Answer to a prayer

Couple’s devotion to St. John Paul II leads to unforgettable engagement

By John Shaughnessy

Every love story has a beginning, and this one begins with a prayer. It’s a prayer that Kara Gregg made long before she met Stephen Janssen—and long before Stephen finally discovered the perfect way to propose to her.

Now 28, Kara made the prayer shortly after she graduated with a nursing degree from Marian University in Indianapolis in 2011. Believing she had always been called to marriage, the oldest of eight children in her family started praying for “a happy and holy marriage” someday.

She also began praying for her future husband, even though she wasn’t in a relationship at the time. “I prayed for his strength, his purity, and for his goodness as a husband and a father,” says Kara, who grew up as a member of St. Nicholas Parish in Ripley County in the Batesville Deanery.

Yet four years passed without a hint of God answering Kara’s prayer. And on the evening when she initially met Stephen in May of 2015, her first impression was that there was no way that God was leading her to this guy.

The beginning of a friendship

At the time, both Kara and Stephen were nurses working the night shift at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. Because the number of people in Kara’s unit was low that night, she was assigned to help in the pediatric intensive care unit where Stephen worked.

During the shift, Kara asked Stephen a work-related question. She waited for an answer. Seconds passed and none came so she walked away, less than thrilled. “I remember texting my best friend saying, ‘I’ve never been able to talk to a guy like this before.’”

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Stephen felt the same way: “It has never felt that easy to talk to someone and share parts of my life as I did with her.”

That moment of miscommunication lingered into the next night for Kara when the nursing shift manager assigned Stephen and Kara to care for the same child. Yet as they worked together through the night, Kara had a change of heart.

“I remember laughing with him and the ease of the conversation,” she recalls. “I remember texting my best friend saying, ‘I’ve never been able to talk to a guy like this before.’”

Stephen felt the same way: “It has never felt that easy to talk to someone and share parts of my life as I did with her.”

Shortly after meeting Stephen, Kara went on a trip with a cousin to Rome where they were invited to a private Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica. During the Mass, she once again prayed for the intention of her future husband, including her longing for someone who shared the depth of her Catholic faith.

After the Mass, she asked the priest to pray for that same intention. As he did, he placed a zucchetto of St. John Paul II on her head, and he also added this intention, “for a happy and holy marriage.”

The opening Mass for the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) convention was celebrated on Sept. 8 at St. Peter’s Basilica. During the Mass, here was one in which the human being is firmly at the center, where all are included in economic, social life, and where creation is cherished and protected,” Cardinal Turkson said.

The Sept. 13 event, titled “The Economy according to Pope Francis,” was sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the embassies of Germany, the Netherlands and Austria to the Holy See.

In his speech, Cardinal Turkson highlighted the pope’s warnings on the “liquid economy,” or an economy judged by the ease with which assets can be converted into cash, and therefore focusing more on finance than on labor and the production of goods.

This type of economy, he said, is one that “refuses to put the human being at the center of economic life.”

“The economy of exclusion,” he said, is one that “invests in persons by creating jobs and providing training," is a solution that shifts the center of economic life.”

Mary is Mother of Mercy, witness to Jesus’ mercy, Archbishop Tobin tells NCCW attendees

By Victoria Arthur

Special to The Criterion

A gathering of hundreds of Catholic women in Indianapolis during the Holy Year of Mercy included, fittingly, a birthday celebration for the Mother of Mercy.

The opening Mass for the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) convention was celebrated on Sept. 8—the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, principal celebrant of the Mass, emphasized Mary’s key role in Divine Mercy, and praised the convention’s timely theme of “Catholic Women: Instruments of Mercy.”

“That year, Pope Francis invites us to turn our thoughts to mercy,” Archbishop Tobin told the more than 700 convention attendees from across the United States. “When he spoke of Mary in his letter that introduced this jubilee, he called her under one of her most ancient titles: Mother of Mercy. And he said that she will help us rediscover the joy of God’s tenderness. For her entire life was patterned after the great presence of mercy made flesh within her.

“Chosen to be the mother of the Son of God, Mary from the first moment of her existence was prepared to be part of the covenant between God and the human race,” the archbishop continued. “She treasured Divine Mercy in her heart in perfect harmony with her son, Jesus. The hymn of praise she sang at the threshold of her cousin Elizabeth’s home was dedicated to the mercy of God, which extends from generation to generation.”

See NCCW, page 7

Catechetical renewal

Read about it in our annual Religious Education Supplement, pages 9-12.
St. Teresa of Calcutta’s witness, life of faith inspire readers

(Editors’ note: In celebration of Mother Teresa’s canonization on Sept. 4, The Criterion is sharing stories from people who have met her and/or been inspired by her to serve people in need.)

By John Shaughnessy

Having lost five babies during different stages of being pregnant, Carol Heckman turned for help to a woman who had known darkness and suffering in her own life.

“I spent a lot of time praying to Mother Teresa to intercede for me and ask our Lord to provide for the safe delivery of my daughter,” recalls Heckman, a member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis.

Her prayers were answered on Feb. 3, 1999, when she gave birth to a girl—known darkness and suffering in her own life.

“Ever since, I have been praying to Mother Teresa for the health and safety of my baby, her siblings, Anna and John, and of all God’s children.”

Now the mother of three college students, Heckman watched the television coverage of Mother Teresa’s canonization with great joy.

“I thought back to the times and the ways that she influenced me, and the way I try to live my life. I was impressed enough by one famous quote attributed to her that I began my dear father’s eulogy with it: ‘Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.’

“There is little doubt that she lived those words every day of her adult life, as did my beloved father. Although I fail often, I strive to follow their example.”

‘She became my role model’

During her 17 years as a public health nurse for the Marion County Health Department, Cecelia Kiley gained inspiration from a picture of Mother Teresa that she had pinned to the wall of her cubicle office.

“Although I had never met Mother, her influence as a servant to the poor captured my attention,” recalls Kiley, a member of St. Elizabeth Seton Parish in Carmel, Ind., and Lafayette Diocese.

“I wanted to emulate this angel of mercy as a public health nurse. Out in the community, I saw poverty at its worst.

In many cases, it was even dangerous to enter a home. It was at these times that Mother Teresa inspired me to see Christ in those I was serving.

“Today, I feel honored and blessed that my special role model was recently canonized a saint.”

If you love her, let her go’

Cathy Sullivan’s surprising journey to entering the Catholic Church began in 1997 after she read the book, Mother Teresa: A Simple Path.

In fact, the then-member of the Methodist Church was so drawn to the story of Mother Teresa’s “love of God and acceptance of all people” that she read the book six times in a row.

The book also led the Batesville resident to an interest in learning more about the Franciscan sisters, who lived in the nearby community of Oldenburg.

Her interest in the Catholic faith grew even stronger when she taught physical education classes at St. Louis School in Batesville. Attending Mass and praying with the children led her to want more.

“I attended 6:30 a.m. Mass alone, sat in the back pew, and didn’t tell my husband at first because I didn’t think he would understand,” Sullivan recalls. “After attending Mass and crossing my arms for the blessing for six years, I couldn’t take not receiving holy Communion any longer.

“I wanted to have Communion every day, and I wanted to attend Mass every day, and the Catholic Church had what I wanted. And Mother Teresa and the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg influenced me by their lifestyle.”

Yet, she also didn’t want to go against her husband. Tom, who didn’t yet share her call to the Catholic Church.

Then came the influence of Father Daniel Mahan, who became the pastor of St. Louis Parish in 2002.

“I invited Father Mahan to our home after Mass, and he talked with Tom and me about my calling,” she says. “He told Tom that it would be a huge sacrifice when the Lord was calling me to the Catholic faith for me not to be able to enter. After my husband had a sleepless night, the next morning he said the Lord spoke to his heart and said, ‘If you love her, let her go.’ So two weeks later, I was set to enter the Church on Aug. 10, 2002.”

During those two weeks, Tom scheduled a meeting with Father Mahan at the rectory.

“Tom told Father Mahan that he could not handle us worshipping in separate churches,” she says. “He asked Father Mahan to allow him to surprise me and enter the Church with me.

‘Long story short, Tom surprised me, and we took the vows on that morning. Afterwards, I was fixed on the eyes of my husband for two weeks in awe of what he did for us. He attended RCIA [Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults] in the fall, and I had been given instruction from the Sisters of St. Francis for six years.’

The journey of their Catholic faith continues. So does her appreciation of the woman who set her on this faith journey.

‘St. Teresa of Calcutta has my allegiance. I hope to meet her face to face in eternity one day. Blessings to her powerful witness.”’

Grant applications for funds from three endowments are due by Oct. 31

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For more information, log onto www.archindy.org/finance/end.html or contact Stacy Harris in the finance office at sharris@archindy.org, 317-236-9836, ext. 1535, or 317-236-1535.
White Mass for Catholic medical professionals is set for Sept. 29

The St. Raphael Guild of the Catholic Medical Association will host its annual White Mass for Catholic medical professionals in the archdiocese and their families at 6 p.m. on Sept. 29 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis.

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin speaks on Aug. 31 to more than 300 attendees of the Southside Catholic Business Professionals’ ninth annual “Inspirational Insights,” held at the Primo Banquet Hall and Conference Center in Indianapolis. (Photos by Sean Gallagher)

Jennifer Trapuzzano speaks on Aug. 31 about finding forgiveness and joy in times of trial during the Southside Catholic Business Professionals’ ninth annual “Inspirational Insights,” held at the Primo Banquet Hall and Conference Center in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Speakers share how to find forgiveness, joy amid sorrow

By Sean Gallagher

Few people have walked the path of faith that Jennifer Trapuzzano has during the past two years.

She was married to her faith-filled husband Nathan for less than a year, and was a month away from giving birth to their first child when he was gunned down on April 1, 2014, while on an early morning walk in their Indianapolis neighborhood.

Despite the uniquely tragic nature of her experiences, Trapuzzano has drawn a message of mercy and forgiveness from it that is relevant for people who face more ordinary crosses in their daily lives.

More than 300 people heard her story on Aug. 31 at the ninth annual “Inspirational Insights” hosted by the Southside Catholic Business Professionals (SCBP) at the Primo Banquet Hall and Conference Center in Indianapolis.

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, another speaker at the event, reflected on the lives of three people he has known to offer perspectives on finding joy amid pain.

The SCBP also honored the Benedictine sisters of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove as the “Catholic Person of the Year” for their many decades of ministry in the archdiocese, especially in Catholic education.

“It is a gift to us to have served on the south side especially, and in all of the archdiocese,” said Benedictine Sister Jennifer Mechtild-Horner, prioress of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove as the “Catholic Person of the Year” for their many decades of ministry in the archdiocese, especially in Catholic education.

“As we have served in the schools and all around the churches and hospitals in the area, we have been receiving Christ in you. And so we thank you for being with us and helping us serve.”

“Inspirational Insights” is also a fundraising event through which the SCBP has helped to support Catholic schools and charitable agencies across Indianapolis.

Trapuzzano noted how the Catholic education she received as a child helped form her to face her difficult challenges later in life.

“This Catholic institutional life, while I did not know it at the time, was the base for where my faith is today,” she said. “I want to take a moment now to thank you all today for coming together to support these institutions. Attending a Catholic elementary school was certainly the foundation to my faith today, so thank you all.”

“Choosing to forgive”

In the immediate aftermath of Nathan’s murder, Trapuzzano said she had times of devastation and deep prayer.

“The days and weeks that followed left me tired with little energy to do much else than pray and contemplate heaven and my path to seeing Nate again,” she said. “I relied on the backbone that was my faith and prayed constantly. My tongue felt too tired, my thoughts too incoherent to speak much those first few days, but I was able to pray the Hail Mary and the Our Father over and over again.

“Jesus calls us all to follow him,” she said. “And sometimes even in the really hard, difficult days, he asks the hardest questions. But once you’ve experienced such sorrow and pain, you find it easier to unite yourself with his pain on the cross, and you find it easier to say yes to him, despite your inadequacies.

That faith was put to the test later when she was invited to speak about the effect of her husband’s murder at the sentencing hearing of his killer, Simeon Adams, who was 16 at the time of the shooting.

