Priests renew promises, archbishop blesses oils at chrism Mass

By Sean Gallagher

In the coming year, countless sacramental celebrations in parishes and health care facilities across central and southern Indiana will be traced back to a series of blessings imparted on March 22, Tuesday of Holy Week, by Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. These blessings took place during the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass, when the archbishop blesses oils that are used in several sacraments and in the consecration of altars and churches. The oils blessed during that multi-lingual liturgy will bring people closer to Christ and the Church through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, holy orders and the anointing of the sick.

Just prior to the blessing of the oils, some 130 priests who will celebrate priestly ministry during his homily.

“With blessings," he said. “This Mass, which also includes priests renewing their ordination promises. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

The oils blessed during that multi-lingual liturgy will bring people closer to Christ and the Church through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, holy orders and the anointing of the sick. Just prior to the blessing of the oils, some 130 priests who will celebrate priestly ministry during the homily.

“We appreciate our human limitations and weaknesses, yet for some reason known only to God, Jesus has chosen us to be his priests in ministry to his people.”

In this Mass, we re dedicate ourselves once again to serve God faithfully for you, our brothers and sisters.

“We ask you to support us in our ministry, which is essentially to preach the Word of God; to celebrate lovingly the sacraments of faith; to shepherd the people of God, caring also for the larger community.”

Transitional Deacon James Brockmeier assisted at the Mass and took special note when Archbishop Tobin blessed the chrism oil, saying, “It was neat to see the blessing, and to know how that blessing is going to bless my ministry and the ministry of my classmates as well.”

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin ritually breathes upon chrism oil while blessing it on March 22 during the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. Seminarian Timothy DeCraen, right, assists as an altar server during the liturgy. Oils used in sacraments and the consecration of altars and churches are blessed during the liturgy, which also includes priests renewing their ordination promises. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

College Seminary in Indianapolis and at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad also assisted at the Mass.

“It is a special day to celebrate [the priestly vocation], and to aspire to it as well, as we see the priests renew their promises,” Dufranse said. “That’s a big inspiration, especially as a seminarian.”

The oil of the sick used in the sacrament of the anointing of the sick was also blessed during the chrism Mass. See CHIRISM, page 8

Servants’ heart is hallmark of this year’s Spirit of Service award recipients

By John Shaughnessy

When she arrived in the United States as a refugee, Htoo Thu looked forward to the freedom and opportunity that her new country offered her and her family. Yet the teenager never anticipated how one chance opportunity in her new city of Indianapolis would change her—and lead to her selection as this year’s recipient of the Spirit of Service Youth Award.

Tim Hahn, Domoni Rouse and Phyllis Usher will also receive Spirit of Service Awards from Catholic Charities Indianapolis during its annual dinner event in Indianapolis on April 27.

For Htoo, the life-changing meeting occurred shortly after her family moved from Burma to St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Indianapolis, where she started at the parish school as an eighth-grade student.

“We lived in an apartment where a lot of other Burmese refugees lived, and one day this American person, Mike Newton, knocked on our door and I answered,” recalls Htoo, now a senior at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis. “That day, he had a trailer full of clothing and furniture and toys. My family received a few things, and a lot of the Burmese refugees came out to see what was going on. I knew some English, so I was the translator. Mister Mike keeps coming once a week, and I come out to translate. He inspires me. He gives us so much of his time for us. I said, ‘Can I be like you?’”

Consider that question answered positively.

Even as she works two part-time jobs, she has accumulated more than 600 service hours during her four years at Roncalli.

Many of her service hours come from translating for Newton and helping him distribute the items from the St. Vincent de Paul Society. She also helps new
refugees by offering them support when they visit the doctor or translating for them when they get a license. And she serves as a translator for parenting-teacher conferences at Roncalli and St. Mark.

And she does it all while earning a 4.2 grade-point-average (on a scale of 4.0).

"Her passion for wanting to help others is so powerful," says Roncalli’s principal Jerry Boucher.

"She truly has a servant’s heart."

It’s all about the sharing of love, says Hoo, who wants to become a teacher.

"Since I have been receiving the endowment of the generosity of other people, I feel great when I help others. I feel I grow so much from doing it," she says. "Now when I look at someone, I think about what I can do to help them. I feel God is telling me I should do this. I don’t even think about it anymore. I just go for it."

Here are the stories of two recipients of the Spirit of Service Award:

Domoni Rouse

Domoni Rouse has a special motivation as she works to help people find a way out of poverty in central Indiana.

"I was a member of the choir, and I fell in love with my husband. And I fell in love with the neighborhood."

"I felt in love with my husband, and I fell in love with the neighborhood."

Domoni Rouse

Phyllis Land Usher

When Phyllis Land Usher married her husband Bill, she joined a Catholic family that was dedicated to approaching every human with dignity and love—what the sisters call taking care of the funeral arrangements of nearly every Little Sister of the Poor in Indianapolis.

"What I’m trying to do is reflect what I was taught. What I was taught was that you have to never be on the sidelines. He thought I could do anything. That’s how I found myself in this position."

Tim Hahn

In nearly 20 years of helping people in need, Tim Hahn has been guided by this belief: "Whenever you take a little leap of faith, God won’t be outdone in his generosity."

"I love that it opens people’s eyes to the possibility and gives them hope. It just starts there. You have to be willing to open your heart and mind."

"I think feeding the poor is the key to the kingdom. Jesus did it. That’s what we’re here for," she said.

Official Appointment

Effective April 1, 2016

Gary A. Taylor, D.Min., appointed parish life coordinator at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Milan.

(Has this copy been approved by Joseph W Tobin, C.S.R., Archbishop of Indianapolis?)
Reconcile with God, resurrect hope in others, pope urges at Easter

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Easter is a feast of hope, a celebration of God’s mercy and a call to pray for and assist all who suffer, Pope Francis said before giving his solemn blessing “urbi et orbi” (to the city and the world).

The risen Jesus “makes us sharers of his immortality and enables us to see with his eyes of love and compassion those who hunger and thirst, strangers and prisoners, the一天的死，and the outcast, the victims of oppression and violence,” the pope said on March 27 after celebrating Easter Vigil Mass.

Easter in Rome dawned bright and sunny. In St. Peter’s Square, the steps leading up to the basilica were turned into an abundant garden with thousands of tulips, daffodils and flowering bushes. By the Easter morning, the pope did not give a homily. Instead, with hands clasped in prayer and head bowed, he led the tens of thousands of people in the square in silent reflection.

After Mass, before giving his solemn blessing, Pope Francis said Easter should give people the courage to “blaze trails of reconciliation with God and with all our brothers and sisters.”

Speaking about Christ’s power over death and sin, the pope prayed that the Lenten cross touch places in the globe scarred by war, terrorism, poverty and environmental destruction.

In the risen Christ points out paths of hope to beloved Syria, a country torn by a lengthy conflict, with its sad wake of internal violence, death, contempt for humanitarian law, and the breakdown of civil concord,” the pope said. “To the powers of the risen Lord, we entrust the talks now in course.”

He prayed that the power of the Resurrection would “overcome hardened hearts, and promote a fruitful encounter of peoples and cultures,” particularly in Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and the Holy Land.

“May the Lord of life also accompany those who could offer them welcome and way death or, in any event, rejection by brothers and sisters of ours meet along the road of life,” the pope said.

“Today is the celebration of our hope, the celebration of this truth: nothing and no one will ever be able to separate us from the love of the one who raised us up,” he said.

At the end of the homily, the pope blessed the Easter candle and said: “This marked the beginning of Peter’s ressurection, the resurrection of his heart. Without giving in to sadness or darkness, he made room for hope; he allowed the light of God to enter into his heart, without smothering it,” the pope said.

At the beginning of the liturgy, after blessing the Easter fire, Pope Francis entered a darkened basilica, gently illuminated by the light of the Easter candle.

In his homily, reflecting on the Easter account from the Gospel of St. Luke, the pope noted how the disciples doubted the testimony of the women returning from the empty tomb.

Peter, he said, was the first of the men to rise and run to the tomb, choosing not to “succumb to the somber atmosphere of those days, nor was he overwhelmed by his doubts.”

“This marked the beginning of Peter’s resurrection, the resurrection of his heart. Without giving in to sadness or darkness, he made room for hope; he allowed the light of God to enter into his heart, without smothering it,” the pope said.

