Catholic Eparchy in the United States and Canada, blesses a woman following a Divine Liturgy on Feb. 14 at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Elmonton, N.Y.


Morgan, Patricia, 75, St. Lawrence, Richmond, Feb. 9. Mother of Elizabeth Flick, Duane Green, Mary Ann Williams and Martin Radke. Sister of Gretchen Kuehn. Grandmother of eight.

Morris, Mary L., 90, St. John the Apostle, Bloomington, Feb. 16. Mother of several.


Poehlein, David, Joe and John Poehlein. Grandfather of three. Great-grandfather of one.


Rauscher, David, John and Angela Rauscher. Grandmother of eight. Great-grandmother of one.

Rieker, David, Joe and John Rieker. Grandmother of three. Great-grandfather of one.

Simms, Gloria F. (Combes), 85, St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, Feb. 13. Mother of Elizabeth Flick, Duane Green, Mary Ann Williams and Martin Radke. Sister of Gretchen Kuehn. Grandmother of eight.

Thieme, Eric, 34, St. Simon the Apostle, Indianapolis, Feb. 11. Husband of Ann (Ries) Thieme. Father of Hadley, Hampton, Hayden and Hudson Thieme. Son of Tim and Janet Thieme.

Trossmann, Roy L., 84, All Saints, Dearborn County, Feb. 10. Brother of JoAnn Paschler, Rita Duggins, Rose Martin, Agnes, Lucille, Violet and Floyd Trossmann.


David and Donald Steffler. Grandmother of three.


Tolle, Christopher, Michael and Timothy Horan. Uncle of several.

Culbertson, Bridget, 87, St. Mary, Richmond, Feb. 5. Mother of Candace Miller, Cynthia Glendolf, Christopher and Craig Culbertson. Grandmother of five. Great-grandmother of five.


For information about rates for classified advertising, call (317) 236-1454.

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Employment

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Lake Front House
3,000 sq. ft. Wige Elck, Dock on Lake Webster - 2BR/2BA, Aces, LG, Living Area, Wash, Dry, Cable, Internet
Call Bob 317-498-2380 for info

For Rent

Hotel Specials in the Gulf of Mexico. Meet Indpls. Maderia Beach, Fl., 2BR/2BA, 62,000 miles, one owner.
2008 Mercury Marquis LS, 62,000 miles, one owner. Very good condition. For more information, call Mike at 317-402-9640.

Health Care

Sexual misconduct now

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you believe anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator.

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Saint Joseph Parish South Bend, a vibrant faith community of 900 families in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, and an enonnie of the Congregation of Holy Cross, is seeking a school principal beginning with the 2016-2017 academic year. Saint Joseph High School is located on the path to higher education and to heaven.

For questions about this position, please e-mail or phone: cclark@archindy.org:

• Three letters of reference or contact information for three references to searchcommittee@stmalachy.org
• Resumé
• How do you express your faith?

Email applications to: cclark@archindy.org

For Sale

Car for Sale
2008 Mercury Marquis LS, 62,000 miles, one owner. Very good condition. For more information, call Mike at 317-402-9640.

Vacation Rental
BEACHFRONT CONDO

For Rent

Youth and Campus Ministries

St. Malachy Parish (in Brownsville, IN, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis) seeks applicants for its Director of Youth and Campus Ministries. The ideal candidate will have a master’s degree in theology or comparable field or 3 years of experience with a bachelor’s degree. The primary responsibility is to strengthen existing ministries and develop new programs for middle and high school students, with a particular emphasis on building St. Malachy Parish school, local Catholic and public schools. In addition, the director will implement a long-term plan to establish college (emerging) and young adult ministry over the next several years. Candidates must demonstrate organizational and communication skills to facilitate and coordinate the work of the parochial and campus-based faith communities. Candidates must be familiar with the 3 goals and 8 components of the USCCB and the Renewing the Wake initiative. This director will report to the pastor and coordinate closely with the parish staff. Ultimately, St. Malachy seeks a passionate Catholic to serve the mission of the parish by fostering relationships, integrating the church centered community to empower the young leaders of St. Malachy’s diverse communities.

Send a resume, letter of interest, and 3 references to searchcommittee@stmalachy.org

For Sale

Car for Sale
14989 Oak Ridge Rd., Carmel, 46032 or docecco@macom before March 31, 2016.

Our Lady of Providence Junior-Senior High School

C/o Youth Ministry Search Committee
or
searchcommittee@stmalachy.org

The educational and ministry guidelines of the archdiocese provide an outline for the application process.

Our Lady of Providence Junior-Senior High School is currently accepting applications for the position of President. Located in Clarksville, Indiana, the school serves a growing student population of 520 and is accredited by the State of Indiana. The institution is blessed with exceptional teaching and administrative staff and a dedicated group of parents, friends, and alumni.