She said she looked at it as “the biggest opportunity I could have to truly be a witness to Jesus Christ.”

“So the one chance I had to speak to my husband’s murderer, I told him that I forgave him. Because in my heart I knew, I could not pray the ‘Our Father’ and speak the words ‘to forgive those who trespass against us’ in good conscience if I refused to do so myself. How could I call myself Christian, if I did not follow in Christ’s basic tenets of love and mercy?” —Jennifer Trapuzzano

Jennifer Trapuzzano speaks on Aug. 31 about finding forgiveness and joy in times of trial during the Southside Catholic Business Professionals’ ninth annual “Inspirational Insights,” held at the Primo Banquet Hall and Conference Center in Indianapolis. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

Benedictine Sister Jennifer Mechtild-Horner, prioress of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, speaks on behalf of the sisters of her community after they received the Southside Catholic Business Professionals’ Catholic Persons of the Year Award on Aug. 31 at the organization’s ninth annual “Inspirational Insights.”

The act of forgiving her husband’s murderer was a moment of healing for Trapuzzano.

“By choosing to forgive, I allowed my heart to let God in even more, to bring him to Simeon who needs him more than anyone I have ever met, and to find even more grace than I could ever imagine,” she said. “I cannot put into words how much of a release it is to not feel such hatred, but to rather feel pity and hope. It is an incredible feeling to not be trapped by anger. And all of that came down to a decision I had to make for myself, a ‘yes’ I had to say to our Lord.”

Trapuzzano acknowledged that making a choice to forgive can be difficult and that she took solace in knowing that Jesus, dying on the cross, didn’t forgive his persecutors personally but asked his heavenly Father to forgive them.

“If you are having trouble with forgiveness, then ask the Father to do the forgiving for you,” she said. “On the days I could not bear to even think the words, I told the Lord to say them for me. If you match your will with the Father’s, it will bring great healing to you. Forgiveness is a process, but it is what we need. It is the healing that we need. And that mercy and compassion is there.”

“Christian joy does not die when sorrows abound”

In his remarks, Archbishop Tobin explored the path of finding joy amidst the pain of the cross by recalling three people he has known who “taught me something about the mystery of the cross, and how God will not allow suffering and death to have the final word.”

One was a religious sister who was confined to a hospital bed for decades while suffering from debilitating rheumatoid arthritis.

Another was a priest who was determined to keep serving God’s people despite being partially paralyzed by a stroke.

And the last was his father, who lost a leg while serving in the U.S. Army during World War II.

“They taught me … that it is in embracing that cross and following in service to others that you’ll find real joy,” Archbishop Tobin said.

The challenge of such a lesson, though, is that feelings like joy cannot be produced simply by choosing to feel them.

“If God commands these certain emotions of us and we can’t make them happen on our own, then we have to pray, ‘If you’re going to command me to feel these things, grant that you would give them to me when you command them.’” said Archbishop Tobin, paraphrasing a prayer of St. Augustine.

Ultimately, he said, it is the Holy Spirit that brings the believer to joy when experiencing sorrow.

“Feelings are movements of the soul,” Archbishop Tobin said. “And they’re produced simply by us as Christians. They’re produced by the Holy Spirit.

“The Holy Spirit produces joy in us, not magically without my mind being engaged, but by causing me to see the glory and the beauty of Jesus Christ.”

He concluded his reflection by noting that “Christian joy does not die when sorrows abound.”

“Joy and sorrow in the Christian life are not sequential. They are simultaneous,” Archbishop Tobin said. “We’re called to rejoice always and yet sorrow breaks over our lives like waves. … Joy and grief can often exist in the same human heart. That’s the nature of the Christian life.”

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The St. Raphael Guild of the Catholic Medical Association will host its annual White Mass for Catholic medical professionals in the archdiocese and their families at 6 p.m. on Sept. 29 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis.

Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin is the scheduled principal celebrant of the Mass. A dinner and reception will take place after the Mass at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, 1400 N. Meridian St., in Indianapolis.

Tickets for the dinner and reception are $15 for regular admission and $5 for medical students. Tickets can be purchased by sending an e-mail to info@indycathmed.org. A link to purchase them online can also be found at indycathmed.org.

The guild is a chapter in the archdiocese of the Catholic Medical Association that, according to the guild’s website, “informs, organizes, and inspires its members, in steadfast fidelity to the teachings of the Catholic Church, to uphold the principles of the Catholic faith in the science and practice of medicine.”
The campaign to repeal the Hyde Amendment

The Hyde Amendment is 40 years old this year. It undoubtedly has saved many lives. But the Democratic Party, quite logically, wants to repeal it, against the wishes of pro-life Democrats and almost everyone else.

Named for the late Rep. Henry Hyde of Illinois, who was a strong pro-life congressman, the amendment had wide bipartisan support when it passed in 1976 because neither party thought that taxpayers should be forced to pay for abortions. How times have changed!

The Hyde Amendment says, “None of the funds appropriated by this title shall be available to pay for an abortion, except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term, or in the case of rape or incest.”

For 40 years, the amendment has been attached to every annual budget and spending bills passed by Congress. The Guttmacher Institute, the research arm of Planned Parenthood, has estimated that one out of four babies born to mothers on Medicaid and other public assistance programs were not for the Hyde Amendment.

At this summer’s Democratic National Convention, pro-abortion delegates managed to pass the party’s platform with this language: “We will continue to oppose—and seek to overturn—federal and state laws and policies that impede a woman’s access to abortion, including by repealing the Hyde Amendment.”

Despite the efforts of pro-life Democrats, this made the Democratic Party more clearly the party of abortion. Its leaders believe that it will win the support of women who they think, support legalized abortion and would like to have the government pay for them. That doesn’t seem to be true, though. In an article reporting on the Democrats’ plans to repeal the Hyde Amendment, Our Sunday Visitor included the results of a survey conducted in July by the Marist Institute for Public Opinion for the Knights of Columbus. It showed that 62 percent of all Americans strongly oppose taxes funded abortion.

The survey results showed that tax-funded abortion is opposed by 65 percent of African-Americans, 61 percent of Latinos, 84 percent of Republicans, 61 percent of independents, and 44 percent of Democrats. According to Democrats for Life, by the way, one-third of Democrats, or about 23 million voters, are pro-life.

The Democratic nominees for president and vice president, Hillary Clinton and Tim Kaine, both declared their support for the party’s push to repeal the Hyde Amendment. Clinton has long supported abortion rights before organizations like Planned Parenthood, and is known for her remark at the World Summit of Women in 2015 that “deep-seated cultural codes, religious beliefs and structural biases have to be changed.”

Kaine, a Catholic, meanwhile, has supported the Hyde Amendment in the past. In an interview when the Democratic platform was passed and he became Clinton’s running mate.

We admit that we do not expect the Hyde Amendment to be repealed. That would require an act of Congress, and it is almost impossible now that the Republican party will ever control Congress. The staff members will win control of the House of Representatives. But just the fact that this got into the Democratic platform demonstrates how far our society has fallen in this post-Christian world.

Abortion proponents have been successful in convincing Americans that abortion is just a normal part of women’s health care, something that women should do if they happen to become pregnant at an inconvenient time. At the Democratic convention, delegates actually cheered when Hugs Hayes, president of NARAL, Pro-Choice America, bragged that she had aborted her child for that reason. Women are being encouraged to be proud, not ashamed, of killing their unborn child, as demonstrated by the #ShoutYourAbortion campaign.

All this is being reported shortly after the Supreme Court’s decision in Roe v. Wade, which made abortion legal.

Making Sense of Bioethics

Leaving our values at the door of a strip club

I was recently talking to a Massachusetts family with a 21-year-old son on the autism spectrum. Because of the Asperger syndrome and obsessive compulsive disorder that have affected him since childhood, he is only able to understand and behave in a limited fashion.

Soon they saw, however, that there were issues: the residents had unlimited access to TV access in their private rooms; there seemed to be a high worker turnover; and some of the staff were not only heavy smokers, but used foul language.

Things took an unexpected turn as Jimmy prepared to celebrate his 21st birthday. Others at the group home started pushing him to visit the strip club in a nearby town now that he was “going to be an adult.”

Always guileless and never hesitant to try something new, whatever was set on Jimmy’s mind, Jimmy blurted out to his grandmother that the group home staff were going to drive him to the strip club the next weekend to the Foxy Lady Club.

A series of phone calls ensued. When the grandmother spoke with a staff member at the home, she was informed there was nothing she could do to prevent it, that the group home routinely transported its residents to the strip club not only for their residents, but for residents of the other group homes operated by the same company in nearby towns.

The staff member said that Jimmy was now 21, and the group home had to let him do what he wanted. A second phone call to the staff supervisor resulted in the same song and dance. The group home had no choice but to cater to its wishes. He was within his legal rights now that he was 21. They would drive Jimmy to the strip club, etc.

Finally, the grandmother called the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services, which had contracted with the company running the group home, and spoke to the woman in charge of his case. She noted that Jimmy was not only within his legal rights, but it was, she asserted, a matter of basic human rights to allow him go to the strip club.

His grandmother replied it would be a failure to care for persons with mental disabilities if caretakers facilitated sexually-addictive practices, which such persons were prone to engage in anyway, often with negative consequences of self-harm and masturbatory behaviors, and this might set them up for a trip back to the mental health system.

When she continued to protest that visiting such a club was not a good or moral idea, the staff member reportedly replied, “Well, if you’re concerned about ‘values,’ I leave my values at the door every time I go to work in order to get my job done.”

Cases like Jimmy’s serve as a disappointing reminder of how low the bar has come to be set in certain segments of our society. The misappropriation of public tax money by state agencies to subsidize damaging behaviors in a vulnerable patient population is also regrettable and fundamentally unjust.

I suggest that the attitude of leaving lecherously on the bodies of naked women is a “basic human right” is itself a profound perversion, and represents a lamentable instance of outright moral bankruptcy.

Most likely the striking element of Jimmy’s telling is the remarkably well-honed ability of some who serve in positions of authority and leadership—while professing to be “good Christians” and therefore “religious” people—to jettison their values and beliefs the moment they are called upon to make decisions and defend them to the right.

Because individuals like Jimmy are consistently unable to make good decisions on their own, it goes without saying that they are requiring a guardian to attend to their interests and protect them.

Yet legal guardians, like Jimmy’s grandmother, are finding themselves in the unsavory position of being ignored on certain issues by those entrusted with the care of institutionalized residents, apparently determined to bypass the guardian’s will whenever specific sexual agendas or views about “rights” need to be duly imposed.

Good parents never drive their children to strip clubs. Neither should any institution entrusted with a protective parental role.

On the contrary, such institutions should erect appropriate boundaries and limits on harmful behaviors, so their residents can grow and flourish, contribute positively to society, and perhaps one day become good and mature moral agents themselves.

(†Fother Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D, earned his doctorate in neuroscience at Yale University and did post-doctoral work at Harvard University. He is a proponent of the Defense of Fall River, Mass., and serves as director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org)
Difficult moral choices cannot be avoided, must be addressed

“Catholics often face difficult choices about how to vote. This why it is so important to vote according to a well-formed conscience that perceives the proper relationship among moral goods. A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who favors a policy promoting an intrinsically evil act, such as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, deliberately subjecting workers or the poor to subhuman living conditions, redefining marriage in ways that violate its essential meaning, or racist behavior; if the voter’s intent is to support that position. In such cases, a Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in grave evil. At the same time, a voter should not use a candidate’s opposition to an intrinsic evil to justify indifference or inattention to other important moral issues involving human life and dignity.” (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Forming Conscience for Faithful Citizenship.”) (#34.)

We Catholics who are citizens of the United States of America are in a tough spot when it comes to making choices on Election Day. Each of us faces the decision of who to take a stand for, who to vote for, who to support in the ballot box. It is the responsibility of every Catholic to call into action our faith community’s shared responsibility to be the Church, to live a faith that transforms lives and society for the common good.