Like Peter and the women, he added, Christians cannot discover life by being “bereft of hope” and “imprisoned within ourselves” but, instead, must allow Christ to bring life and break open their tombs, sealed by “the stones of our rancour and the boulders of our past.”

While problems will always remain, he said, Jesus’ resurrection is a sure foundation of Christian hope and not “mere optimism, nor a psychological attitude or desire to be courageous.”

The Holy Spirit “does not remove evil with a magic wand. But he pours into us the vitality of life, which is not the absence of problems, but the certainty of being loved and always forgiven by Christ, who for us has conquered sin, death and fear,” he said.

Christians are called to awaken the same hope in the hearts of others, Pope Francis said. Without such witness, the Church risks becoming “an international organization full of followers and good rules, yet incapable of offering the hope for which the world longs.”

Archbishop Tobin praises new state restrictions on abortion signed into law

Indiana became the second state in the nation to ban abortions sought because of a diagnosis of a disability in an unborn baby when Gov. Mike Pence signed into law House Enrolled Act 1337 on March 24.

The law also bans abortion motivated by the gender or race of the unborn child. In a statement, Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin praised the new law.

“This new law reflects the love that God has for every child by affirming that every human life is sacred,” he said. “This is a victory for the family, for life, for the day of death, for unborn human life. No baby should lose its life because of a potential disability or its gender or race. Every human life matters.”

Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, who serves as the legislative and public policy spokesperson for the Church in Indiana, expressed support for the proposed law while it was being debated during the session of the Indiana General Assembly that recently came to a close.

“It’s important that the concern for human life is and continues to be a topic of the legislature,” Tebbe said.

“Indiana laws in terms of restrictions and limitations on abortion and promoting life are good, but it’s always important that we keep finding opportunities to enhance those laws to make them stronger.”

A similar law was approved in North Dakota in 2013. †
There appear to be many Catholics who wish that Pope Francis would stop giving those press conferences on planes. We are not among them.

Yes, there’s always the possibility that the reporters will report only part of what he said, or will ask a question designed to cause controversy, or will not understand the context of the pope’s statements. That was certainly true during the press conference after the pope arrived to Mexico when he answered questions about Donald Trump and about contraception to prevent the Zika epidemic.

But even when that happens, the pope’s words reach audiences that have never paid attention to what popes have said. It is part of Francis’s understanding that this is part of his mission of evangelization.

That’s why Pope Francis has been using all the social media to try to get his, and the Church’s, message across to as many people as possible. He’s on Twitter, Instagram and other technological means of communicating.

This is a definite contrast to many of his predecessors. There was a long period of time, from 1870 to 1929, when the popes confined themselves to the Vatican and were seldom seen or heard. It was not until 1958 that a pope was first flown to the United States. Pope Francis’s predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, wasn’t comfortable answering reporters’ questions. He didn’t eliminate the press conferences, but he asked for the questions in advance and then would select the ones he wanted to answer. Francis, obviously, is comfortable with everyone—even reporters.

We suppose it’s similar to the case with our presidents. Although some of our early presidents were comfortable with the press, it wasn’t until Woodrow Wilson started the practice of presidential press conferences that they became a tradition, and some presidents handled them better than others—mainly Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan.

What people who object to those papal news conferences seem to be afraid of is that the pope will say something with which they disagree. They wish the pope would stick to personal morality issues like abortion, same-sex marriage and divorce. They don’t like it when he stirs up “political” issues like immigration, economics or ecology.

The pope has been told to stay away from “political” issues in our treatment of migrants and refugees and has nothing to do with morality. As Francis said when he spoke to the U.S. Congress, the Golden Rule should be the basis of all morality.

Of course the pope should speak out about “political” issues, not from a partisan point of view but from a moral one. He did that when he said, on his plane back from Mexico, that a person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not of building bridges, is not Christian.” The questioner asked about Trump, but Francis answered with a principle.

With his emphasis on helping the poor and preserving our environment, Pope Francis is following in the footsteps of his predecessors. Even since Pope Leo XIII issued the first social encyclical, “Rerum Novarum,” in 1891, every pope except John Paul I has followed suit. (Pope John Paul I died after only a month in office.) It’s strange that people who follow the pope so closely when it comes to personal morality seem comfortable with rejecting what he has to say regarding social issues.

We hope that Pope Francis will continue to speak freely. We’re sure that he will.

—John F. Fink

Editorial

Pope Francis listens to a question from Javier Martinez-Brocal of Rome Reporters before giving a press conference aboard his flight from Asuncion, Paraguay, to Rome in this July 12, 2015, file photo. The first pope in modern history to do an interview with a reporter was Pope Leo XIII in 1892.

Opinion

Word on Fire

The spiritual legacy of Mother Angelica

Mother Angelica, one of the most significant figures in the post-conciliar Catholic Church in America, died on Easter Sunday, March 27, after a 14-year struggle with the aftereffects of a stroke. I can attest that, as a former Catholic circle during the eighties and nineties of the last century, it was almost de rigueur to make fun of Mother Angelica. She was a crude popularizer, an opponent of Vatican II, an arch-conservative, a culture-warrior, etc., etc.

And yet while her critics have largely faded away, her impact and influence are uncontested. Against all odds and expectations, she created an evangelical vehicle without equal in the history of the Catholic Church. Starting from, quite literally, a garage in Alabama, the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) now reaches 230 million homes in more than 140 countries around the world. With the possible exception of John Paul II himself, she was the most watched and most effective Catholic evangelizer of the last 50 years.

Read Raymond Arroyo’s splendid biography in order to get the full story of how Rita Rizzo, born and raised in a tough neighborhood in Canton, Ohio, came in time to be a man, a founderess and a television personality.

For the purposes of this brief column, I will simply draw attention to three areas of particular spiritual importance in the life of Mother Angelica: her vision of God’s eye for an eye, her keen sense of the supernatural quality of religion, and her conviction that suffering of any value.

The accounts of the beginning of EWTN read like the stories of some of the great saints founders of monastic centers within the Church. Mother had a blithe confidence that if God called her to do something, he would provide what was needed. Her right hand man, Deacon Bill Steltemeier, a lawyer and businessman who would prove invaluable in keeping the operation of EWTN off the ground, came to her in the most remarkable way.

While in Chicago for a convention, he saw a flyer advertising a speech at a local parish by a man whom he did not know. For some reason, he felt compelled to attend. Despite typically horrific Chicago winter weather—and though he had no real idea where he was going—he made it to the parish and caught the second half of the nun’s presentation. Just as she was finishing up, he heard a voice speaking quietly but insistently, “until the day you die.” The nun, of course, was Mother Angelica.

This scene is repeated over and over in “Mother Angelica: Portrait of a Saint,” a new biography of the EWTN president. For the purposes of this brief column, I will simply indicate the times when Mother Angelica foundered, after suffering a heart attack at 75, spent the last 20 years of her life praying for the order that she had established.

Mother Angelica wasn’t perfect—and neither was every television personality. For her lack of political and advanced educational theology, she sometimes said things that were insufﬁciently nuanced and balanced.

And her hot temper, which gave fire to her soul, once led her to indulge in ad hominem attacks and unfair characterizations of her opponents’ positions. But these are quibbles.

When Church historians write their accounts of the years immediately following Vatican II, Rita Rizzo of Canton, Ohio, Mother Angelica, will find a very honored place.

(Bishop Robert E. Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries. For more information, go to www.wordoffire.org.)

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and should be brief, clear, well-expressed, concise, temperate in tone, non-personal and non-attacking.

The editors reserve the right to select and edit the letters based on space limitations, post-date, clearness and content.

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.
Easter joy flows from experience of God’s mercy

Easter is the season of joy. It’s the time of year when we celebrate the great mystery of our redemption, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. Easter joy is different from other kinds of joy. It is rooted in an experience of liberation or release.

The joy of Easter is like the feeling a prisoner has when he learns he has unexpectedly been set free. It is like the overwhelming happiness parents experience when they are told that their seriously ill child is now cancer-free. Easter joy is the experience of long-separated lovers having the freedom to be reunited now. It is the emotion a father feels when he sees his prodigal son, or daughter, returning home and being reunited with the family after many years away.