The position of president is an administrative position. Qualified applicants will have spent the majority of their career in the corporate or nonprofit world in a leadership role. The president of the school is the chief executive, advancement, and financial officer of the institution and is responsible for all facets of its operation. The president leads and articulates the school’s mission and vision, creates and implements strategic plans, and builds and nurtures relationships with stakeholders. The president reports to and is evaluated by the superintendent of Catholic schools for the archdiocese with inputs from the Board of Trustees. The president works closely with the principal who is the chief operating officer of the school.

Applicants must foster a proven Catholic identity, have sound marketing and financial skills, and possess strong leadership and interpersonal skills. Applicants must be practicing Roman Catholics who have demonstrated their commitment to serving leadership. Preferred candidates will have a corporate or executive background, a master’s degree or equivalent work experience, be able to model their faith in strategy and direction, lead the administrative team and allocate capital to priorities while building community and serving others. This position does not require a teaching license.

Interested, qualified candidates are encouraged to apply by April 15, 2016; applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

To apply, please submit the following items electronically to Cynthia Clark (c Clark@archindy.org):

• Letter of Interest, including responses to the following two questions:
  • How do you expect your faith?
  • What skills will you bring to a Catholic school?

• Resume

• Three letters of reference or contact information for three professional references.

For questions about this position, please e-mail or call:

Rob Rash
Office of Catholic Education
rash@archindy.org (317)236-1544
Incident in Kalamazoo: Bishop decry shootings, prays for victims

BY BRANDON A. EVANS

This week, we continue to examine what was going on in the Church and the world 50 years ago as seen through the pages of The Criterion. Here are some of the items found in the Feb. 25, 1966, issue of The Criterion:

• Link penitence for Lent to charity, pontiff urges

"VATICAN CITY—Pope Paul VI, in his whole-sale revision of the Church’s rules of fast and abstinence, stressed that the goal of penitence is renewal and reform which is not only interior and individual but also external and social. The pope reduced the number of days requiring both fast and abstinence to two—the first day of Lent and Good Friday. But at the same time, he stated the Church’s teaching on the need for penitence, whose basic requirements consist of prayer, fasting, charity. He therefore urged that the peoples of the world’s richer nations practice self-denial and charity on behalf of their brothers who suffer in poverty and in hunger, beyond all boundaries of nation and of continent."

• Deacons conduct ‘Whoozit’ for high school students: Experiment draws teenage support

“An experiment in creating a religious experience among teenagers was rated a ‘plus’ by 175 Sacred Heart Central High School in Indianapolis last week. Nineteen deacons from St. Meinrad Seminary, aided by some first- and second-year theologian folk singers, presented a ‘seven-hour course’ in Christian love, brotherhood and developing a sense of Christian community. The Sacred Heart cafeteria, used daily by the Spartans to satisfy their nutritional needs, was transformed into a ‘religious workshop’ where the students heard a talk, held a group discussion of its meaning, expressed their discussion summaries with crayons on poster paper, sang, explained their art, sang, entered into improvised crisis-dramatics, sang, and participated in an ‘Eve and Charlie-type’ dialogue about love. Halfway through the unique exercises, termed a ‘Whoosh’ by the deacons of St. Meinrad School of Theology, the teenagers experienced a ‘joll, Mass, celebrated in the cafeteria by their superintendant. Father Patrick Kelly. Guitars accompanied the folk-type hymns, which were easily learned in a five-minute warmup session before Mass. The liturgical service also included an Offertory procession, during which the entire congregation placed their individual hosts in the ciborium, and a brief homily, preached by Rev. Mr. Richard Keil, of St. Andrew’s Parish, Indianapolis.”

• Help needy, pope urges U.S. youths

• St. Meinrad seminar speakers announced

• No mere formality: Canterbury’s visit to Rome

• Anglicans approve fixed Easter date

• Text of Church in Modern World schema

• Priest-guerilla reported killed by Colombia troops

• Salvation Army Major to speak

• Economic ‘blueprint’ reaction awaited

• Directors of NCCW voice social concern

• Cuban refugee influx seen a boon to Miami

• St. Roch pulls upset over Latin School ‘A’

• Secret units spur vocations

• Bishop, priests issue pastoral

• Pope suggested for Nobel Prize

• Military mission need at Woods program

• Only habitual breach of fast ‘grave sin’

“VATICAN CITY—Pope Paul VI’s new regulations for fast and abstinence are explained in a front-page article by L’Osservatore Romano, the Vatican City Daily. It is asserted that individual violations of the Church’s penitential laws of abstinence from meat on Fridays and fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Fridays are not grave. . . .

The document [from the pope] said ‘substantial observance’ of Friday abstinence and the days of Lenten penitence ‘obliges gravely.’

• Family Planning group schedules training courses

• Fr. DuBay urges union for priests

Bishop Paul J. Bradley of Kalamazoo, Mich.

What was in the news on Feb. 25, 1966? More on Lenten fasting and abstinence, and deacons conduct a high school ‘experiment’