L
os católicos que somos también ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos nos encontramos en una situación difícil a la hora de tomar decisiones en el día de las elecciones. La postura de nuestra Iglesia es muy clara: la persona que vota por un candidato o partido político que apoya o que se opone a la promoción de actos intrínsecamente malos, tales como el aborto provocado, la eutanasia, el suicidio asistido, el trato desigual de los trabajadores (lo que abarca a inmigrantes y refugiados), la redefinición del matrimonio, el racismo u otros actos inmorales, sería culpable de “cooperar formalmente con un mal grave.” ¿Qué debe hacer el elector? ¿Quedarnos en casa el día de las elecciones? ¿Escribir “ninguno de los anteriores”? Se nos plantea un dilema serio. Ningún candidato al gobierno representa a la perfección las posturas de la Iglesia católica. Ningún partido político ha redactado una plataforma que sea totalmente coherente con nuestra perspectiva sobre asuntos morales y justicia social. Y sin embargo, nuestro Papa y nuestros obispos nos exhortan con vehemencia a que participemos, que ejerzamos el derecho (y la responsabilidad) otorgada por Dios de elegir líderes y de respaldar políticas que sean moralmente responsables y que promuevan el bien común. ¿Cómo podemos lograr esto? He aquí lo que dicen los obispos de los Estados Unidos, en Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles (#34).

Las decisiones morales difíciles son ineludibles, deben afrontarse.

“Los católicos a menudo afrontan decisiones difíciles sobre cómo votar. Es por esto que es tan importante votar de acuerdo con una conciencia bien formada que perciba la relación apropiada que existe entre los bienes morales. Un católico no puede votar por un candidato que toma una posición a favor de algo intrínsecamente malo, como el aborto provocado, la eutanasia, el suicidio asistido, el sometimiento deliberado de los trabajadores o los pobres a condiciones de vida infrahumanas, la redefinición del matrimonio en formas que violan su significado esencial, o comportamientos racistas, si la intención del votante es apoyar tal posición. En tales casos un católico sería culpable de cooperar formalmente con un mal grave. Pero al mismo tiempo, un votante no debería usar la oposición a un mal intrínsecamente grave para influir en la elección de un candidato que pueda justificar su indiferencia o despreocupación hacia otras cuestiones morales importantes que atañen a la vida y dignidad humanas.” (Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos, “Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles.”) (#34).

Morally grave reasons” is the standard set by the U.S. bishops for voting for candidates or policies that are clearly contrary to Church teaching on matters that are intrinsically evil. The bishops continue:

“When all candidates hold a position that promotes an intrinsically evil act, the conscientious voter faces a dilemma. The voter may decide to take the extraordinary step of not voting for any candidate or, after careful deliberation, may decide to vote for the candidate deemed less likely to advance such a moral evil. Informed and morally responsible candidates should be bringing their platform forward in a way that is truly good and, for those voters, brings about a clearer conscience.” (#36).

A similar dilemma arises when a candidate promotes one intrinsically evil act (such as abortion) while his or her opponent appears to reject this evil while actively promoting another intrinsically evil act (such as deliberately subjecting workers or the poor to subhuman living conditions). The bishops address these moral dilemmas as follows:

“Forming decisions, these decisions are essential for Catholics to be guided by a well-formed conscience that recognizes that all issues do not carry the same moral weight and that the moral obligation to oppose policies promoting intrinsically evil acts has a special claim on our consciences and our actions. These decisions should take into account a candidate’s commitment, characters, integrity, and ability to influence a given issue. In the end, this is a decision to be made by each Catholic guided by a conscience formed by Catholic moral teaching” (#37). In the end, each of us must decide. It would be easier (more comfortable) if the Church would tell us who (or what) to vote for or against. But that is not the Church’s role, and Catholics would be among the first to cry “Foul!” if the Church inserted itself into the political process in an inappropriate way.

What is the role of the Church? To proclaim the Gospel, to call attention to intrinsic moral evils, to urge all people of good will to defend human life above all, and to invite Catholics to accept our role as missionary disciples sent to bring our incarnate Lord to the “peripheries,” the ends of the Earth.

The moral dilemmas we face are not an inevitable result of our passive inactivity. We are called to choose—like it or not—and through our difficult choices to defend life and promote the common good.

“Cuando todos los candidatos tienen una posición que favorece un mal intrínsecamente grave, el votante consciente enfrenta un dilema. El votante puede decidir tomar el extraordinario paso de no votar por ningún candidato o, tras deliberar cuidadosamente, puede decidir votar por el candidato que piense que sea quien probablemente menos promueva tal posición moralmente defectuosa y que sea quien probablemente más agro otros bienes humanos auténticos” (#36).

Un dilema parecido surge cuando un candidato promueve un acto intrínsecamente malo (como por ejemplo el aborto provocado) en tanto que su oponente aparente rechazar este mal y al mismo tiempo promueva otro acto intrínsecamente malo (como por ejemplo, someter deliberadamente a los trabajadores o a los pobres a condiciones de vida infrahumanas). Los obispos abordan estos dilemas morales de la siguiente forma:

“Al tomar estas decisiones, es esencial que los católicos tengan en cuenta que cuando hay una conciencia bien formada que reconoce que todas las cuestiones no tienen el mismo peso moral y que la obligación de oponerse a actos intrínsecamente malos tiene una relevancia especial en nuestra conciencia y acciones. Estas decisiones deben llevar en cuenta los compromisos, el carácter, la integridad y la habilidad que tiene un candidato a frente a los dos malos. Finalmente, estas decisiones son decisiones que cada candidato debe tomar guiado por una conciencia formada por la doctrina moral de la Iglesia” (#37).

Al final, cada uno de nosotros debe decidir. Sería mucho más fácil (más cómodo) si la Iglesia nos dijera por quién votar o no. Pero esa no es la función de la Iglesia y los católicos deberíamos ser los primeros en reclamar “¡falta!” si nuestro Papa, los obispos o los sacerdotes se inmiscuyen inapropiadamente en el proceso político.

¿Cuál es la función de la Iglesia? Proclamar el evangelio, atraer la atención hacia los males morales intrínsecos, exhortar a las personas de buena voluntad a que defendan la vida humana por encima de todo e invitar a los católicos a aceptar el papel que nos corresponde como discípulos misioneros enviados para llevar al Señor encarnado a las “periferias,” hasta los confines de la tierra.

Los dilemas morales que enfrentamos no son una excusa para la inactividad pasiva. Estamos llamados a elegir, nos guste o no, a través de nuestras difíciles decisiones, estar en la vida y a promover el bien común. Translated by: Daniela Guajiná

Rejoice in the Lord
Alégrese en el Señor

The Criterion, Friday, September 16, 2016
Page 5

Archbishop/Arzobispo Joseph W. Tobin
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Events Calendar</th>
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| **September 21**  
St. Mary of the Assumption Parish “Italian Dinner” at Persimmon Festival. Main St., Mitchell, 11 a.m. until food runs out. Information: 812-849-3570. |
| **September 24**  
| **October 2**  
St. John Paul II Parish, St. Joseph Campus, 2605 St. Joe Road, Sellersburg. Serra Club Dinner Meeting, 5 p.m. and Shoot and Fall Festival, 11 a.m.—4 p.m., chicken dinners with all the fixings, beer and wine, food and drink carried-out available, boots, raffles, quilts, fire ring, Information: 812-246-5322. Holy Family Parish, 307 Pearl St., Oldenburg Fall Festival, 10 a.m.—6 p.m., chicken and roast beef dinner 11 a.m.—4 p.m., money raffle, quilt raffle, door prizes, silent auction, country store, games for adults and kids. Information: 812-934-3013, option 2. |
| **October 7-9**  
Diocese, on Oct. 7-9. Retreats and Programs | For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retreats. |
| Women of the Church conference registration deadline is Sept. 26  
“A Women of the Church” conference will be held at Immaculate Conception Church, 802 E. 106th St., in Indianapolis, Ind., in the Evansville Diocese, on Oct. 7-9. The presenters are Catholic Relief Services president and CEO Carolyn Woo; director of the Cusbara Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame Kathleen Sowards Cummins; and University of Notre Dame professor of theology Dominican Sister Mary Catherine Hilbert. The Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin and Bishop Charles Thompson of Evansville, Ind., will also participate in the program. The breakout sessions on Saturday will feature the topics of leadership formation, vocational discernment, spirituality, Catholic health care, youth ministry, the Benedictine charism and cultivating leaders for a multicultural Church. The conference is designed for both women and men in the Church, including professional lay ecclesial workers, scholars, teachers, youth and campus ministers, parish leaders and volunteers, health care providers and other lay ministers and laity discerning a call. It is hosted by Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in St. Meinrad and the Sisters of Saint Benedict of Ferdinand. The registration is due Sept. 26. Registration, lodging costs and other information is available by logging onto www.womenofthechurch.org, e-mailing info@womenofthechurch.org or by calling 812-367-1411. |

Marian University offers three-part series on refugees and migration  
The Marian University Richard G. Lugar Frances Center for Global Studies Speaker Series will offer a three-part series of talks on refugees and migration at the Lugar Center for Global Studies, Science Building, Lecture Hall 1, 3200 Cold Spring Road, in Indianapolis, at 7 p.m. on Sept. 19, Oct. 2, and Nov. 16, plus a special talk by former Indiana Sen. Richard Lugar on Dec. 4, to students and the public. Speakers and topics are as follows:  
**Sep 28**: Catholic Relief Services program manager Jennifer Atwell “Conflict and Displacement: Catholic Relief Services’ Emergency Response in Iraq and Turkey.”  
**Oct 20**: German constitutional law professor Herbert Quelle, “The Refugee Crisis in Europe and its Impact on the European Union.”  

Two-night St. Maurice Parish mission for cathoic actor Frank Runyeon  
A parish mission featuring Catholic actor Frank Runyeon will be held at St. Maurice Church, 8477 N. Harrison St., in Indianapolis, 7 p.m. on Sept. 19-20. Runyeon will give dramatic presentations of stories from St. Luke’s Gospel on Sunday night and Mark’s Gospel on Monday night. Runyeon will take a humorous but also deeply challenging look at the story we are actually living, the passions and struggles we face daily as Americans to live lives of real joy in the middle of a media-centered culture. Runyeon starred for seven years as Steve Andropoulos on “As the World Turns.” He appeared for four years as Father Michael Donnelly on the Emmy award-winning “Santa Barbara,” and as tycoon Simon Romero on “General Hospital.” He has also guest starred on many television shows, in movies, on stage and on radio. At one point, Runyeon considered becoming a priest. He has a bachelor’s degree in religion from Princeton University and a master’s degree from Yale Divinity School and General and Theological Studies at the University of Ghent, Belgium. He has also given talks and parish missions. There is no charge for the mission, although freewill donations will be accepted. For more information, call 812-498-7512 or e-mail hudstedmaurie@gmail.com. |
Archbishop Kurtz encourages NCCW members to show, receive mercy

By Sean Gallagher

At the Sept. 10 closing Mass of the annual convention of the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW)—whose theme was “Catholic Women: Instruments of Mercy”—Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., reflected in his homily on an iconic image of mercy, the recently canonized St. Teresa of Calcutta.

The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops recalled an encounter he had with St. Teresa in 1976 when he was a priest of the Diocese of Allentown, Pa., and heard the founder of the Missionaries of Charity give a speech.

“At the end of it, a man sitting in the front row of her audience told St. Teresa that he wanted to return to Calcutta to work with her. ‘I’ll never forget what she said in reply,’ Archbishop Kurtz said. ‘Sir, the person that Christ wants you to serve is already at your doorstep.’ I think she was talking, first of all about the way we treat our family. Right?

“Sometimes, it’s easy to forget that Christ has put at our doorstep certain people in our life to serve. That is the gift that St. Teresa of Calcutta talked about.

“The convention, the 96th one in the nearly century-long history of the NCCW, was held on Sept. 7-10 at the Downtown Marriott in Indianapolis. In his homily, Archbishop Kurtz praised the members of the NCCW for seeking to perform 1 million works of mercy during the Church’s Holy Year of Mercy. But in light of the Mass’ Gospel reading, which recounted the parable of the Prodigal Son, he reminded them both of the power of the mercy they can show to others and their need to experience mercy themselves.

“It’s people seeing the good that you do and the women you are so that they can give glory to God . . . .”