Easter joy overshadows all anxiety and fear. It allows us to breathe easily and let go of burdens that weigh us down. The risen Lord tells his disciples—and us—to let go of fear. His love has conquered every evil, including our own sins and the sins of the world. We can rejoice now because the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus have set us free. We can be at peace now because nothing—even death—can separate us from God’s love and mercy.

Easter joy flows from the experience of God’s mercy, from the forgiveness of our sins and the absolute we have received from the Father whose face is mercy. It is the experience of heartfelt gratitude that flows from an act of undeserved kindness given to us with no strings attached. Easter joy is our response to the grace of God—freely given and totally unmerited—simply because God loves us, and wants us to be happy with him forever.

During this Holy Year of Mercy, Pope Francis asks that we reflect on the joy of the Gospel, and “the delightful and comforting joy” of sharing the Good News with others. Easter is the perfect time to encounter the risen Lord in the Scriptures, in the sacraments (especially the holy Eucharist) and in our encounters with our brothers and sisters in Christ. “The Gospel, radiant with the glory of Christ’s constant love, constantly invites us to rejoice,” Pope Francis teaches in his apostolic exhortation, “Evangelii Gaudium” (“The Joy of the Gospel.”)

We can rejoice because we have been set free, and when we share this Good News with others—especially those who are weighed down by life’s burdens—our joy increases exponentially!

Sadness, fear, anxiety, guilt and despair are all too common in our society (even in our families). The Gospel shows us countless occasions when Jesus responded with compassion and healing to all forms of mental, physical and spiritual illness in the people of his day by curing them, and setting them free from whatever burdens they carried. We also read in the Scriptures that the risen Lord commanded his disciples (us) to go out into the whole world and proclaim the joyful Good News of our salvation.

Easter joy is active, not passive. It’s not simply a good feeling; it’s an enthusiastic response, in action, to the great liberating gift we have received from our loving and merciful God. Easter joy is contagious; it cannot be held inside, but must be shared with others. Pope Francis assures us that Easter joy, like life itself, “grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed, those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others” (“Evangelii Gaudium.” #10).

This is the Easter paradox: Joy comes not by satisfying our desires for comfort, security or pleasure. It comes to us through self-sacrificing love, even a martyr’s death. The great mystery of Christ’s resurrection is that it alone had the power to overcome the paralyzing grip of sin and evil. His passion, death and resurrection set us free. This is the supreme act of mercy, the ultimate expression of God’s unconditional love for us: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

Easter joy flows from the boundless love and mercy of the Triune God. May our hearts always be open to this saving grace. May we embrace this holy season of Easter with hearts filled with gratitude. May our Easter joy compel us to share with others the Good News of our redemption in Christ. May we strengthen in our service to others, both close to home and far away.

La misericordia de Dios es el origen de la alegría pascual

La Pascua es la temporada de la alegría. Es el momento del año en el que celebramos el gran misterio de nuestra redención salomática de nuestro Señor Jesucristo de entre los muertos.

La alegría pascual es distinta de otros tipos de alegría puesto que encuentra su origen en una experiencia de liberación.

La alegría pascual se parece a lo que siente un prisionero cuando recibe la noticia de que está libre. Su liberación se asemeja a la alegría que siente un padre al ver que su hijo gravemente enfermo ya no tiene cáncer. La alegría pascual se parece a la emoción que siente un preso cuando descubre que va a ser liberado.

La alegría pascual es activa, no pasiva. No se trata sencillamente de sentirse bien; es una respuesta entusiasta, en acción, al maravilloso obsequio de liberación que hemos recibido de nuestro Dios amoroso y misericordioso. La alegría pascual es contagiosa; no puede conmoverse sino que debe ser compartida con los demás. El papa Francisco nos asegura que la alegría pascual, al igual que la vida misma, “se acrecienta dándola y se debilita en el aislamiento.”

La misericordia de Dios es el origen de la alegría pascual. La misericordia divina es la fuente de la que emana la alegría pascual: del perdón de nuestros pecados y de la absolución que hemos recibido del Padre cuyo rostro es la misericordia.

La misericordia divina es la fuente de la que emana la alegría pascual: del perdón de nuestros pecados y de la absolución que hemos recibido del Padre cuyo rostro es la misericordia. Se trata de la experiencia de profunda gratitud que surge de un acto de inmerecida bondad que recibimos sin ningún tipo de agradecimiento. La alegría pascual es nuestra respuesta a la gracia de Dios que nos ha entregado libremente y sin mérito alguno de parte nuestra, sencillamente porque Dios nos ama y desea que seamos felices junto a Él para siempre.

Durante este Año de la Misericordia el papa Francisco nos pide que reflexionemos sobre la alegría del Evangelio y “la dulce y confortadora alegría” de compartir la Buena Nueva con los demás.

La Pascua es la oportunidad perfecta para encontrar al Señor resucitado en las escrituras, en los sacramentos (especialmente en la sagrada eucaristía) y en nuestros encuentros con nuestros hermanos y hermanas en Cristo. “El Evangelio, donde nos presenta a Jesús y nos invita a compartir la alegría de la Buena Nueva de nuestra salvación,” asegura el papa Francisco en su exhortación apostólica “Evangelii Gaudium” (“La alegría del Evangelio,” #5).

Podemos regocijarnos porque hemos sido liberados y cuando compartimos esta Buena Nueva con los demás, especialmente con aquellos abogados por las tribulaciones de la vida, ¡nuestra alegría aumenta exponencialmente! La tristeza, el temor, la ansiedad, la culpa y la desesperación son aspectos demasiado comunes en nuestra sociedad (incluso en nuestras familias). El Evangelio nos ilustra innumerables ocasiones en las que Jesús respondió con compasión y sanación ante todas las formas de padecimientos mentales, físicos y espirituales en las personas de su época, curándolos y liberándolos de cualesquiera que fueran las cargas que arrastraban. También leemos en las Escrituras que el Señor resucitado ordenó a sus discípulos (a nosotros) que saliéramos al mundo y proclamáramos la alegría de la Buena Nueva de nuestra salvación.

La alegría pascual es activa, no pasiva. No se trata sencillamente de sentirse bien; es una respuesta entusiasta, en acción, al maravilloso obsequio de liberación que hemos recibido de nuestro Dios amoroso y misericordioso. La alegría pascual es contagiosa; no puede conmoverse sino que debe ser compartida con los demás. El papa Francisco nos asegura que la alegría pascual, al igual que la vida misma, “se acrecienta dándola y se debilita en el aislamiento.”

Traducido por: Daniela Guapina

La alegría pascual es el momento del año en el que reflexionamos sobre la misericordia de Dios y su amor abnegado, e incluso de una muerte de martirio. El gran misterio de la resurrección de Cristo es que por sí sola tuvo el poder de vencer sobre el pecado y el mal. Su pasión, muerte y resurrección nos liberaron. Este es el supremo acto de misericordia, la máxima expresión del amor incondicional que nos tiene Dios: “Porque tanto amó Dios al mundo, que dio a su único Hijo, para que todo el que cree en él no se pierda, sino que tenga vida eterna” (Jn 3:16).

La alegría pascual emana del amor y la misericordia desinteresados de la santisima Trinidad. Que nuestros corazones estén siempre abiertos a recibir esta gracia salvadora, que recibimos esta temporada santa de la Pascua con corazones rebosantes de agradecimiento; que nuestra alegría pascual nos impulse a compartir con los demás la Buena Nueva de nuestra redención en Cristo, que nos fortalezca en el camino de los sacrificios, tanto en nuestra localidad como en tierras distantes.”
April 4 Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, 333 S. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Mass celebrating 150th anniversary, Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin celebrating, 6 p.m., reception will follow the Mass. 

April 5 Marian University, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Michael A. Evans Center for Health Sciences, Indianapolis. Richard G. Lugar Francisco Center for Global Stalldes Speaker Series, “The Indianapolis 500 Mile Race: A Century of Global Impact,” Mark Miles, presenter, 6 p.m. Information: maplel@marian.edu or 317-955-6755.

Archbishop O’Meara Catholic Center, 812 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. Solo Seniors, Catholic, educational, charitable, social single seniors, 50 and over, single, separated, widowed or divorced. New members welcome. 6 p.m. Information: 317-243-0777.

April 7-8 Mary, Queen of Peace Church, 1005 W. Main Street, Danville. Rummage Sale, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., proceeds benefit St. Malachy School and church. 8 a.m.-3 p.m., 317-408-4396.


Earth Day Celebration, 1 Providence Way, from 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on April 23.

The retreat will be facilitated by Providence Sister Connie Kramer, who has more than 40 years of experience in ministry dealing with those who are grieving or have grieved.

The retreat will be conducted in a group setting, where hope and healing await for those willing to share their sacred grief journey with their God and with one another. A primary focus will be on understanding and embracing the process of grief.

Cost to attend the retreat is $40, and the registration deadline is April 18.

Register online at Events.SistersofProvidence.org, or by calling 812-535-2952 or e-mailing stbirish@maestro mcgowanhall.com.

Joseph W. Tobin at 8:30 a.m. at St. Michael the Archangel Church.

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Washington Avenue Center, and Retreat Center, 200 Hill Drive, Montgomery, presenter, registration deadline April 11.

April 14 Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., Beech Grove. Sale, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Information: 317-788-7581.

April 16 St. Bartholomew School, 1235 Jackson St., Columbus. No Tie Affair fundraiser, samples from local restaurants and breweries, live and silent auctions, games, raffles, cash bar, live music by the Tiptonians, 7-11 p.m., purchase tickets before April 15, $50 before April 1, 50 on or after April 1. Tickets and information online: at elishf.mastersbod.com or email stmary@archindy.org. Information only: 317-278-3355.


April 14-16 St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Providence Spumality and Confrence Center, 1 Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Holy Ground Retreat: Tending the Soil, Tending the Soul, Providence Sister Mary Montgomery, presenter, registration deadline April 11. Information: 812-535-2952 or perscrt@psusign.org.


Events Calendar

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

Musical gold

Sophomore Troy Bartkus, left, and freshman Nathan Dickman, both students at Seton Catholic High School in Richmond, smile proudly after winning gold medals at the Indiana State School Music Association state solo contest on Feb. 27. Troy earned his gold medal for the saxophone, and Nathan won his for drums. Troy not only received a gold medal, but also a perfect score.
Pope Francis to refugees: Despite differences, all people are God’s children

ROME (CNS)—In a moving gesture of brotherhood and peace, Pope Francis washed the feet of several refugees, including Muslims, Hindus and Coptic Christians. Gestures, like Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, “speak louder than words,” he said during the Holy Thursday Mass on March 24. Together with the Lord’s Supper on March 24, coming together, he added, is another gesture meant to show a desire to live in peace as brothers and sisters despite people’s different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Hundreds of refugees were outside hoping to catch a glimpse of the pope as he made his way into the courtyard of the Center for Asylum Seekers at Castelnuovo di Porto, about 15 miles north of Rome on March 24.

Pope Francis kisses the foot of a refugee during Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper at the Center for Asylum Seekers in Castelnuovo di Porto, about 15 miles north of Rome on March 24. The pope washed and kissed the feet of refugees, including Muslims, Hindus and Copts. (CNS photo/Osservatore Romano, handout)

Before going around and greeting each of the center’s residents individually, Pope Francis asked them to pray in “their own religious language,” so that there may “always be brotherhood and traditions.” After his homily, the pope removed his vestments and handed the pope a marker, which the pontiff used to sign a banner depicting the flags of 26 nations, representing the countries of origin of the center’s guests.

In his brief, off-the-cuff homily, the pope said there were two distinct gestures in the day’s Gospel: Jesus serving and washing the feet of his disciples, and Judas receiving money by Jesus’ enemies to betray him.

Today as well, there are two gestures: All of us here, (coining) together—Muslims, Hindus, Catholics, Copts, Evangelicals—but [being] brothers, sons of the same God who want to live in peace,” he said.

However, recalling the recent terrorist attack in Brussels, the pope said there was a second gesture made by those want war. Like Judas, he said, behind those who committed the attacks there are “arms traffickers who want blood, not peace.”

“In this moment, when I do Jesus’ same gesture—to wash the feet of you 12—all of us are making this gesture of brotherhood. And all of us can say. We are diverse, we are different, we have different religions and cultures, but we are brothers and we want to live in peace,” he said.

Acknowledging the suffering endured by the refugees, Pope Francis asked them to pray in “their own religious language,” so that there may “always be brotherhood and goodness.”

After his homily, the pope removed his vestments and put on a large white garment tied over his alb. He knelt before each of the 12 people, washed each person’s foot slowly and dried it.

The refugees barely contained their emotions, tears streaming down their faces as the pope bent low and kissed their feet. A young mother wiped her tears as the pope gazed at her and reached out to touch her baby. This beauty, he said, “has a name: peace and love.”

Archbishop Tobin to lead pilgrimage to old California missions

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin to lead a pilgrimage to the missions of California for a glimpse of the places where the faith was spread along the west coast in the late 1700s and early 1800s. The pilgrimage will be coordinated by Grueninger Travel, which will also provide a travel escort for the six-day journey. The pilgrims will take in six old Catholic missions from San Francisco to Carmel-by-the-Sea, including two established by newly canonized St. Junipero Serra. The archbishop will celebrate daily Mass, five of which will be at the missions being visited. While in California, pilgrims will also enjoy such sites as the world famous Monterey Bay Aquarium, two wineries, a state park, several quaint, small towns along the coast, and more.

The pilgrimage begins with a flight from Indianapolis to San Francisco on Oct. 30. That afternoon, pilgrims will visit the mission of San Francisco de Asís—also known as Old Mission Dolores—founded by St. Junipero Serra in 1776. Archbishop Tobin will celebrate Mass at the mission, the oldest intact building in San Francisco.

The next day, pilgrims will enjoy several marvelous sites and sights, starting with a visit to Mission San Rafael Arcangel, where the archbishop will celebrate Mass. Founded in 1817, the mission once served as a hospital to Christianized Native Americans. The day also includes a trip to Mt. Tamalpais State Park. From the top of Mt. Tamalpais, visitors can take in the vista of San Francisco and the bay below. Time will also be spent at the Army Corp of Engineers Bay Model Visitors Center and the waterfront district, which grew during the Gold Rush era in the mid-19th century. Pilgrims will then have dinner in Chinatown.

On Nov. 1, the Feast of All Saints, pilgrims will travel through the famous vineyards of Sonoma’s wine country. After Archbishop Tobin celebrates Mass at Mission San Francisco Solano, tours will be offered through the 1823 mission and around Sonoma’s town square. The group will then travel to Andretti Winery in Napa for a tour and wine tasting.

After a restful night in Napa, pilgrims will start their day with the archbishop for Mass at the Carmelite House of prayer, then travel to V. Sattui Winery for wine-tasting and lunch. The afternoon will be spent traveling to Monterey, where pilgrims will spend the night.

On Nov. 3, pilgrims will enjoy visiting two missions. The first, Mission San Juan Bautista, is located in San Benito County and was founded in 1797. Archbishop Tobin will celebrate Mass here, then the group will return to Monterey to visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium, voted “World’s Best Aquarium” by TripAdvisor in 2014. In the afternoon, pilgrims will travel to Mission San Carlos Borromeo Del Rio Carmelo, founded by St. Junipero Serra in 1775 and the site of his remains. Time will be allowed for taking in the mission, as well as entrance fees. The double-occupancy cost is $2,364, and the single-occupancy cost is $2,974. A deposit of $250 is required, with final payment due by July 15.

For more information, call Carolyn Noone at 317-236-1428 or 800-382-9856, ext. 1428, or by e-mail at cnoone@archindy.org.

To reserve a spot on the pilgrimage, contact Grueninger Travel at 317-581-1122 or 800-825-9019.

Below, pilgrims accompanying Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin on a pilgrimage to visit old missions in California on Oct. 30-Nov. 4 will also savour wine at Andretti Winery in the state’s famous Napa Valley.

Left, the elaborately adorned rood screen behind the main altar of Mission San José in Fremont, Calif., bears a statue of the mission’s namesake, St. Joseph. Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin will celebrate Mass in this mission church during an archdiocesan pilgrimage he will lead on Oct. 30-Nov. 4.

(L nursery, L’Osservatore Romano, handout)

By Natalie Hofer

To help Catholics in central and southern Indiana grow in faith and knowledge, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis offers pilgrimages to sites of historic or spiritual interest to the Catholic faith.