Archbishop Kurtz said, “We have the privilege of being companions with the Lord Jesus and ambassadors who are witnesses to the risen Lord. And can only happen when we come to the Lord with humility, ask forgiveness for the sins we’ve committed and trust that God’s grace will come alive in our hearts.”

In his closing remarks at the Mass, Archbishop Kurtz thanked the members of the NCCW for the good they do in the Church and in broader society.

“I want to thank you for your leadership and your witness in the various parishes and dioceses in which you are involved throughout the United States,” he said. “The role and leadership of women within our Church and within our society is something that is essential to the life and well-being of our Church and of society. And so I thank you for that.”

After the Mass, NCCW member Sharon O’Brien, director of the Catholics for Family Peace Education and Research Initiative at The Catholic University of America in Washington, spoke of how attending the convention was a boost for her life of faith.

“Connecting with a thousand other Catholic women makes you feel energized about your faith,” she said. “We learn so much from each other. It’s absolutely amazing what women in other dioceses are doing.”

She also said the convention was a way to help all the members focus more on being merciful in their daily lives.

“It’s an opportunity to demonstrate that an encounter with others is an act of mercy,” O’Brien said. “We’re called as women of faith and disciples of Christ to encounter each other. Coming here is a reinforcement of that.”

(For more information on the National Council of Catholic Women, visit nccw.org.)

Kim Padan of Danville, Ill., sings during the Sept. 10 closing Mass of the National Council of Catholic Women convention held at the Downtown Marriott in Indianapolis. Some 700 women from across the country attended the convention of the organization that was founded in 1920. (Photo by Sean Gallagher)

St. Barnabas parishioners Teresa Granda, left, and Francesca LaRosa provide music for the opening liturgy at the National Council of Catholic Women convention on Sept. 8. LaRosa is the parish’s director of music. (Photo by Victoria Arthur)
Prayer must be at heart of uniting communities, priest says

By Mike Krinks

The gathering included Scripture, music, a recitation of a Litany of Saints, intercessions, and a litany for healing.

Father Douglas Hunter, associate pastor of St. Pius X Parish and chaplain coordinator at Bishop Chatard High School, both in Indianapolis, delivered a homily.

But “a call to prayer and action for peace and unity” was at the heart of the message approximately 50 people heard on Sept. 9 at St. Andrew the Apostle Church in Indianapolis.

The event was held in conjunction with the nationwide celebration of a Day of Prayer for Peace in Our Communities called for by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in July to raise awareness of violence and racism within communities and empower people to do the work needed to restore racial harmony.

As a former law enforcement officer at Perry Meridian High School in Indianapolis, Father Hunter has witnessed firsthand the challenges many young people face today.

“We as a loving, Christian community, can provide the foundation of support for them,” he said in his homily.

Our faith in Scripture and the sacraments is not meant to be compartmentalized, Father Hunter continued.

“God did not give us the Eucharist and his word for ourselves,” he noted. “He gave it for everyone.”

“We are the vessels that go out and make a difference within the world.”

Parents must stop placing the responsibility of their children on other people, and take that responsibility back on themselves, Father Hunter said.

Many children, he added, are looking for adults to take the lead in helping nurture their lives of faith.

“To our young people, you can invite them back. All they really want is an invitation,” he said.

When it comes to faith, “hold them accountable. Hold yourselves accountable,” Father Hunter said. “I hold myself accountable in prayer each and every single day, and I hope all of you do, too.”

“But I cannot pray for the world by myself. We are a Christian community. We’ve got to pray together. No matter what is taking place in our lives, we have got to pray.”

The day chosen for nationwide prayer was the feast of St. Peter Claver, the Spanish Jesuit priest and missionary who ministered to slaves for 40 years in Colombia and became the patron saint of slaves and ministry to African-Americans.

He is said to have personally baptized about 300,000 slaves.

Pearlette Springer, coordinator of Black Catholic Ministry in the archdiocese, reflecting on Father Douglas Hunter’s homily, said, “I like the way he ended it, by saying, ‘Do not be afraid, go out and proclaim the Good News,’ because that is what we are called to do.”

—Pearlette Springer, coordinator of Black Catholic Ministry in the archdiocese, reflecting on Father Douglas Hunter’s homily

What was in the news on September 16, 1966? The ICC is formed, and pope warns priests about ‘doubt, anxiety’ after council

By Brandon 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 September 16, 1966, issue of The Criterion:

• Expect 664 students at St. Mary-of-Woods
• Priest-scientist role emphasized
• St. Joseph Sisters to try out variety of urban ills
• Archbishop Gabriel enroute to Rome for abbatial parley
• Catholic Social Services adds four to its staff
• Urges new catechism based on religious garb
• Compulsory Mass attendance by students dropped
• Restriction put on Polish priests
• Priests-scientist role emphasized
• theologian supports new penance views
• Group asks Canon Law revision to permit ordination of women
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• Group asks Canon Law revision to permit ordination of women
• Archbishop Gabriel enroute to Rome for abbatial parley
• Catholic Social Services adds four to its staff
• Head of Anglicans predicts one church
• Asks psychological testing of students for the priesthood

Read all of these stories from our September 16, 1966, issue by logging on to our archives at www.CriterionOnline.com. †
Prayer helps close the breach between Gospel and daily life

By Ken Ogorek

Our chief shepherd and catechist—the vicar of Christ—wants to encounter in daily life—Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, calls the rupture between the Gospel and daily life “the great divide of our time.” It’s no exaggeration to say that Satan wants you to compartmentalize religion so it’s “that thing I do on Sunday, and maybe a few more days a week when I pray.”

Catechetical Sunday’s theme this year, “Prayer: The Faith Prayed,” is meant to help folks realize that religion is a way of life. Every area of your life is illumined by your faith in God and love for his holy, Catholic Church. Conversely, each aspect of your life is great raw material for prayer. God doesn’t want you to hold back in prayer. He wants you to pour out your heart to him each time you spend time with him in prayer.

Catechetical Sunday isn’t a one-and-done phenomenon. Yes, it’s a specific day when we honor catechists for their great service to us. Its tone and theme, though, are meant to permeate the entire program year of parish faith formation efforts.

Our U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) makes great resources available to all Catholics and people of good will via its excellent webpage usccb.org. On the USCCB homepage is a link to Catechetical Sunday resources. See, for example, a family resource by Mike Aquilina called “Praying with the Fathers of the Church: A Relection per Day for Advent, Christmas and Lent-East.” Plan now to use this tool with your family later this year and early next year.

Author and speaker Jim Gontis offers “Another Look at Sacramentals and Devotional Prayers.” What a great resource for growing in knowledge of prayer and ability to communicate with God in this way!

“The Word of God as a Source of Prayer” by Chris Chapman includes contemporary examples and practical suggestions. Father Robert Haler, longtime Archdiocese of Cincinnati catechetical director, offers the theological reflection “Embracing Our Universal Call to Holiness.”

This year, don’t let Catechetical Sunday pass you by. You don’t have to forget like yesterday’s football score. Avail yourself of the resources above and participate in catechetical opportunities offered by your parish, deanery and beyond.

Most of all, be mindful of your prayer life. Just visit with God for a few minutes each day. Call him to mind often as you go about your daily activities.

When you reach out to God often in the relational conversation that constitutes healthy prayer, when you listen to the handful of major ways God talks to you in daily in sacred Scripture, Church teaching, and sacramental experiences, when you tell God what’s on your mind and ask him to inspire your heart so each area of your life is touched by faith, you can’t help but connect the Gospel and daily life. Your spirit is refreshed regularly. A skip in your step—attitudinally if not literally—is noticeable. The great divide of our time is healed. Satan is confounded.

When your prayer life is vibrant, a certain joy is evident. And that joy forms an encounter in daily life. They might ask you what your secret is. You might have an opportunity to introduce them to Jesus. You might be an answer to unspoken, even unknown, prayer.

( Ken Ogorek is director of catechesis for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. He can be reached at kogorek@archindy.org )

Authentic catechetical renewal seeks to bring faith and life together

By Sean Gallagher

Catholics across central and southern Indiana—indeed around the world—have “a right to solid, effective catechesis,” says Ken Ogorek, archdiocesan director of catechesis.

He has worked hard over the past nine years to continue an authentic renewal of catechesis in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis so that this right is respected.

And he’s also been doing this at the national level for the past year and a half as president of the National Conference of Catechetical Leadership.

“It’s invigorating,” Ogorek said. “It’s not without its challenges. As a parent, I’m familiar with what we sometimes call ‘growing pains.’ And so growth often involves a bit of struggle.

‘Having said that, it’s invigorating and a blessing. I just ask for prayers that authentic catechetical renewal will continue by God’s grace in our country and beyond.’”

Ogorek and other catechetical leaders in the archdiocese and beyond spoke recently with The Criterion about the importance of the authentic renewal of catechesis for all the faithful.

He sees three “key traits” of catechetical renewal that began after the close of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, and took on new strength in the mid-1990s with the promulgation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Vatican’s General Directory for Catechesis.

The first trait is what Ogorek describes as “affirmative orthodoxy.”

“We acknowledge that the basic doctrinal and moral teachings of the Church are not only true, but they’re also true for all people,” he said.

Prayer program teaches participants how to hear God’s voice in their lives

By John Shaugnessy

Phyllis McNamara understands when people say they’re overwhelmed by the daily demands of work and family life, but she also has a hard-to-denry comeback for anyone who says they’re too busy to spend time with God each day.

“He’s giving you a whole day, so you can set aside some part of it with him,” says McNamara, a member of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis.

“Once you start doing it every day, it becomes a habit. And then you look forward to that time, and then it becomes a part of your life that you can’t do without.”

For McNamara, one of the best ways for learning how to develop a closer relationship with God is a program called “Oremus: A Guide to Catholic Prayer.”

“Let us pray,”—declares, “You will discover how God speaks to you, even in the smallest encounters. Following the tradition of the Catholic Church and the wisdom of the saints, you will learn how to express yourself to God in prayer, and how to hear his voice.”

McNamara has helped people develop those skills as leader of an Oremus study group program at Christ the King. Years before, she learned the value of listening for God’s voice and talking with him when she was devastated by the greatest tragedy a parent can experience.

My daughter Julie died 10 days before her 17th birthday in 1989. That’s McNamara, who also has a son, Jim. “She had an asthma attack and died,” she said.

“I was a single parent, and my kids were my life. You can die from that kind of pain, and that’s what I wanted to do. I wouldn’t have survived if I couldn’t talk with God. I still get sad sometimes, but then I’ll remember she’s safe, and I know who she’s with. That’s what God promises. I know she’s got her because he’s told me.”

While the program helps people see that “desolation and consolation are a normal part of everyone’s walk with God,” it also shows how prayer can be used to connect with God in routine moments of life.

“Some of the young mothers in our group said, ‘How can I pray while I’m doing the dishes?’” McNamara says. “I tell them, ‘You’re thinking about God. You’re doing this for your family. That’s prayer.’”

As a spouse and the mother of two girls, Connie Sandlin acknowledges, “I know I should pray every day, but I get distracted.” One of the most impactful parts of Oremus’ eight-week video program for her was an admission from the priest who developed it and leads it—Father Mark Toops, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Houma-

(Habibouke) in Louisiana.

“You hear his personal story and his struggles in his prayer life, even though he is a priest,” says Sandlin, the...
‘Faithful Citizenship’ can help Catholics form consciences for election

By Sean Gallagher

Glenn Tebbe has witnessed up close the nitty gritty work of politics in the halls and offices of the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis during the annual sessions of the state’s General Assembly.

As executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), Tebbe is the public policy spokesperson for the Church in Indiana and an advocate for the Church’s view on promoting the common good among Hoosier lawmakers.

Voters across the state and nation will play their part in the difficult work of politics on Nov. 8 when they will choose a new president and a wide range of office holders at the state and local levels.

While Tebbe knows that this work often involves much learning and discussion—not to mention partisan wrangling—he also knows that prayer should come first as Catholic voters form their consciences for the election.

“In terms of forming your conscience, that’s a critical aspect,” Tebbe said.

“Conscience is listening to God speaking to you about what the right thing to do is at this time and in this circumstance in order to do good and avoid evil.