This fall, from Oct. 30-Nov. 4, Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin will lead a pilgrimage to the missions of California for a glimpse of the places where the faith was spread along the west coast in the late 1700s and early 1800s. The pilgrimage will be coordinated by Grueninger Travel, which will also provide a travel escort for the six-day journey. The pilgrims will take in six old Catholic missions from San Francisco to Carmel-by-the-Sea, including two established by newly canonized St. Junipero Serra. The archbishop will celebrate daily Mass, five of which will be at the missions being visited. While in California, pilgrims will also enjoy such sites as the world famous Monterey Bay Aquarium, two wineries, a state park, several quaint, small towns along the coast, and more.

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Franciscan Sister Veronica Lopez values this oil in a special way since she serves the dying as a palliative care nurse at St. Francis Hospital in Indianapolis. She was present at the chrism Mass to receive the holy oils for the hospital.

“I work with the dying, and some of my patients are Catholics,” said Sister Veronica, a member of the Mishawaka, Ind.-based Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration. “So these oils will be used to anoint them. It’s a beautiful experience to be a part of the Mass by being present for the dying and representing the hospital and our sick.”

Representatives of parishes across central and southern Indiana also received oils to be used in the celebration of the sacraments in their faith communities over the coming year.

Adam Welp was present at the Mass for Holy Family Parish in New Albany and received its oils.

“It’s an honor and a privilege to be able to receive the oils for the parish,” he said. “I like how all the parishes gather together for this observance, and now we can each take our own oils from the archbishop’s [cathedral] out to the parishes in the archdiocese.

The oil of catechumens and the chrism oil blessed at the chrism Mass were used in parishes across the archdiocese four days later during the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night when people were received into the full communion of the Church.

Cathi Barzilauskas witnessed the blessing of the chrism oil with which she was confirmed at St. Agnes Church in Nashville during the Bloomington Deanery faith community’s Easter Vigil.

She reflected before the chrism Mass on how she was looking forward to being received into the Church.

“I’m absolutely ecstatic about it,” Barzilauskas said. “I feel like I’m at home. This is where I’m supposed to be.”

This year’s chrism Mass also took place during the Holy Year of Mercy. Many people, including Barzilauskas, who took part in the liturgy, passed through the holy doors at the cathedral.

“It was humbling and very peaceful to walk through them,” she said.

During his homily, Archbishop Tobin reminded the congregation that mercy is at the heart of the mission of the Church that they are charged by their baptism to help carry out.

“Our mission is to transform the world in accord with the Gospel,” he said. “To work for the righteousness of the kingdom of God in all areas of human life. We live in a highly secularized society and world. We cannot forget that this is the world that God so loved, that God still loves. Together, we are stewards of God’s mercy.”

Andrew Motyka, director of archdiocesan and cathedral liturgical music, leads the Archdiocesan Choir during the chrism Mass at the cathedral.

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin and some 130 priests process on March 22 into SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis at the start of the annual archdiocesan chrism Mass. Oils used in sacraments and the consecration of altars and churches are blessed during the liturgy, which also includes priests renewing their ordination promises. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Above, Gabriela Rojas, archdiocesan coordinator of catechetical resources, proclaims in Spanish the second reading at the chrism Mass.

Right, Transitional Deacon Nicolás Ajpacajá gives holy oils to Adam Welp, a member of Holy Family Parish in New Albany, during the chrism Mass. Assisting Deacon Ajpacajá is transitional Deacon Meril Sahayam of the Palayamkottai, India, Diocese. He is co-sponsored by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. A native of Guatemala, Deacon Ajpacajá is a member of Holy Family Parish in New Albany.

Above, some 130 priests who minister in central and southern Indiana join Archbishop Tobin in blessing chrism oil during the chrism Mass.
Mother Angelica, founder of Eternal Word Television Network, dies after long illness

BEIRUT (CNS)—Mother Angelica, a pioneer in the Electronic World Television Network (EWTN) dedicated her life to spreading the faith through television and Evangelization throughout the world. In a March 30, 2016 Encyclical Letter, Pope Francis called EWTN “a gift from God” and commended the network for its “witness of the resurrection.”

Mother Angelica, who founded the Eternal Word Television Network, died early on March 27 at age 92.

Feisty and outspoken, she was a major, controversial figure in the United States during the closing decades of the 20th century. At the same time, the international scope of EWTN’s media operations gave her a ready calling card at the Vatican.

She said these appearances made her aware of the “kindling the fire” and fund and supply the wars in the Middle East to help “witnesses to the resurrection.”

“Faith is having one foot on the ground and the other up in the air, waiting for a fulcrum to bear the weight,” she said.

Mother Angelica was born on November 22, 1923, in a Birmingham hospital to remove a blood clot in her brain after she suffered a major stroke.

She left it with partial paralysis and a speech impediment.

Last November, she was placed on a feeding tube as she continued to battle lingering effects of the stroke.

In February, members of her religious order, the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration, said she was in a vegetative state and asked for prayers. She had been in a coma since She was pronounced brain dead on March 27.

Mother Angelica died at her order’s Our Lady of Mount Carmel Monastery in Hanceville, where she “was surrounded by the prayers and love of her spiritual daughters, sisters and friends,” said a statement from the Poor Clares.

A morning funeral Mass will be celebrated in the upper church of the monastery’s Shrine of the Most Sacred Heart, with the homily to be offered by Deacon Joseph Mary Wolfe, a Franciscan missionary of the Eternal Word, will be the homilist.

Following her funeral, Mother Angelica’s body will be interred in the shrine’s Crypt Chapel.

This is a sorrow-filled day for the entire EWTN family and will, and always, personify EWTN, the network which she founded,” said Michael P. Warsaw, chairman and CEO, in a statement.

In the face of sickness and long-term illness, there is a strange joy of example and prayerful perseverance exemplified the Franciscan spirit she held so dear. We stand in prayer for Mother Angelica’s gift for her extraordinary life, he said. “Her accomplishments and legacies in evangelization throughout the world are nothing short of miraculous, and can only be attributed to divine providence and her unwavering faithfulness to Our Lord.”

In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI awarded the EWTN with a papal honor for the Church and the world.

In 1944, she joined her religious order in the United States and professed her solemn vows in Canton, Ohio, in 1947.

In 1961, she started working with local law enforcement authorities in planning and deploying naloxone throughout the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, to combat opioid overdose deaths.

In 1980, she founded the EWTN Catholic Radio Network, which broadcasts in English and Spanish.

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In 1995, EWTN launched a satellite-delivered AM/FM radio network with programming available also for rebroadcast by local stations.

In 1997, Mother Angelica stepped down as the head of EWTN and Deacon Steltemeier was appointed chairman and CEO.

Mother Angelica was born on April 20, 1923, as Rita Rizzo in an Italian neighborhood in Canton, Ohio. She described her childhood as rough. Her father abandoned the family when she was young and her parents eventually divorced.

She lived in a rented apartment with her mother and said their existence was marked by poverty.

“Mother Angelica died at the age of 92 after a lifetime of service to the Church,” said the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration.

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Grant helps first-grader brighten senior citizens’, shut-ins’ Easter

By Natalie Hoeter

SELLERSBURG—In November of 2015 when Jimmy Schepers heard that he’d been selected as a winner of a $500 Indianapolis Colts Student All Star community service grant, he had an unusual reaction.

“I was scared, because I didn’t know what to do!” the 7-year-old said with large eyes.

But then his mom reminded him about the idea they’d brainstormed for the application two months prior: to create Easter bags for the senior citizens group and the shut-ins of their parish, St. John Paul II in Clark County. It was all exciting and planning from there.

The project came about when Jimmy’s mother, Dawn Schepers, read about the grant in an e-mail from the Indiana Youth Institute last September. The Colts grant, sponsored in conjunction with Grange Insurance of Indianapolis, called for youths ages 13 and younger to outline a plan for a community service project in partnership with a non-profit organization, identify what resources would be needed, and explain how the project would impact those in their community. The grant could be for as little as $500.

“We talked about what we could do for a group in the parish,” said Dawn Schepers, who also serves as the parish youth ministry coordinator.

“We have a lunch [in the St. Paul School gym in Sellersburg] once a month for the senior citizens of the parish. I knew we wouldn’t get the money until after the [Christmas] holidays, so we thought we could make Easter bags and deliver them to the seniors at their lunch during Holy Week, and also to shut-ins [in the parish].” Bags will also be delivered separately by Jimmy and a classmate to senior citizens of the parish’s St. Joseph campus.

Jimmy was one of six applicants—and the youngest winner—selected to receive the Student All Star grant. He received the full $500 he requested for his project. “Jimmy [and the five other recipients] were awarded funding because the goals of their projects most closely aligned with the requirements of the grant,” said Amy Waymire, Indianapolis Colts community relations assistant. “This program is designed to get students involved in a service project that will strengthen their community and make a positive impact on others.”

Jimmy enlisted the members of his first-grade class at St. Paul School to help fill the Easter bags. On Feb. 26, the children gathered around for Jimmy’s demonstration of how to assemble the bags.

Like an enthusiastic salesman, he showed off each item—most purchased with the grant money—that would comprise the contents of each of the 180 colorful Easter gift bags. Two plastic eggs with sugar-free candy, one plastic egg with a finger puppet, one plastic egg with a rosary donated by the parish, a small wooden cross, a “little chickie” made of chenille, a pinball maze game, and handmade Easter card colored and signed by Jimmy or another of his 17 classmates.

Jamie Bruggeman, Jimmy’s first-grade teacher who agreed to be listed on the application as overseer of the project, was happy to include the class in creating the Easter bags.

“I think it’s a great extension of what we do and talk about every day in the classroom, talking about helping others,” explained Bruggeman, who is also a St. John Paul II parishioner with children attending St. Paul School.

“It’s kind of a hands-on thing where they can actually do what we talk about every day. I think this has made an impact on them to make the connection with giving. I think they feel really good about this [project] because they actually helped make it and will get to give it to the senior citizens themselves.”

After the bags were filled—a job quickly done when 18 children form a cheerful assembly line dropping one item from each pile into the bags—Jimmy reflected on how the project made him feel.

“It makes you feel happy to give,” he concluded.

His classmate Baileigh Schneider agreed. “It makes you feel good inside,” she said. When the senior citizens receive the bags, she said, “I think they will be happy and smile.”

In this Feb. 26 photo, Jimmy Schepers, front, places a plastic egg into a colorful Easter bag destined for a senior citizen or shut-in of St. John Paul II Parish in Clark County, while his mom, Dawn Schepers, places completed bags in a box in the background. Jimmy won a $500 Indianapolis Colts Student All Star community service grant to coordinate the project. His first-grade classmates at St. Paul School in Sellersburg helped fill the Easter bags. (Photo by Natalie Hoeter)

High school teacher is among scientists who ‘heard’ sound in space, confirming Einstein’s Theory

NEW YORK (CNS)—Through long years of research by scientists, including a physics teacher at Regis High School in Manhattan, gravitational waves have been directly measured, confirming the last prediction of Albert Einstein’s general theory of relativity.

On Sept. 14, the faint “chirp” of two black holes colliding 1.3 billion light-years away was heard and recorded by scientists in the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory Scientific Collaboration, or LIGO collaboration for short.

Luca Matone, a physics teacher at Regis High School, was one of the 1,000 scientists involved in the effort. The collision of the black holes generated a gravitational wave, a ripple in space and time propagated throughout the universe. It is very much like the ripple that results when a pebble is thrown into a pond that gradually becomes less pronounced over distance and time.

“Instead of seeing, you can listen to events in the night sky,” Matone told Catholic New York, newspaper of the New York Archdiocese. “From now on, there will be a way to look at the universe in a different light.”

He called the results “absolutely stunning.”

The LIGO collaboration made the discovery with a pair of L-shaped observatories in Washington state and Louisiana. The two machines allowed scientists to actually “hear” sounds in space, and both picked up the chirp of the black holes colliding almost simultaneously.

Matone, who holds a doctorate from the University of Paris, spent much of his career involved in gravitational wave research. He assisted in the production of the interferometer at the LIGO observatory in Hanford, Wash. He also was among the scientists who wrote the detection paper, “Observation of Gravitational Waves from a Binary Black Hole Merger,” published on Feb. 12 in Physical Review Letters. The paper assembled the research so other scientists could review it. “This detection is real,” he said. “It’s an opportunity to see real science. Generally, there are answers in the back of the textbook. For this, there are no answers in the back now.”

As a teacher at a Catholic high school, Matone discussed the intersection of faith and science. “A lot of my colleagues are atheists,” he said. “I never really found a conflict between the two.”

For example, he recalled one night during his research when he found himself in the desert, preoccupied with his own thoughts and problems. He remembered finally taking a moment to breathe and look up at the sky, marveling at what he saw.

“It makes you wonder,” he said. “There was never a conflict between the supernatural and science for me.”

About 100 juniors and seniors gathered recently at the school to hear Matone discuss his experiences and research. He showed them photos of the LIGO interferometers, and played the sound recording of the black holes colliding.

Lake D’Cruz, a junior at Regis, left the presentation impressed.

“This is probably going to be one of the greatest scientific discoveries of the century, and Dr. Matone can say he was part of it,” he said.

“He’s a real role model.”

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Letters
Instructing the ignorant is a work of mercy that extends beyond schools

By David Gibson

Millions of loyal viewers discovered during the recently concluded final season of “Downton Abbey,” the popular British TV drama set in the early 20th century, that Andy Parker, a footman in this grand noble household, could not read.

The young man, anguished over his illiteracy, felt humiliated by it and certainly did not want this fact of his life known by others. Yet Andy realized that learning to read was essential for taking his next steps forward in life.

One day, and as Andy’s pride came to fall like the local schoolmaster stepped forward to offer him the very instruction he needed.

Everyone, including every child, deserves to have just the right teacher step forward in the course of life. This may be a teacher who recognizes clearly the real but somehow hidden talents of a child, who struggles with reading well past the earliest grades of school, or whose love of the classroom falls decidedly short for reasons not yet fully known.

The number of teachers like this is large. I, for one, have welcomed their commitment to children in our extended family.

These are “really good teachers” who, to borrow words from Chicago’s Archbishop Blase J. Cupich, “delight in seeing the light of discovery go on in their students’ eyes,” and “never pass up the chance to make that happen.”

Teachers of all kinds are found in this world, and not only in schools. In fact, anyone can teach by serving as a role model for others—a walking, breathing sign of what matters most, and of the aspects of ordinary life that truly merit a person’s time, attention and energy.

Patience, respect, a capacity to listen and a consistent pattern of offering encouragement are among the marks of a good teacher. St. John Paul II once commented that “good teachers are needed to form the conscience of each person, later a hindrance. Let’s be clear, ‘ignorance’ refers to a lack of awareness of valuable knowledge, not an inability to learn it.

A person who is ignorant in certain important ways may, indeed, be profoundly intelligent. This truth challenges all those who “teach” today, whether in schools, the workplace, as parents or as volunteers.

Doesn’t this spiritual work of mercy highlight the truth of that, suggesting that the Year of Mercy can be viewed as a chance to recognize, honor and awaken the hidden gifts of others?

In its challenge, as well, is to allow others to nurture us in ways that support our continued growth as spouses, parents, good friends, co-workers and lovers of the poor and of our planet.

Pope Francis cautions, I should note, that academic degrees do not enroll the well educated in an elite group set apart from or above others.

Instead, he suggested during a July 2015 visit to Ecuador, one’s education is a mandate to serve by stepping forward with “greater responsibility in the face of today’s problems, the needs of the poor, concern for the environment.”

He wanted those who enjoy a good education’s benefits to ask themselves two questions: “What does this world need us for? Where is your brother?”

For Pope Francis, care for the poor is basic to fulfilling the demands of mercy. In the Year of Mercy, “we will be asked … if we have helped to overcome the ignorance in which millions of people live, especially children deprived of the necessary means to free them from the bonds of poverty,” the pope wrote in formally proclaiming this holy year (“Face of Mercy,” #15).

In his eyes, then, ignorance possesses a power to enslave. Doesn’t that make liberators of those who “instruct the ignorant”—liberators freeing others to pursue a fuller, happier life?

(David Gibson served on Catholic News Service's editorial staff for 37 years.)