“Prayer is a time to listen. But prayer also includes seeking the truth about topics of concern through God’s word and the Church’s teaching. All of those are essential steps that help one to form one’s conscience. Prayer is part of all that.”

An important resource to help Catholics across central and southern Indiana and across the nation prayerfully prepare to participate in the upcoming election is “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” which the U.S. bishops revise and re-issue during presidential election years and is available online at archindy.org and archindy.org/faithfulcitizenship.

“It’s a great summary of Catholic social teaching and the pertinent issues with regard to our obligations to civic responsibility,” Tebbe said. “And it does a nice job of overviewing the salient issues that we should be thinking about regarding candidates and their impact on these issues.”

“Faithful Citizenship” encourages Catholics to be involved in public life and to apply their faith to public policy issues.

It explores the basic principles of Catholic social teaching, and applies them to issues affecting political campaigns today. Finally, it helps Catholics determine how to balance the call to do good and avoid evil in the political process.

“For anybody that’s serious about this, it’s written in such a way that it’s easily understood,” Tebbe said. “And it’s broken up into parts. You can sit down with it and take your time. You can read it in pieces. An adult education class can do it over several weeks.”

Holy Family Parish in New Albany has sponsored a series of study sessions of “Faithful Citizenship” this summer. Zachary Mocek, pastoral associate at the New Albany Deenay faith community, has led the sessions and posted online video summaries of them on YouTube.

He has used study guides for “Faithful Citizenship” that are posted at usccb.org for the sessions that include Scripture readings, prayer and discussion on various sections of the document.

“You don’t have to give an hour-long lecture on what this is,” Mocek said. “You come together for 60 to 90 minutes to pray together and discuss these highlighted points [in the study guide]. It’s very beneficial.”

In addition to the study guides, four bulletin inserts on “Faithful Citizenship” are available at usccb.org.

“That’s something that I think all churches should distribute,” Tebbe said. “It’s relatively inexpensive to do.

“There’s just a plethora of things for parishes, parish leadership and individual people. They can download the resources and use them in reflection, conscience formation and prayer. It’s out there for everybody to use.”

Ken Ogorek, archdiocesan director of catechesis, said “Faithful Citizenship” effectively applies the wisdom of Scripture and the teachings of the Church to the concrete circumstances of the political process.

“This resource brings those two ingredients together and allows us to reflect on issues of the day in light of God’s outreach to us in Scripture, and in various teaching documents of the magisterium, both not-so-new and those that are very current,” he said.

In leading members of Holy Family Parish in reflecting on “Faithful Citizenship,” Mocek always returns to the critical part that prayer should play in their participation in public life.

“That’s the most important part of it,” he said. “We gather all of the information, and then we talk to God about it and we pray about it. How do we know what to do? If we don’t know what he wants us to do, we don’t talk to God about it. That’s been a major highlight at the end of each session.

I re-emphasize the prayer part of it.”

Tebbe notes importance of voting despite candidates with “very serious flaws”

By Sean Gallagher

The U.S. bishops have revised and issued “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship” during presidential election years for decades to help Catholics prayerfully consider their participation in elective office holders from the perspective of Scripture and Church teachings.

Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) and the public policy spokesperson for the Church in Indiana thinks “Faithful Citizenship” might be especially helpful in this election year where, he noted, the presidential candidates for both major parties “have very serious flaws.”

Tebbe said. “All of the candidates previously had their virtues and flaws. But these two candidates have very serious flaws in terms of their positions and how they might lead. I think it does pose a harder choice.”

One option that voters can consider, Tebbe said, is to not vote for any presidential candidate, an action that “Faithful Citizenship” says is a legitimate choice under certain conditions.

“When all candidates hold a position that promotes an intrinsically evil act, the conscientious voter faces a dilemma. The voter may decide to take the extraordinary step of not voting for any candidate or, after careful deliberation, may decide to vote for the candidate deemed less likely to advance such a morally flawed position and more likely to pursue other authentic human goods” (#36).

“Don’t be discouraged by the fact that our presidential candidates are so poor. Those aren’t the only people on the ballot. There are other positions on the ballot that are quite important and that have direct impact on our lives—as much if not more than the presidency.”

—Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference

Don’t be discouraged by the fact that our presidential candidates are so poor. Those aren’t the only people on the ballot. There are other positions on the ballot that are quite important and that have direct impact on our lives—as much if not more so than the presidency.

(“Don’t be discouraged by the fact that our presidential candidates are so poor,” Tebbe said. “Those aren’t the only people on the ballot. There are other positions on the ballot that are quite important and that have direct impact on our lives—as much if not more than the presidency. Don’t let the presidential campaign discourage you from voting.

In any case, Tebbe said that it is important for Catholics to live out their faith in society at all times, not just at election time.

“We are called to witness to our faith in every day of our lives, not just during elections and not just when we’re barking about public policy or arguing with people about which direction we should go with regard to one issue or another,” he said.

“Being a disciple is not just an episodic, now-and-then kind of thing. It’s every day, all day long in the choices we make and in the witness we give to everybody.”

A link to “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship” and other related resources can be found at www.archindy.org/faithfulcitizenship/
Shelbyville parish helps with new USCCB program on prayer

By Natalie Hoefer

“It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’” (Lk 11:1).

Some 2,000 years later, Christians are still seeking to learn how to pray.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is launching an eight-session series to address this desire.

The series is called “Prayer: The Faith Prayed.” Through expert-led webinars, videos and articles, Catholics—who are interested in growing in their prayer life. “The piece on prayer and various forms used during Mass,” says Steier “They are a great way to get a lot out of a little bit of time.”

The vignettes can be viewed by visiting goo.gl/0QqaT1.

Beth Schoentrup, a former leader of Adult religious education at St. Joseph, says that she “enjoyed the sessions a lot.”

“The pace on prayer and various forms of prayer, I thought that was very strong and would help adult catechists,” she says. “Really, many of the speakers were strong. I liked the way some of the speakers looked at things from a different angle, but still a Catholic angle.”

Some of the other comments Steier received from the St. Joseph reviewers helped him know what the series got right:

• “Lacked working through the program at my own pace. Some [programs] you have to take whatever it’s offered and the pace is dictated by the leader and number of participants. With this, I could choose whatever time and date to participate.”

• “I really encourage people to capitalize on any of their resources.”

• “The presenters encouraged real and true intimacy with God. This reminds me of media—webinars (the primary source for learning), video vignettes, articles, PowerPoint presentations and other tools.”

The program offers history, information, applications and examples of prayer highlighted in eight sessions: What Is Prayer? Seeds and Flowering; Forms of Prayer; Teaching Prayer to Persons with Disabilities; Sources and Manner of Praying; Prayer in Communion with Mary; Prayer and Penance; Praying the Lord’s Prayer; and Leading Others in Prayer.

Each session offers tools in a variety of media—webinars (the primary source for learning), video vignettes, articles, PowerPoint presentations and other tools.

Burlington, Vt. Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, former auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, created a series of short video vignettes of about three minutes each focusing on gestures used during Mass.

“I recommend people look at Bishop Coyne’s vignettes, even if they don’t do the whole series,” says Steier. “They are a great way to get a lot out of a little bit of time.”

The vignettes can be viewed by visiting goo.gl/s8QyT1.

A scene from one of the “Prayer: The Faith Prayed” vignettes by Burlington, Vt., Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, former auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. The vignettes are hosted on the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).
“The catechist in today’s society has to be well prepared,” Father Hater said. “They’re busy people. They’re not professionals. They’re being asked to do something that is sometimes quite challenging.”

A growing number of people who came of age during the mid-1990s when catechetical renewal took on renewed energy are now taking leadership roles in passing on the faith in parishes across central and southern Indiana.

Jackie Vandenbergh, coordinator of adult faith formation at St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, was a young adult during that time and tried to bring faith and life together in all she does.

“Seeing a connection between our faith and our daily lives makes a great and often immeasurable difference in our lives,” she said. “For some, questions about faith, God and the meaning of life are born in the midst of tragedy, trial, illness or a life-altering experience.

‘Having both a relationship with Christ and the perspective that comes with our faith, we are able to see and encounter God working in our daily lives to the point that we could even experience gratitude in the midst of suffering’”

Father Jonathan Meyer, pastor of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County, was a young college seminarian during that period and has looked forward to passing on the faith with vigor and conviction as a priest.

“There was a great drive within me to be involved and even create, if need be, programs or experiences to help young people know the Lord and serve him,” he said.

In recent years, Father Meyer has helped develop a distinctly Catholic vacation Bible school program focused on Scripture and the mysteries of the rosary that he has used in his parish and is looking to spread to other faith communities.

“It works as a really good way to drive home a theme,” he said. “Every day, the music, game, snack, color of clothing the kids are asked to wear, points to the biblical passage which is [related to] the mystery. If kids go home and know the five mysteries of the rosary for that year, we win.”

Kristina Vogt, director of religious education at St. John Paul II Parish in Clark County, is even younger than people to share a more personal response to the Scriptures they are reading. They both focused on the prompts, “I sense the Lord was telling me …” and “I ended the prayer wanting …”

“What I love is that there are no right or wrong answers,” McNamara says. “This is all you, and how you’re being directed by the Holy Spirit to answer the questions. It’s all about, ‘What speaks to you?’ and ‘How do you want God to talk with you on one on one?’ It made prayer quieter, more thoughtful, instead of rushing through it.”

That thoughtful approach to prayer was enhanced by the use of a journal during the program, Sandlin says.

“I am not one who usually keeps a journal, but I did find it helpful,” she says. “It helped me put my prayers into words—to talk to Jesus about it.”

It also helped her to make her prayer more personal—an approach that was different and difficult for her at first.

“I pray a lot for my girls, my family. But this was different—‘What does Jesus want for me?’” Sandlin says. “Several of us really struggled with that. We don’t always think of ourselves. We started talking and said, ‘I am a child of God, too, not just my children.’ I had to start thinking, ‘What do you want from the Lord?’ It helped me see the value of daily prayer. It made me realize what I was missing.”

That reaction was shared by the 30 parishioners who participated in the Oremus program during Lent at St. Anthony of Padua.

“They kept going to [Franciscan] Father Joe [West, the parish’s pastor] after Mass, telling him how much they loved this program,” she says. “It improved their prayer life so much that after it ended, they wanted to continue meeting.

“We meet the first Monday of each month,” McNamara says. “I know that talking to God and listening to him has made her life.

“It teaches you not just to do memorized prayer,” she says. “I learned that you just have to be quiet. I just had to stop trying to control everything. I just had to listen because God is talking to you all the time.

“It’s given me peace. Peace of heart. And confidence. Because I know I’m not really by myself. God is with me.”

(For more information about Oremus, visit the website, www.oremus.org)
Retired pope says governance wasn’t his gift, but Francis is good

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—While retired Pope Benedict XVI said organization and governance are not his strong suits, he also said, “I am unable to see myself as a failure.”

In a book-length interview with the German author Peter Seewald, Pope Benedict said that when he resigned he had the “peace of someone who had overcome difficulty,” and “could tranquilly pass the helm to the one who came next.”

The new book, Last Testament, will be released in English by Bloomsbury in November. The German and Italian editions were released on Sept. 9, but some excerpts were published earlier by the Italian daily newspaper Corriere della Sera.

Pope Benedict insisted once again that he was not pressured by anyone or any event to resign, and he did not feel he was running away from any problem.

“My weak point perhaps is a lack of resolve in governing and making decisions,” he said. “Here, in reality, I am more a professor, one who reflects and meditates on spiritual questions. Practical governance was not my forte and this certainty was a weakness.”

Pope Francis, on the other hand, “is a man of practical reform,” the retired pope said. His personality and experience as a Jesuit provincial and archbishop have enabled him to take practical organizational steps.

The retired pope, who is 89, said he had no inkling that then-Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio would be elected his successor; “no one expected him.”

“When I first heard his name, I was unsure,” he said. “But when I saw how he spoke with God and with people, I truly was content. And happy.”

Pope Benedict said it made no impression on him that the brand new pope chose to appear on the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica without wearing the ermine-lined red mozzetta or cape. “What did touch me, though, was that even before going out onto the loggia, he tried to phone me.”