Passing on knowledge, forming character are key parts of the Christian faith

By Daniel S. Mulhall

The spiritual work of mercy “to instruct the ignorant” is solidly grounded in the New Testament. It is seen clearly in the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus sent his disciples out to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20).

This command flows directly from Jesus’ life and ministry. For Jesus was known as a rabbi—one who taught people how to follow the Jewish faith. Throughout the New Testament, there are numerous passages where Jesus taught his disciples or the crowds of people that followed him.

Consider the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7, or his many parables. Jesus was known as a teacher, so it is no surprise that Jesus wanted his disciples to teach others.

This work of mercy is the reason why Catholics have invested so much time and energy in starting, staffing and supporting Catholic educational institutions that serve people from early childhood to the university levels.

By providing educational opportunities in schools and parishes, we are following Jesus’ example.

But the meaning of “instructing the ignorant” goes deeper than simply teaching one to know math, science or even religion. At the heart of this work is the understanding that education is transformational.

Education is about changing hearts and minds, forming a person’s character as well as sharing information and knowledge. While passing on knowledge and teaching people how to think are critical, this work of mercy begs for something more.

To understand this, consider first this passage from the Gospel of Luke: “And Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor before God and man” (Lk 2:52). This verse, which comes after the scene of a young Jesus speaking with teachers of the Jewish law in the temple in Jerusalem, makes the point that growth in wisdom and age are key developmental steps in one’s formation.

This passage from Luke is very similar to the passages about the young Samuel, the prophet who appears in the First Book of Samuel: “Young Samuel grew up in the service of the Lord” (1 Sm 2:21) and “the Lord was with him” (1 Sm 3:19).

Consider also the passage from the Second Letter of Peter: “Therefore, beloved, since you are forewarned, be on your guard not to be led into the error of the unprincipled and to fall from your own stability. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pt 3:17,18).

Here, Peter indicates that the key point of instructing the ignorant is to help them to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord.”

During this Holy Year of Mercy, look for ways that you can support Catholic education in some way. Pray for teachers and catechists. Make a donation to support Catholic schools or religious education.

But also look for ways to share your faith and understanding of the Gospel with those who do not understand. Do not be afraid to change someone’s life.

(Father Daniel Leary, pastor of St. Andrew Apostle Parish in Silver Spring, Md., gives a homily during a Mass at St. Matthew’s Cathedral in Washington on Jan. 22. In his last act before his ascension Mission and his Apostles to teach the faith to people in all nations. (CNS photo/Michael Haley, Catholic Standard))

Brent Fernandez, who teaches Catholic social teaching at Father Ryan High School in Nashville, Tenn., tends the school garden with some of his students on Aug. 12, 2015. Instructing the ignorant, one of the Church’s spiritual works of mercy, can happen in many contexts and be accomplished by anyone, not just trained teachers. (CNS photo/Theresa Laurence, Tennessee Register)
How will we RSVP to God's calls to accept and to extend mercy?

Our refrigerator door has become especially crowded lately, as Margaret, our 8-year-old daughter, has been asking to invite more than three friends to her birthday parties. Each invitation comes with a birthday card addressed to our family, and we are responsible for the cost of mailing them to her friends. Our family has been considering hosting a playdate for the children, and Margaret has been insistent on inviting her friends over for a birthday party. However, we are not sure how to handle the situation, as she has been asking us to invite more than the usual number of friends. We are concerned about the cost and the potential disruption to our daily routine. What do you think we should do?
Sunday Readings

Sunday, April 3, 2016

- Acts of the Apostles 3:12-16
- Revelation 1:5-11a, 12-13, 17-19
- John 20:19-31

Last week, the Church celebrated Easter with great hope and joy. This week, the Church begins to tell us what the resurrection of the Lord means to us here and now. It is about God’s loving mercy. We celebrate the Sunday of Divine Mercy in the Holy Year of Mercy.

This weekend’s first reading comes from the Acts of the Apostles as the case in almost every Mass of this season.

Important to understanding Christianity and the Church itself is realizing that Acts continues St. Luke’s Gospel. This fact is evident that apparent since for centuries biblical translators have inserted St. John’s Gospel between Luke’s Gospel and Acts, blurring the connection between Luke and Acts.

The link shows that the redemption secured by Jesus, his miracles and preaching did not end with his ascension. All of these realities associated with Jesus were continued by the Apostles in the context of the infant Church.

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Reflection

Two points in the readings support the theme of divine mercy. The first is the absolute love for the Lord, seen in the readings. God, through Jesus, always calls us to life in him.

The second point is that God’s call in our day and time, and in every age, comes to us through the Apostles. They were so much more than the Lord’s companions and most frequent students. They represented the Lord. They possessed the Lord’s authority and power after the ascension.

Majestic among all these powers was their ability to share God’s mercy through forgiving sins, an ability expressly represented the Lord. They possessed the Lord’s authority and power after the ascension.

Majestic among all these powers was their ability to share God’s mercy through forgiving sins, an ability expressly conferred upon them by Jesus.

We are not alone. Granted, as humans we are limited, no matter how impressive “progress” may be. The Lord comes to us with strength, knowledge and life. He lives! His mercy lives, as freshly now as ever.

We only have to turn to God honestly and humbly.†

Daily Readings

Monday, April 4

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

Tuesday, April 5

- St. Vincent Ferrer, priest
  - Acts 4:32-37
  - Psalm 93:1-2, 5
  - John 3:7b-15

Wednesday, April 6

- Acts 5:17-26
  - Psalm 34:2-9
  - John 3:16-21

Thursday, April 7

- St. John Baptist de la Salle, priest
  - Acts 5:27-33
  - Psalm 34:2, 9, 17-20
  - John 3:1-16

Question Corner/ Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Ordained ministers are ordinary ministers of holy Communion in the Church

During Lent, more people than usual tend daily Mass in our parish. We have two assigned priests. For some reason, when the pastor celebrates Mass, the associate does not concelebrate but sits in a pew with the congregation. Then, when it is time for Communion, an extraordinary minister of holy Communion helps the pastor distribute, and the associate walks up in the regular Communion line.

I always thought that members of the laity assisting in the distribution of Communion were supposed to be “extraordinary,” i.e., used only when ordained ministers were unavailable. The associate is healthy and very capable, so I am confused. (New York)

Let me say first that your parish is blessed to have two priests. Thus, the situation is reversed in many parishes: A single priest is scrambling to cover an entire slate of Masses.

As for the distribution of Communion, though, you are correct. Canon 910 of the Church’s Code of Canon Law states that the ordinary minister of Communion is a bishop, priest or deacon. And Canon 230 specifies that members of the laity may be asked to assist “when the need of the Church warrants it and ministers are lacking.”

The “General Instruction of the Roman Missal”—which provides norms for the celebration of the Eucharist—is even clearer: “In the distribution of Communion, the priest may be assisted by other priests who happen to be present. If such priests are not present and there is a truly large number of communicants, the priest may call upon ordinary ministers to assist him” (*1862*).

Our diocesan regulations require that a couple give a parish nine months’ notice prior to a marriage ceremony. Is this an ironclad Catholic rule? I am an 80-year-old widower, planning on marrying an 81-year-old widow. We don’t see the need for any premarital counseling, etc., since we have both been there before. (City of origin withheld)

No, it is not an ironclad and universal rule of the Church. In 2005, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops undertook a study of marriage preparation programs in the more than 100 dioceses around the country.

It found that most dioceses had a six-month guideline for the initial meeting with a priest before the wedding date itself. A few were shorter (three or four months), and several were longer (eight to 12 months).

The guideline was designed to accommodate not only the marriage preparation but also the collection of necessary paperwork (baptismal certificates, etc., and, in your own case, documentation from previous marriages and death certificates of your first spouses). Of course, the requirement for advance notice is a guideline, not a law, and it admits of reasonable exceptions in particular circumstances such as your own.

Why not simply talk to a local priest and see what he would recommend? There might still be a marriage preparation course, but it could well be abbreviated, and some dioceses offer a specific informational program for second marriages.

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

Benedict the Moor

1526 - 1589

feast - April 4

Born near Messina, on the Italian island of Sicily, Benedict was the son of African slaves. As their eldest son, he was given his freedom. Growing up, he was nicknamed “el moro” (“the holy Moor”) for his piety and good works. He became a hermit and then the community’s superior; but, after the pope ordered them to disband in 1562, Benedict became a Franciscan lay brother. He served as cook, but drew many visitors and supplicants with his reputation for holiness and miracles. Despite his illiteracy, Benedict was chosen as superior and also as novice master, before being allowed to return to his kitchen refuge. He is a patron saint of Palermo, Sicily, and of blacks in the United States.
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.


ZIEGLER, Albert, 92, St. Mary, New Albany, March 12.

Providence Sister Amata Dugan ministered for decades in education, senior housing in Indiana

Providence Sister Amata Dugan died on March 14 at Mother Therese Hall at St. Mary-of-the-Woods. She was 85. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on March 21 at the Church of the Immaculate Conception at the motherhouse. Burial followed at the sisters’ cemetery. Helen Therese Dugan was born on October 5, 1930, in Indianapolis. She grew up as a member of St. Anthony Parish and was a graduate of the former St. Mary Academy, both in Indianapolis. Sister Amata entered the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods on Feb. 2, 1950, and professed final vows on Aug. 15, 1957. She earned a bachelor’s degree at Mary-of-the-Woods College and a master’s degree at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind. During her 62 years as a member of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Amata ministered in education for 28 years in schools in California, Illinois and Indiana. She later served for 22 years as an administrative clerk and later manager at Maryvale Apartments, a senior housing facility adjacent to the motherhouse grounds, and then in various roles at the motherhouse. In 2014, she dedicated herself entirely to prayer. In the archdiocese, Sister Amata taught at St. Malachi School in Brownsburg from 1965-73. She also served as a chaplain at St. Mary-of-the-Woods. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Sisters of Providence, 1 Sisters of Providence Road, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN 47876. 

Spring flowers

Daffodils bring spring color to a lawn on March 21 in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)
WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (CNS) — The first U.S. presidential visit to Cuba in almost 90 years and the diplomatic dysfunction on display over human rights issues concerned the need for the Church to be a viable alternative and present to both the people, according to one observer.

“There is no question there are tremendous differences between both countries, and the normalization process will not move very slowly with the U.S. presidential election underway this year,” said Andy Gomez, retired assistant minister to the Hispanic Church in the Diocese of Miami and a long-time resident of Miami who traveled to Cuba last September and Cuban-American Studies.

Gomez, his wife and several hundred South Florida Catholics traveled to Cuba last September in support of the historic visit of Pope Francis to the island.

Gomez spoke to Catholic News Service, the official news agency of the Catholic Church in the United States, from his home in Arizona where he was to talk to college and university educators about the prospects of U.S. student travel programs to Cuba.

During an awkward news conference with President Barack Obama at Cuba’s Revolutionary Palace in Havana, Cuban President Raul Castro bristled at a reporter’s questions on the issue of political prisoners and human rights. Gomez, a Cuban exile, said in his remarks, Obama raised objections to arbitrary imprisonment of Cuban dissidents.

Gomez said that Cuba could be the best setting to reach American tourists for tourism business, and they will be very selective on what other foreign investments from America they will allow; law and business leaders here are telling me the risks are still great,” said Gomez.

Gomez thinks more parishes in Cuba could be the best setting to help affect change in Cuba, such a teaching catechism, discipline, civic values and things that in the long run will help families.

“Clearly, Raul felt fluttered and upset and was unprepared for opposition,” Gomez told CNS, noting that Castro retorted that Cuba and U.S. definitions of human rights are simply different.

“But wait a minute. Isn’t there an immense ignorance of human rights?” Gomez said, expressing frustration in the intractable situation.

“It is time for some of our leadership in the Catholic Church to take a stronger stand with the Cuban government and demand more; it is time to stop dancing around issues,” Gomez said, calling for an end to visa restrictions to encourage U.S. business to operate in Cuba. He said adding that recent openings for U.S. business to operate in Cuba are highly selective, and of limited value to the Cuban people and to U.S. business.

American hotel and cruise ship companies announced some new business arrangements with Cuba in President Obama’s historic three-day visit to Cuba. The president arrived in Havana on the evening of March 20.

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Easter attacks in Pakistan not first time Christians targeted

KARACHI, Pakistan (CNS)—The terrorist attack that killed more than 70 people in a Lahore park on Easter was not the first time that Christians in the Islamic country have been targeted, and observers say that, as things stand, it will not be the last time.

The Asian Church news portal ucanews.com said this is largely because discriminatory laws, the state’s patronage of militant groups, deep-rooted intolerance and chronic ignorance give rise to incidents of persecution in Pakistan, “making it a living hell for the minority Shia Muslims who, along with Christians, Hindus and Ahmadis, became the prime target of Sunni extremists.”

Several incidents occurred since the United States attacked Afghanistan in 2001. The dual fundamentalist Islamic regime of Afghanistan has many supporters across the border in Pakistan. Most Pakistanis view the United States and West European countries as Christian, and Muslim militants consider Pakistani Christians to be associated with those “Christian nations.”

Pakistan, carved from British India, was created in 1947 after Muslims of the Indian subcontinent called for a separate homeland. Although Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the nation’s founder, said Christians may belong to any religion, a resolution proclaiming that the future constitution of Pakistan would be modeled on the ideology and principles of Islam was kept as a preamble of the constitution.

In 1985, when it was made an integral part of the constitution, Pakistan became an Islamic republic, and the Council of Islamic Ideology and the Shariah (Islamic) court were established. Many Islamic laws were passed, including blasphemy laws and the Hudood Ordinance (Islamic criminal code), reported ucanews.com. Christian leaders have long campaigned against the misuse of blasphemy laws that have led to incidents of mob violence. The law mandates that anyone who “blasphemes” the Quran is to be handed a death sentence.

Shahbaz Bhatti, the federal minority affairs minister, was murdered in March 2011 by Islamist gunmen after he spoke out against Pakistan’s blasphemy laws.

In recent years, Christians have been targeted in terrorist attacks that left hundreds dead.

Two bomb blasts at churches in Lahore in March 2015 killed 14. A twin suicide bomb attack at a Peshawar church in 2013 left around 80 dead. In 2009, at least 40 houses and a church were burned by a mob in Gojra, with eight people burned alive.

In 2005, a mob claiming Christians had burned pages of the Quran forced hundreds of Christians to flee their homes in Faisalabad; churches and Christian schools were set on fire.

More than 95 percent of Pakistan’s 180 million people are Muslims. Less than 2 percent are Christians, Hindus and other religious minorities.

Catholic educators have long maintained that the textbooks used by students “bias” Muslims who do not make allowances for the teachings of religions other than Islam.

The Catholic Church, which operates more than 200 schools, has often criticized the syllabus for praising only Islamic personalities while presenting followers of other religions as infidels and depicting Christianity negatively.

Moreover, textbooks—even science texts—quote excessively from the Quran, ucanews.com reported. It said Church officials have raised the particular concern that minority students’ unfamiliarity with these texts could lead them to open to accusations by people exploring the country’s blasphemy laws.

Activists and members of the Christian community say around 5,000 Christians have fled Pakistan because of threats, persecution and lack of security.

Many of them have sought asylum in Thailand and Sri Lanka. Some representatives in the Christian community say there are 10,000 registered Pakistani asylum seekers between the two countries, ucanews.com reported.

Vatican: Pope Benedict is frail, but his mind remains ‘perfectly lucid’

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.

What was in the news on April 1, 1966? Centuries of state domination over religious seen ended, and Jesuit magazine calls for discussion on priestly celibacy

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Although retired Pope Benedict XVI is growing more frail, there are no particular concerns or worries regarding his health, a Vatican spokesman said.

Jesus Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, issued a statement on March 25 following an interview with Archishop Georg Ganswein, the retired pope’s personal secretary, in which the archbishop said Pope Benedict was slowly “fading.”

“Of course, years of age now are not as we would like to be in our young age. Pope Benedict still retains ‘his refined, subtle sense of mercy and justice,’ which makes us tremble in his sight,” he said.

“I expect that in the coming days, he may not raise any particular concerns,” he said.

Pope Francis greets retired Pope Benedict XVI prior to the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican in 2015. Although retired Pope Benedict is growing more frail, there are no particular concerns or worries regarding his health, a Vatican spokesman said. (CNS photo/flavio Brunetti, EPA)