E lecting the first Jesuit pope and the first Latin American pope, the College of Cardinals showed that “the Church is moving, dynamic, open, with the prospect of new developments before it,” he said.

“What is beautiful and encouraging is that, even in our day, things that no one expected happen, and they demonstrate that the Church is alive and brimming with new possibilities.”

Seewald also asked Pope Benedict about reports that during his pontificate there was a so-called “gay lobby” in the Curia, and the group protected certain priests by threatening to blackmail others.

The retired pope replied that a commission of three cardinals he had named to investigate a major leak of reserved documents and conduct an administrative review of Vatican offices and procedures identified “a small group of four, perhaps five persons,” which a few Vatican officials and the media later would refer to as the “gay lobby.”

“We dissolved it,” Pope Benedict said. The retired pope, who has had a pacemaker since 1997 and can no longer see out of his left eye, told Seewald that preparing for death is part of his daily routine. It’s not a matter of getting his earthly affairs in order, he said, “but of preparing to pass the ultimate examination before God.”

MRS gets $1 million-plus grant from Mormons for refugee resettlement

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The U.S. bishops’ Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) is receiving a $1.25 million grant from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to aid in its refugee resettlement efforts once the newcomers arrive in the United States.

The Mormons, as the denomination’s adherents are popularly known, have refugee-processing capabilities overseas, said MRS executive director Bill Canny, but do not offer domestic resettlement services.

Canny told Catholic News Service (CNS) that this is the first time in memory that the Mormons have made such a gift to an agency within the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, although Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. bishops’ overseas aid and development organization, has received grants from the Mormons dating to the Ethiopian famine more than 30 years ago.

Grants of this nature, of this size, Canny added, don’t often happen, “not often enough.”

Canny said the Mormons had conducted a successful fundraising drive to aid Syrian refugees.

Afterward, “they then approached nine resettlement agencies, offering each of them a gift to help with resettling refugees currently. So they got in touch with us as one of the resettlement agencies. We began to discuss how to distribute the money and the in-kind goods, and we wrote a small project for them, and they agreed to it and gave us the go-ahead.”

Of the $1.25 million, $425,000 is in cash while the remaining $800,000 is an in-kind contribution from the Mormons, according to Canny.

The cash portion of the grant will help MRS “further ... develop volunteer networks in dioceses and parishes, so that’s important,” Canny told CNS. “It’s going to allow us to have some money for special medical cases of refugees, and perhaps to help with some housing. And it will help improve the system” to allow more family reunification in situations where members of one family are split between the United States and a refugee camp.

The 34th Annual Celebrate Life Dinner

Invites you to the
34th Annual Celebrate Life Dinner

Tuesday, October 4, 2016
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Indianapolis Convention Center
The Sagamore Ballroom

Featuring Keynote Speaker Sue Ellen Browder

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She will be available after the dinner for a book signing.

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The go-ahead.
“He made me cry because those were the words I always used in praying for my future husband. I knew that once married, a part of John Paul II’s involvement in my life.”

Life-changing moments

That involvement included her reading the book, Saint John Paul the Great: His Five Loves by Jason Evert. Kara connected with the saint’s devotion to Our Lady, and a new conversation where she said, “I’m feeling a lot more than friendship with you.” “Recalling those words, Stephen, who was 26, smiled. “We had a hard time being vulnerable with other people. This was the first time I was able to do that because it was just so beautiful, to be able to know each other.” By November, their relationship took a deeper turn. In a conversation with the saint, she said, “I knew God was calling us to get married.”

A journey of faith and love

Their conversations about marriage soon led Stephen to wonder what would be the best time and place to propose to Kara. His thoughts quickly turned to a journey of faith they had committed to as the two began attending Mass each week in the friendship stage of their relationship.

By October of 2015, Kara and Stephen had independently signed up for the World Youth Day in 2016, the gathering of Catholic young people from around the world that occurs about every three years. Beyond their growing involvement in their faith, Kara and Stephen also felt drawn to attend the World Youth Day in late July because it was being held in Poland, the homeland of St. John Paul II, the saint for whom they were praying. “It’s in Krakow,” Stephen says, recalling his thought process. “John Paul II was the one who stood up for the people of Poland. When he died, he had an engagement ring in his backpack that he didn’t let out of his sight.”

“I want to marry you”

Stephen also prayed about the proposal on the plane as they headed home to their church and the statue of St. John Paul II. “I prayed, ‘Lord, show me where and when,’” he recalls. “I prayed because of what it means to pass on the faith and probably the most important question I’ll ever ask her. I wanted her to love it. I wanted her to respect this.”

After they checked into the hotel where the 64-year adults from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis were staying in Krakow, Stephen soon learned that their hotel was about 400 yards from the Church of Our Lady, the Queen of Poland—where St. John Paul II had laid the cornerstone for the church when he was the cardinal archbishop there.

As Kara and Stephen ran by the church the next morning, they noticed a sign that read, “Fatima 13.” Then they both saw a large statue of St. John Paul II outside the church, with his arms outstretched in welcome. Stephen knew he had the setting for the proposal. “When we went by, I thought, ‘That’s it! It’s God’s plan for us to be here.”

Next, he wanted the right time. Finally, he chose 3 p.m., the hour when Divine Mercy Chaplet is traditionally prayed, signifying the time when Christ died on the cross.

So shortly after 2 p.m. on July 28 as Kara, and he were listening to a speaker at a conference, he hustled her out of the room and began rushing them to the church and the statue of St. John Paul II.

“Is God letting this happen?”

“So on the way, he’s pouring his heart out to me,” Kara recalls. “He’s telling me he wants to marry me and serve me with me—selflessly love me and help me get to heaven.”

“I see the five past two years and serve me,” she thought, “Is God letting this happen?”

At 3 p.m., in front of the statue of St. John Paul II, Stephen, with tears flowing down his face, knelt on one knee and extended the ring toward Kara.

“I was so overwhelmed—in a good way. It was such a gift,” says Kara, wiping away tears as she remembers the moment. “It shows God’s faithfulness through all those years of waiting and praying.”

The couple has scheduled their wedding at St. Nicholas Church for May 13, 2017—the 100th anniversary of the first time that the Blessed Mother appeared to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal. (Batesville observer)

Kara smiles and adds, “I always had it in the back of my mind that Stephen could be the one” because he didn’t seem to fit the “type” the classic Catholic woman would want. “He’s the one,” she said, “because he’s not only a good Catholic but he’s also just someone I love deeply.”

More and more people are being discouraged as machines take up their tasks. And as technology gets more and more advanced, what will a ‘robot economy’ mean for workers?” the cardinal asked.

In order to serve the common good, Cardinal Turkson said, businesses must “put the creation of employment ahead of a fixation of profits.”

Government policies that provide tax cuts to the wealthy while “fraying social safety nets and weakening unions,” he said, also have contributed to a growing inequality that has given the wealthy the “too much influence over policy.”

Societies that become too unequal, he added, “lose a sense of shared purpose necessary for deliberating on the common good.”

A new social economy, he said, must be respectful of nature instead of relying on “old-school industrialization,” making the world dependent on oil, coal and gas.

Also, the possibility of change and the destruction of vital ecosystems caused by such industrialization will continue to push people into extreme poverty “if we fail to act.”

Everyone must “play their part” in ensuring an economy that is sustainable, equal and respectful of human dignity, he said. “Let’s not fall into the trap of assuming that the state alone is responsible for the common good while the ‘business of business is business.’”

WASHingtOn (CNS)—A Sept. 9 letter from USCCB officials to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) stressed the religious objections of a substantial number of petitioners’ health plans regarding the Affordable Care Act’s contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization requirement.

The letter, in response to the government’s request for comments on a proposal mandating contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization coverage, echoed the Supreme Court’s ruling in Zubik v. Burwell—the combined lawsuit of the Little Sisters of the Poor, Priests for Life, and several other religious groups, that said they provided religious and moral objections to health care coverage to employees through their insurance plans violated their religious beliefs.

The letter, which had been sent to the lower courts saying religious employers and the government should be “afforded an opportunity to arrive at an approach going forward that accommodates petitioners’ religious exercise while at the same time ensuring that women covered by petitioners’ health plans receive full and equal health care coverage,” included contraceptive coverage.

For this accommodation to happen, the USCCB letter stressed that “any government-mandated [contraceptive, abortifacient, sterilization] coverage must be truly independent of petitioners and their plans;” meaning the coverage should be offered by a separate communication and with a different policy, enrollment process, insurance card and payment source.

The letter, signed by members of the USCCB’s general counsel, also said such coverage should not be automatic in order to protect the conscience rights of people with religious objections to contraception and sterilization coverage.

It said that another look at the HHS contraceptive, abortifacient and sterilization requirement provides an opportunity for the government to “bring to an end two years of church-state litigation and, in turn, to avoid a legacy of ongoing and unnecessary conflict with substantial portions of the religious community in the United States.”

It also noted that the Supreme Court had urged the litigants “to resolve this matter amicably,” which the letter said they had sought to do by “describing, in good faith, and in great detail, a way to reach an amicable resolution.”

But these groups cannot change the regulations, the letter added, stressing that only the government could and should do this instead of ignoring “the sincerely held and repeatedly stated religious objections of a substantial majority of our civic society.”
Children are gifts to be received with unconditional love

By Mike Nelson

What is a gift?

In our contemporary world, a gift is something to be unwrapped, looked upon, acknowledged and then it can be used, set aside, or stabbed and forgotten about. It can be returned or exchanged, maybe for something “better,” or something more appropriate.

In other words, we may or may not welcome these gifts, depending on how they fit into our lives. So how do we regard the gifts God gives us—specifically, the gift of children?

Children are the fruit of the greatest of God’s gifts—the gifts of love and life. Pope Francis declares in “Amoris Laetitia” (“The Joy of Love”), in a chapter that speaks about welcoming children into a family. “Love always gives life,” he writes (#165).

Each new life, he continues, “allows us to appreciate the utterly gratuitous dimension of love, which never ceases to amaze us. It is the beauty of being loved first: Children are loved even before they arrive” (#166).

And that “gift of a new child, entrusted by the Lord to a father and a mother, begins with acceptance, continues with lifelong protection and has as its final goal the joy of eternal life” (#166).

Our challenge, of course, is to recognize children as God’s gifts to us, and not to fret unreasonably over whether we can afford them or whether they will somehow inconvenience us as we pursue our chosen course in life.

“Some parents,” Pope Francis notes, “feel that their child is not coming at the best time” (#170). Or maybe we welcome children, but on our terms, as if they were a means to achieve what we want. And if they don’t meet our needs, we regard them as disappointing.

“It is important,” the pope reminds us, “for that child to feel wanted. He or she is not an accessory or a solution to some personal need. A child is a human being of immense worth and may never be used for one’s own benefit. So it matters little whether this new life is convenient for you, whether it has features that please you, or whether it fits into your plans and aspirations” (#170).

That means we welcome children not because they are cute, not because they entertain us in one way or another, not because we can mold and shape them like pieces of clay into whatever we want.

“We love our children because they are children,” says the pope, “not because they are beautiful, or look or think as we do, or embody our dreams. We love them because they are children” (#170).

Jesus knew this, certainly better than his disciples did, or at least those disciples who complained when children seemed to interrupt with whatever Jesus—and the disciples—were doing. “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them,” Jesus told his disciples, perhaps sternly. “For the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Mt 19:14).

The Gospels of Mark and Luke further recount Jesus’ admonition to his disciples, spoken as he embraced a child: “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me” (Mt 9:37; Lk 9:48).

It’s important here to note the context of Jesus’ words. His disciples had been arguing among themselves about who was the greatest, which prompted Jesus to say, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all” (Mk 9:35).

That shouldn’t be ignored by those of us who are parents. In fully receiving and welcoming the gift of children, it’s not our needs—our job, our night out, our sleeping in— that come first. There is something else worth contemplating, at least for those of us who not only believe in responding to Jesus’ call to “go and make disciples,” but welcome that call as well (Mt 28:19).

“By their witness as well as their words, families speak to others of Jesus,” says Pope Francis. “They pass on the beauty of the Gospel and its way of life. ... Their fruitfulness expands, and in countless ways makes God’s love present in society” (#184).

By welcoming children, we welcome the opportunity to pass on our faith—to teach our young people the value of feeding the poor, comforting the afflicted, seeking justice for the lowly and, yes, welcoming all of God’s children into the family of the kingdom.

“Children are a gift,” writes Pope Francis. “Each one is unique and irreplaceable” (#170). Like all of God’s gifts, they are not something that we earn, not something we deserve. They are generous signs of God’s love for all of us.

“We are all sons and daughters,” the pope reminds us. “And this always brings us back to the fact that we did not give ourselves life, but that we received it. The great gift of life is the first gift that we received” (#188).

And, like Jesus, we are called to welcome and embrace these gifts with joy.

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

Openness to the gift of life is an essential part of Christian marriage

By Daniel S. Mullhall

In his apostolic exhortation “Amoris Laetitia” (“The Joy of Love”), Pope Francis writes much about the importance of accepting children in marriage. The chapter titled “Love Made Fruitful” focuses primarily on this point, that “love always gives life” (#165).

The pope notes that “the family is the setting in which a new life is not only born, but also welcomed as a gift of God. Each new life allows us to appreciate the utterly gratuitous dimension of love, which never ceases to amaze us. It is the beauty of being loved first: Children are loved even before they arrive” (#166).

The Bible makes the point that the person who accepts children lovingly from God is blessed. Psalm 127 says it, “Certainly sons are a gift from the Lord, the fruit of the womb, a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man who has filled his quiver with them” (Ps 127:3-5).

God tells Adam and Eve in Genesis, “Be fertile and multiply; fill the Earth” (Gn 1:28).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses the importance of fertility in marriage. Quoting the Second Vatican Council’s “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” the catechism says, “By its very nature, the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring, and it is in them it finds its crowning glory” (#1652).

The catechism, again quoting the pastoral constitution, adds that “children are the supreme gift of marriage and contribute greatly to the good of the parents themselves” (#1652). In so doing, marriage is at the service of life. The catechism encourages those who cannot have children to have a "conjugal life full of meaning” (#1654), radiating the fruits of charity, hospitality and sacrifice.

In the Catholic rite of matrimony, the couple is asked, “Will you accept children lovingly from God and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?”

In their positive answer to this question, the couple commits themselves to be open to receiving from God the gift of new life if it is offered to them.

In this way, says the catechism, the “covenant between the spouses is integrated into God’s covenant” with humanity, and “authentic married love is caught up into divine love” (#1639).

While children are to be accepted willingly and loving, Pope Francis also notes that “couples are to use their inviolable liberty wisely and responsibly” in discerning when God is calling them to be open to the gift of life (#167).

Having children brings with it the responsibility to educate them, nurture them and prepare them for life everlasting. Couples must be aware of this sacred duty.

(Daniel S. Mullhall is a freelance writer and a catechist. He is father of three children and has two grandchildren.)
That All May Be One/ John XXIII opens Vatican II

The Criterion  Friday, September 16, 2016

Cardinal Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was a month short of his 77th birthday when he was elected pope in October of 1958. Because of his age, he was considered to be an “old” pope, a caretaker pope; he would not reign for anything like the 14 years as Pope Pius XII had done. But Pope John XXIII didn’t think of himself as a caretaker pope. It was his reign that would be short—less than five years—but his decisions were to change the Catholic Church in ways that were never envisioned by his electors.

Two days after his election, he remarked that the Church needed a council that would bring the Church into the 20th century. Less than three months later, on Sept. 25, 1959, he explicitly declared that he intended to call a council, and he invited bishops to submit suggestions.

The council would be the Second Vatican Council. When John XXIII became pope, the Church was not as closed and opposed to contemporary thought and scholarly work as it was during the time of Pope Pius X, but it wasn’t far from it. There was still a deep antagonism between the papal Church and Protestantism, for example, and the Church was generally known for its conservatism.

Catholic thought had grown considerably since the First Vatican Council in 1869-70, especially during the papacy of Pius IX. As such, the council that called there, were 739 bishops. When John XXIII called Vatican II, there were 2,594 bishops. New bishops being appointed all the time. 2,860 eventually participated in council proceedings.

Then John XXIII had another shock: He invited observers from Protestant communities and Eastern Orthodox Churches to attend because he wanted the council to have a true ecumenical flavor. Indeed, ecumenism was one of the important themes of the council.

Vatican II was held in four sessions in St. Peter’s Basilica, during the autumn months of 1962 to 1965. When John XXIII opened the first session on Oct. 11, 1962, nobody foresaw the momentous changes the council would bring to the Church. Many thought it was nothing more than a ceremonial show.

Certainly the documents prepared by 10 commissions prior to the council gave no indication of what was to come. Since the commissions were dominated by curial cardinals, the first few council documents were basic summaries of then-current theology. They certainly weren’t what John XXIII had in mind when he called the council.

But in his opening address, he made clear how he did it in mind. He said that “authentic doctrine has to be studied and expounded in the light of the research methods and the language of modern thought. For the substance of the ancient deposit of faith is one thing, and the way it is presented is another.”

He showed that the council meant to enter a new age in other ways, too: “Today the Spouse of Christ prefers to use the medicine of mercy rather than severity.”

**Continued next week.**

**Ways to avoid explaining the ‘fiscal facts of life’ to your children**

Good news, moms and dads! It has never been easier to avoid having that awkward conversation with your children: explaining the fiscal facts of life.

Here are seven simple tips for dealing that unpleasant task:

**Say “no”**
If there is one question that none of your children will enjoy hearing you say is “no.”

**Tell them no money**
(When you ask them to buy something for him or her. Don’t be negative. That’s bad, right?) The best way to open your heart and prove your love, is to open your wallet.

**Show them love**
Possessions are the foundation of friendship. If your son or daughter hopes to have many wonderful friends, and that simply can’t happen if he or she doesn’t own the latest, absolutely coolest ... whatever ... that all the other kids have.

**All the other kids, Mom.** Single one of them.

**It’s best to keep religion out of this.** Separation of Church and state right? And who makes money? Again, nobody foresaw the momentous changes that “the Tenth Commandment forbids greed and the desire to amass earthly goods without limit.”

**It continues.** When the law says, “You shall not covet,” these words mean that we should be grateful for whatever does not belong to us. Our thirst for another’s goods is immense, infinite, never quenched. Thus it is that: “Money never has money enough . . .”

**Donate**
is just as crazy. If you’re supposed to give—just give—your money to a charity or a parish or a . . . That makes no sense. Many people donate so you don’t have to.

But if you feel the slightest tickle of guilt, have your children set a goal now. “Dear God, I will set up a foundation to help the poor just as soon as I win the Powerball.”

It’s: “You shall not covet . . . The envy of the Catholic Church when it points out that “the Tenth Commandment forbids greed and the desire to amass earthly goods without limit.”

**“The envy of the”**

**Believe it!** Let your children in on your wonderfully generous plan. Pretty exciting, huh kids?

**“Want” it is a synonym for “need.”**
“Credit” is a fancy word for “money.” Set an example for your youngsters: If you want it, you need it. If you need it but you don’t have the money for it, use credit. Use a lot of it.

**Live in the now.** If you want/need it now, then buy/charge it now. On the other hand, if you want to help your children the value of patience, skip the one-day shipping—which comes with an extra fee—and settle for the free two-day option.

**Don’t allow that allowance nonsense.** It’s just so complicated. Keep track of who gets what when? And it has to be some . . . 1950s. (What next, suggest they name it or write it down?)

**Separation of Church and state right?** And who makes money? Again, nobody foresaw the momentous changes that “the Tenth Commandment forbids greed and the desire to amass earthly goods without limit.”

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The The Sunday Readings
Sunday, September 18, 2016

- Amos 8:4-7
- 1 Timothy 2:1-8

The first reading for this weekend is from the Book of Amos. This prophet, regarded as one of the major prophets, was from Tekoa, a rural area of Judea, about 10 miles from Jerusalem. Amos was a shepherd. He obviously knew well the religious traditions of his ancestors. He also had a sense of events occurring beyond his own environment, even events happening in other lands.

His pastoral occupation and keen knowledge of religious tradition and life far beyond his own situation gives his book of only nine chapters a special quality.

Money dominates the message of this reading. The passage even mentions ancient units of currency, such as the shekel. Most importantly, it is highly critical of any quest to gather great sums of money where all ethics are put aside. It insists that a higher standard always exists, and it bluntly states that a reward greater than monetary gain is to be preferred, and it is available.

For its second reading, the Church presents a passage from St. Paul’s First Letter to Timothy. Early Christian history presents Timothy as a deeply committed convert to Christianity.

Actually, Timothy was so close to the Apostle Paul that the Apostle referred to him as “beloved son,” although of course nothing suggests that Timothy was the Apostle’s biological child. To the contrary, Timothy was the son of a Greek father and a devout Jewish mother. As his mother was Jewish, Timothy was Jewish under the laws of Judaism.

According to tradition, Timothy was the first bishop of the Church in Ephesus. In this weekend’s reading, Timothy is asked especially to pray for rulers and people in authority. They are especially vulnerable to the temptation of greed and ambition.

In Luke’s Gospel, the parable of the unrighteous manager supplies the last reading. It is a parable about an irresponsible manager who fears the results if his employer discovers his mishandling of his duties. So the manager calls his employer’s debtors and orders them to tamper with the notes in order to curry favor with them. If the loan was for 100, the manager said to change the amount to 50.

This arrangement would have been as unacceptable then as it would be now. The employer would have had every right to repudiate the manager’s manipulation of the amounts owed.

Reflection: It is easy to become lost and confused in the world of ancient economics, which was quite unlike modern finances. Rather than focus on the manipulation of the amounts owed, the Gospel calls us to focus on mercy instead.

The bottom line is that some things in life are more important than money. It is the theme of the reading from Amos. The central figure in the Gospel is the employer. The manager is either misguided or dishonest or both.

The manager reduces the debts, even if prompted by the manager’s mishandling of the situation. This is the message, the employer’s mercy.

Not without a lesson, however, is the story of the manager and of the debtors’ willingness to join in the fraud. The line between genuine security and peace of mind on the one hand, and grasping for more and more on the other, is easy to cross. It is so easy for humans to rationalize, to cut corners, to succumb to fear.

Remember what is important. Pursue what is important. ♦

Question Corner/Fr. Kenneth Doyle

Dress for Mass in ways that help people focus their attention on God, not you

too often, I have seen various ministers at Mass wearing shorts. This concerns me. I know that God probably doesn’t care, but shouldn’t we care how we present ourselves before him and our Church’s representatives? Shouldn’t we dress as our best for Mass— which, after all, is the most important event we attend each week? (New York)

There is nothing in the Church’s Code of Canon Law that stipulates how lectors and extraordinary ministers of holy Communion should be dressed— which is logical, since one considers that the Catholic Church embraces the entire world and that what is considered appropriate apparel varies widely around the globe. (I have been present at papal Masses in the interior of Africa that included liturgical dance by women in grass skirts—all done reverently and enhancing the sense of worship.)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, however, does speak to the issue when it observes that the “bodily demeanor [gestures, clothing]” of worshipers at Mass “ought to convey the respect, solemnity and joy of this moment when Christ becomes our guest” (#1387).

Because taste in dress does differ (even within our own community), it might seem wise for dioceses or parishes to draft their own guidelines—and many, in fact, have done so successfully.

Some are rather general, noting that ministers should dress in a way that is respectful, modest and presentable— often adding that clothing that is too casual or flamboyant can distract worshipers from the Eucharist.

Others are quite specific. One parish in the U.S. Midwest directs that liturgical ministers should wear “no jeans, sweatpants or yoga pants; no shirts exposing the navel; no tight-fitting clothes; no shorts, flip-flops.” For men, this means “no T-shirts (collared shirts only); no sleeveless shirts.” For women, “no dress or skirt with a hem any higher than at or just above the knee; no spaghetti strap tops or tank tops or tube tops; no style of dress exposing bare shoulders or bare back; no style of dressing exposing cleavage.”

My wife passed away three years ago, and I miss her very much. We were married for 63 years. What are the Church’s thoughts on the hereafter? Will we be man and wife? (Iowa)

Your question is one frequently used by those who are mourning deeply the death of a spouse. The response should bring you some comfort.

In one Gospel story ( Mk 12:27-28), a question is posed by Jesus to the Sadducees, who did not believe in an afterlife. They wanted to know about a woman who had had seven spouses successively, and which man would be her husband in heaven. Jesus explained that “when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven” (Mk 12:25).

Some have interpreted these words— erroneously—to mean that there will be no continuing and special relationship in heaven between those who are earthly spouses. Instead, Christ simply meant that the institution of marriage, as we have known it on Earth, will be unnecessary in heaven.

There will be no need for procreation because no one will ever die; human companionship will not be required to satisfy our loneliness because the desire for intimacy will be fulfilled by knowing the Lord personally.

Still, though, the Church does believe that the relationships we have enjoyed on Earth will be transformed and enhanced as they continue in heaven. The prayer frequently used at the end of funeral Masses has the priest say, “Before we go our separate ways, let us take leave of our brother/sister. May our farewell express our affection for him/her; may it ease our sadness and strengthen our hope. One day, we shall joyfully greet him/her again when the love of Christ, which conquers all things, destroys even death itself.”

(Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Cannonbridge Circle Dr., Albany, NY 12203.)

The Daily Readings
Monday, September 19
St. Januarius, bishop and martyr
Proverbs 3:27-34
Psalm 152:4b, 5
Luke 8:16-18

Tuesday, September 20
St. Andrew Kim Tae-gôn, priest, St. Paul Chông Ha-sang and their companions, martyrs
Proverbs 21:1-3, 10-13
Psalm 119:1, 27, 30, 34-35
Luke 8:19-21

Wednesday, September 21
St. Matthew, Apostle and evangelist
Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13
Psalm 19:2-5
Matthew 9:9-13

Thursday, September 22
Ecclesiastes 1:1-11
Psalm 90:3-6, 12-14, 17b, 18b
Luke 9:7-9

Friday, September 23
St. Pius of Pietrelcina, priest
Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:8
Psalm 144:1b, 2b, 3c-4

Saturday, September 24
Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:8
Psalm 90:3-6, 12-14, 17
Luke 9:43-45

Sunday, September 25
Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Amos 6:1a, 4-7
Psalm 146:7-10
1 Timothy 6:6-16
Luke 16:19-31

The Journey to God
By Thomas J. Rillo

I walk the meadows and undulating hills Passing I hear clearly the songbird thrills It is a symphony of nature’s sounds In the green meadows and hills life abounds. I hear God’s Symphony

God has made the symphony of nature’s sound His paintbrush has colored things all around His palette has conveyed a myriad of tints Color adds clearly to the symphony imprints. I Hear God’s Symphony

God gave us ears to hear the symphony He imparts External ears are a pipeline to the ear of the heart We need to ventilate beyond our comfort zone. And find that perfect place where we can pray alone. I Hear God’s Symphony

The meadows and hills are where the angels sing Voices join the symphony coming from God’s wellspring God created and bestows us an outdoor cathedral We need to put our trust in God believing in Life eternal. I Hear God’s Symphony

(The Thomas J. Rillo is a member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington and is a Benedictine oblate of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad. Autumn colors are in full display among these trees seen on Oct. 8, 2015, in Henniker, New Hampshire.) (CS) phone: (713) 321-2000, ext. 8803.)
Praying for peace

Parishioners from several Detroit parishes gather on Aug. 25 to pray for peace, an effort organized by the Archdiocese of Detroit’s Office of Black Catholic Ministries. (CNS photo/Dan Melady, Michigan Catholic)
Benedictines keep spiritual oases alive in hectic world, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The world’s Benedictines offer precious gifts by providing quality education, quiet refuge in a hectic world and loving hospitality to anyone in need, Pope Francis said.

At a time when the Church is called to focus increasingly on youth, the Benedictine monks and sisters possess “a unique gift and a special responsibility—that of keeping alive spiritual oases where pastors and the faithful can draw from sources of divine mercy,” the pope said.

The pope’s remarks came in a speech on Sept. 8 to abbots and conventual priors from 250 monasteries of Benedictine men from around the world at the Vatican on Sept. 8. The Benedictines are meeting in Rome Sept. 3-16 to elect a new abbot primate. (EPA photo/Ennio Leanza)

Abbot Primate Notker Wolf highlighted some of the Benedictine order’s recent work: Many monasteries have been taking in migrants and refugees, offering them housing, employment and education; promising relationships have been formed with Buddhist monks and with Muslims; and around 160,000 students are enrolled worldwide in Benedictine educational institutions.

Pope Francis said the Benedictines’ work in education and formation of youth “is very much appreciated and highly valued.”

Thanks to their studies and experience of the Benedictine way of life, these students can become skilled experts in the values proposed by St. Benedict’s Rule, he said.

He praised the monks’ efforts to live merciful and fraternal lives in their communities, which they do “through that industrious and eloquent silence that lets God speak in the defacing and distracted life of the world.”

“Even though you live separate from the world, your seclusion is not sterile, rather it is an enrichment, not an obstacle to education,” he said, referring to his apostolic constitution, “Vultum Dei Quaerite,” on the contemplative life of women—a document that is also addressed “by extension to all monks,” he told his audience.

Benedictine Archabbott Kurt Stasiak of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, Ind., attended the meeting and was able to greet the pope personally.

“It was not only a special moment, but the Holy Father spent a full hour with us Benedictine abbots and priors, taking the time to greet each of us as we approached him and to kiss his ring in greeting and blessing,” Archabbot Kurt said. “Pope Francis’ reminded us that we Benedictines are the heart of the Church’s prayer. We assured him of our prayers and thanked him for his munificence.”

The Benedictine charism of hospitality, Pope Francis said, allows members to encounter people whose hearts are “lost and distant” and who may be in a moment of “great human and spiritual poverty.”

He urged them to let the declining number of members in their monastic communities be a discouragement, but rather to be an impetus to hold onto “the zeal of your testimony.”

“Your service to the Church is very precious,” Pope Francis said. “Even today, there is a need for men and women who put nothing before the love of Christ,” who receive daily nourishment from God’s word, who celebrate the holy liturgy in a dignified manner and who work in harmony with creation, he added.

Coordinator of Latino Outreach, Office of Catholic Schools

The Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Executive Assistant to provide administrative support to the Executive Director of Catholic Charities. This position will have regular interaction with the Board of Advisors and will furnish administrative support before, during, and after board meetings. The Executive Assistant will also prepare detailed internal and external reports, collaborate with various constituencies, and manage the office. They will work collaboratively, demonstrate a growth mindset, and approach challenges as opportunities.

The applicant should be an active, practicing Catholic committed to serving children, families and Catholic schools. The position requires a minimum of five years of administrative experience, preferably with a not-for-profit organization, excellent clerical and computer skills (Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, and Outlook), proficiency with PowerPoint, and experience in grant writing. Applicants must be well-organized, detail-oriented, and comfortable with managing multiple tasks and projects. A college degree in a related field is preferred.

To apply, please e-mail your cover letter, résumé, and list of references to Ed Isakson, Director of Human Resources, Archdiocese of Indianapolis. E-mail: eisakson@archindy.org Equal Opportunity Employer

The Criterion Friday, September 16, 2016 Page 19
Author finds One World Trade Center a witness to nation’s spirit

MAMARONECK, N.Y. (CNS)—
Fifteen years after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks decimated the twin towers in lower Manhattan, the 1,776-foot One World Trade Center rises out of the ground a palpable symbol of triumph and optimism. The tallest skyscraper in the Western Hemisphere is the soaring, storied, centerpiece of a 16-acre complex that includes eight other major structures.

“It’s a secular site encoded with multiple symbols of faith, hope and love,” said Judith Dupre, author of the recently published One World Trade Center: Biography of the Building. The volume is a detailed, illustrated exploration of the political, structural and aesthetic forces that combined, clashed and coalesced before the building opened in Oct. 2014.

Dupre, a Catholic raised in Rhode Island and an architectural historian and best-selling author of lushly illustrated works of narrative non-fiction, spoke to Catholic News Service (CNS) on Aug. 30 at her home in Mamaroneck, a suburb north of New York. She said she was the only writer given unfettered access by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to its site and archives. The Port Authority is principal owner of One World Trade Center.

The nine-building complex is primarily a commercial site, but includes the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, Liberty Park and the not-yet-opened National September 11 Memorial and Museum, Liberty Park and the not-yet-completed St. Nicholas National Shrine of the Orthodox Church.

“It’s impossible to be on those 16 acres and not remember what transpired there,” Dupre said. “We all hold the falling towers in vivid imagination. The new structures are part of a continuum that began on 9/11 and carry a message of faith in the future.”

The 104-story One World Trade Center required nimble solutions to complex technical, political and security considerations, Dupre explained. She described its structure as “a hybrid system consisting of a concrete core wrapped in a muscular steel perimeter frame that was designed to redistribute gravity loads in the event of an explosion or natural catastrophe.”

In addition to the challenges of engineering the strongest, safest building possible, developers and the public demanded an attractive, symbolic skyscraper. What they got, Dupre said, is a massive reflective tower that manages to stand both tall and humble. “It had to stand for everything that was lost on 9/11 and reclaimed in the years that followed,” she added.

Dupre described One World Trade Center as deceptively simple-looking. “The 13,000 glass windows are nearly all unique, but from a distance they look like a single piece of glass. It’s not a tower that reveals itself quickly. It demands patience and engagement. The design is subtle and richly experiential. The more you look at it, the more you see,” she said.

“In many ways, building One World Trade Center was comparable to building a cathedral,” Dupre continued. “Cathedrals were always the most prominent element on the skyline and marked the heart of a city or town. There’s a sense that great height is a way to express great devotion.”

The building is not meant to be a secular cathedral, Dupre cautioned, but the effort dedicated to its construction makes it a cathedral to the spirit of the nation, she said. And the 50-foot high marble-clad lobby adds to the effect.

While researching the book, Dupre interviewed some of the 26,000 people who worked on One World Trade Center.

“Without being asked, each person first spoke of their personal story of 9/11 and described what compelled them to rebuild. It was a deeply moving ritual, and gave me the sense that they were doing the work for something greater than themselves,” she said.

Dupre was particularly impressed with an ironworker who described his daily routine during a snowy month. “He carried a shovel to his post on a 10-inch-wide steel beam 1,000 feet above the ground, shoveled snow off the beam into a dumpster, and then used a blowtorch to melt any lingering ice before he started the day’s work,” she said.

The entire project was built over existing below-ground infrastructure and curving rail lines that remained operational throughout construction. The below-ground site is eight stories deep and has commercial square footage equivalent to 10 mid-sized cities,” Dupre said. “Underground is a Rubik’s cube of interdependent structures that share walls and ceilings. I found the image of elements sharing and leaning on one another down there a hopeful contrast to the turf feuds that went on above ground during the planning process,” she said.

Myriad delays throughout the project reflected political compromises and the enormous amount of money devoted to the redevelopment, Dupre said. Nonetheless, the process was determinedly democratic, and some of the delays could be attributed to the time-consuming effort of listening.

Dupre holds a master of divinity degree from Yale University. Among her earlier works are Skyscrapers, Churches and Full of Grace: Encountering Mary in Faith, Art and Life.

She considers her writing a form of lay ministry. Through compassionate listening, extensive research and faithful rendering of the building’s development, she tried to capture the tremendous kindness and goodwill present at the site. It’s a way to bring the good word to people who yearn for meaning, yet do not consider themselves religious, she said.

“I understand that rebuilding is a way to heal,” she said. “One World Trade Center will never bring back loved ones and what was lost, but it stands as a symbol of hope, resilience and faith in the future.”

The project is open to the public daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Dupre said she plans to write a new book exploring the meaning of the building’s design.

One World Trade Center in New York is seen on June 13, 2015, with Pope Francis looking at a Bible fragment found in the rubble following the 2001 terrorist attack in lower Manhattan. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)